Gender and Education in Turkey

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The Eskişehir Yolu Survival Test

• Assume that you like staying alive and not being hurt. Most of us like those things, and yet we still drive up and down Eskişehir yolu.

• If you had the choice between being driven down Eskişehir yolu by a randomly selected female driver or a randomly selected male driver, which would you choose?
• Traffic deaths in Turkey per 100,000 people in 2004
  – Male: 17.82
  – Female: 6.58
• Researchers in the United States have found that, *based on miles driven*, there is a 77% higher chance of a male driver dying in a car accident than a female driver.
• That seems to contradict the common perception that men are superior drivers, less likely to get lost when driving and so on.
• Male visuospatial superiority? = superior ability of (male) soft creatures to maneuver a hard and heavy object at speed amongst other hard and heavy objects, many of which are also being maneuvered by (male and female) soft creatures.
• Common belief suggests that you really want a male pilot to manually dock a space craft onto a orbiting space station. The evidence suggests the opposite!
The problem with prioritarianism

• Priority on the well-being/life quality of the worst-off. (e.g. ensuring that they at least have basic needs or don’t fall below the poverty line or that they achieve a threshold level of numeracy and literacy).

• Problem: equality as a precondition for priority
  (i) The prioritarian approach permits inequality of resources,
  (ii) Inequality of resources leads to/reinforces inequality of influence.
  (iii) Equality of influence over decision-making is a key determinant of priority.
Equality in the capability to influence

• Real opportunity to influence decision-making in household, work-place and public life.
• Enables self-protection in each of those spheres.
• Ineffectual unless it is equally possessed.

• Functioning in itself and
• Essential for ensuring that all achieve the other basic functionings (e.g. cognitive and health functionings) (i.e. self-protection)
Some Painful Truths

• In comparatively similar roles women in Turkey earn little more than ½ of what men earn. [rank: 85/135 countries]

• Only 26% of those in work or seeking work are women. [rank: 125/135 countries]

• Only 10% of legislators, senior officials and managers are women. [rank: 103/135 countries]
• While more than half of eligible voters are women, only 4% of ministerial positions are occupied by women [rank: 85/135 countries]

• Turkey ranked 124/135 on the Gender Gap Index in 2012 (World Economic Forum, 2012).
Gender Equality in Education

• Recent shift toward greater gender equality in the sphere of education.
• Why hasn’t that change flowed through to the workplace and public life?
• Too soon or are the improvements in educational equality being exaggerated?
• We argue that recent gains in terms of equality of educational attainment hide ongoing inequality in terms of learning outcomes.
Gender Inequality in Education Attainment (ages 15-19)

1.00 = EQUALITY
13 year-olds Enrolled in School

![Bar chart showing enrollment percentages for different categories over years.](chart.png)
Inequality of Learning Outcomes

- *Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2003* study of 15 year-olds in formal education (= those who have completed primary school).

- Differential drop-out rates between genders in different countries may bias the results.

- Of the 40 countries participating in PISA 2003, Turkey had the lowest proportion of enrolled 15 years-olds.

- Guiso et al (2008) control for that source of bias by excluding observations for those students from less advantaged backgrounds (where dropping out is more common).
• Average mathematics score in Turkey was 22.6 points higher for males.

• Only 2 of the 40 participating countries had a wider gender gap.
Math gender gap and women emancipation

For each country, the math gap is the average math score of girls minus the average math score of boys.

Source: Zingales at http://www.kellogg.northwestern.edu/faculty/sapienza/gender/
• Five countries with a similar or lower level of economic development (Indonesia, Mexico, Thailand, Tunisia, Uruguay) had a much narrower math gender gap than Turkey.

• ... although, the gender gap in Brazil was slightly worse and the gender gap in South Korea was only slightly better (see scatter plot).

• Correlation between gender gap and gender inequality measures remained statistically significant when controlling for GDP per capita.
Reading Gender Gap

• In all countries females perform better than males on the PISA reading test.

• Average reading scores in Turkey was 25.1 points higher for females.

• Only 6 of the 40 participating countries had a narrower gender gap.
Social Conditioning

• Guiso et al (2008) argue that gender differences in the PISA scores are due to social conditioning, rather than biological factors.

• Influence of culture persists between countries with a similar or identical evolutionary history.

• That finding is supported by experimental evidence ...
Mental rotation test

Here is one of the questions from the Vandenberg Mental Rotation Test, used to measure one aspect of mathematical reasoning. Check the boxes under the two figures that are identical to the one on the far left (but seen from different angles). Men are three times as likely as women to do well on this type of problem.

through 5 from left to right, 2 and 5 are identical to 1.

ANSWER: The second from the left and the one on the far right are identical to the target object (the one on the far left). If you number them 1
• Males consistently outperform females on the mental rotation test.

• Moè (2009): Three groups -
  – Group 1: told ‘men perform better than women in this test, probably for genetic reasons’.
  – Group 2: told ‘women perform better than men in this test, probably for genetic reasons’.
  – Group 3: told nothing about gender (control group).

• Men in groups 1 and 3 performed better than the women in those groups.

• Women in group 2 performed just as well as the men in group 2.
Culture or Economy?

• If cross-country variation in the gender gap is due to social conditioning, what explains cross-country variation in social conditioning?

• Is it because certain cultures are inherently more patriarchal (male dominated)?

• Or, is it because of cross-country differences in economic history?
The Economic Transformation Thesis

• Some argue that all cultures have a strong patriarchal tradition and that particular forms of economic growth have enabled some to break the mold.
• Expansion of low-skilled/ low wage manufacturing jobs at some point in their history.
• Transformative effect on educational achievement and the capability to influence household, workplace and public decision-making (i.e. the ability to self-protect).
• In other words, variation in cultural ‘type’ does not explain variation in social conditioning across countries.
How should we measure the value of education?

Or, in what sense does education contribute to human well-being?

• Resources (e.g. income)?
• Capabilities (e.g. real opportunity to pursue an intellectually stimulating or creative life)?
• Happiness? (e.g. how much did you laugh or smile lately?)
Happiness: The problem of adaptive preferences.

- People living in deprived or oppressive circumstances often report a surprisingly high level of happiness.
- People adjust what they value according to what they realistically expect to achieve or avoid.
- For example: People in Afghanistan report being happier than the world average. (Graham, 2010)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling of happiness</th>
<th>Turkish Males</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Turkish Females</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education level</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very happy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30.10%</td>
<td>32.00%</td>
<td>28.60%</td>
<td>26.30%</td>
<td>39.90%</td>
<td>41.60%</td>
<td>36.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite happy</td>
<td></td>
<td>40.80%</td>
<td>37.70%</td>
<td>46.10%</td>
<td>38.70%</td>
<td>43.20%</td>
<td>42.20%</td>
<td>45.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very happy</td>
<td></td>
<td>16.60%</td>
<td>16.20%</td>
<td>15.10%</td>
<td>22.90%</td>
<td>11.10%</td>
<td>10.50%</td>
<td>11.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all happy</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.60%</td>
<td>14.20%</td>
<td>10.30%</td>
<td>12.10%</td>
<td>5.80%</td>
<td>5.80%</td>
<td>5.80%</td>
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</table>
• More education appears to make men and women less happy.

• In spite of gender inequality in Turkey, women appear to be happier than men.

• **Lower educated women appear to be significantly happier than upper educated men.**

• So is less education better for you? Are young females better off not going to school?

• What do we say to the father, husband or male politician who says that their under-educated daughters, wives or fellow citizens are happy with the way things are?

• The problem of adaptive preferences suggests that well-being (and, therefore, the value of education) should not be measured in terms of mental satisfaction.
References

Data Sources

- World Values Survey at http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/