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Social cohesion among Syrian und Turkish children, adolescents and young adults in Turkey

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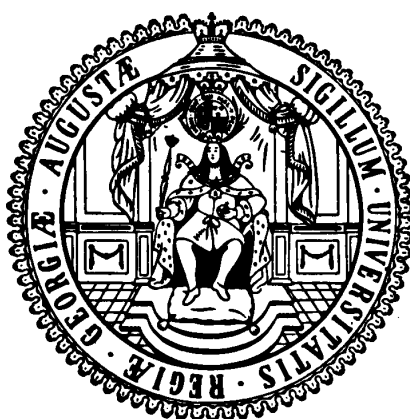
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Social Cohesion among Syrian und Turkish children, adolescents and young adults in Turkey

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Abstract

Turkey has experienced a large influx of Syrian refugees since the start of Syrian civil war. Integration and social cohesion are thus important questions and priorities of public policy in Turkey. We study social cohesion among young Turkish nationals and Syrian refugees. Our study sample comprises of adolescents and young adults (12-30 years), and children (6-11 years) who participated in events of “The Education Program for Syrian Refugees and Host Communities” (BILSY) project conducted by the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ). Social cohesion among adolescents and young adults is measured by means of three dimensions – sense of belonging, trust, and relational capacity. For children, we use behavioural games to measure two dimensions of social cohesion – altruism and trust. Our results show high social cohesion for both age groups, though lack of reciprocal trust from Turkish nationals is an area of concern. We also evaluate the impact of participation in events of the BILSY project with a randomized design and find that it had no impact on social cohesion.

I. Introduction

By the end of 2020, the refugee population worldwide had reached approximately 82 million people. While many studies investigate the material deprivation status of this refugee population (Alemayehu et al. 2016; Grijalva-Eternod et al. 2012; Hejoj 2007), the evidence regarding social cohesion levels within and between refugees and host communities in low- and middle-income countries remains limited. Social cohesion is not only a desirable goal in itself but is also closely connected with other key dimensions of socio-economic wellbeing (Colletta and Cullen 2000; Devereux et al. 2011; Ferroni et al. 2011; Hayami 2009; King et al. 2010). Therefore, understanding the degree of social cohesion between the host and refugee communities is crucial for policies aimed at improving their living conditions.

Since its establishment in 1923, the Republic of Turkey has been a destination for internationally displaced people. Immigration intensified during the 1970s and mainly involved the former residents of the Ottoman Empire. These include Muslims fleeing the Balkan area, Kurds escaping Saddam Hussein's persecutions and the Halabja massacre, as well as Iranians and Afghans. With the beginning of the Syrian civil war in 2011, a considerable number of Syrians sought refuge in Turkey (Kirişçi 2014; Yakar 2013) (Kirişçi 2014; Yakar 2013), an unprecedented event in Turkish history due to the large number of people arriving in the country within a relatively short time (Kirişçi 2014). Turkey has the highest refugee population worldwide (UNHCR 2020). In 2020, there were 3.6 million registered Syrians refugees living in the country, making up 4.5% of the total population of the country (DGMM 2020). The majority of these refugees are settled in Istanbul, Ankara and the provinces sharing a border with Syria (Figure 1).

This study examines the differences in social cohesion among young Turkish nationals and Syrian refugees and assesses the impact of the program on social cohesion among children as well as adolescents and young adults. The analysis is conducted for two age groups – children (aged 6 to 11 years) and adolescents and young adults (aged 12 to 30 years). These age groups together represent more than 60 percent of the Syrian refugee population in Turkey (UNHCR 2019), and thus greatly influence social cohesion. Understanding levels of social cohesion and how to enhance it among children is even more important as this generation (especially those born in Turkey) will most likely settle permanently in the country. Many studies that measure social cohesion in Turkey focus on adults (Erdoğan 2017; 2020; International Crisis Report 2018; WFP 2018). There are few studies that measure social cohesion in young people in other contexts (Kuhnt et al. 2019; Barron et al. 2020). We contribute to the

limited descriptive evidence on social cohesion among children and youths living in communities highly affected by war and forced displacement. Furthermore, we add to the growing number of studies on refugee children's inclusion in Turkey (Alan et al. 2020; Boucher et al. 2020; Tumen et al. 2021; Alan et al. 2021).

There is no universal agreement on the definition of social cohesion. Adapting from literature, we measure social cohesion on multiple dimensions. For adolescents and young adults, we consider three dimensions of social cohesion – sense of belonging, trust, and relational capacity. Their perceptions for these three dimensions are elicited using questionnaire-based interviews. We also explore heterogeneity in the social cohesion proxies by gender. For children, we conduct behavioral games to estimate their levels of altruism and trust. We collect data for participants of “Educational programs for Syrian refugees and host communities in Turkey” (BILSY) program implemented by the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ). Data was collected between November 2018 – January 2019 in Ankara, Istanbul, and in the bordering cities (which have a large refugee population) of Mardin, Gaziantep, Hatay and Şanlıurfa. The selected respondents were randomly assigned to be interviewed at the beginning or end of their participation in events of the BILSY program to assess the immediate impact of their participation in the event. We use the data for the control group only, interviewed before participation in the BILSY project, to understand the patterns of social cohesion in Turkey and the full data to evaluate the impact of the project.

II. Sampling design and Variables

II.1 Sampling design

In 2016-2019 the GIZ implemented the BILSY program with the aim of improving access to formal and informal education for both Syrian refugees and Turkish hosts and increasing social cohesion between and within communities. The program had two components – formal and non-formal education. We focus on the participants of the non-formal education component of the BILSY program. Data for our study was collected through a primary survey conducted between November 2018 - January 2019 funded by GIZ. Data collection was carried out in Ankara, Istanbul and the border cities of Mardin, Gaziantep, Hatay and Şanlıurfa areas where a high share of refugee population resides. To select the sample, we used a cluster randomized sampling design (at the event-level). Events refer to activities organised by volunteers under the non-formal education component of the BILSY program. First, for each age

group, from the complete list of events taking place during our data collection period, we randomly selected events to include in our survey using Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) method. This implies that events with a higher number of participants had a larger probability of being selected. We randomly selected 60 events for adolescents and young adults, and 27 events for children. Second, we randomly assigned each selected event either to the control or the treatment group. The control and treatment groups were surveyed before the start of the event and at the end of the event, respectively, to assess the immediate impact of participating in events of the BILSY program on social cohesion. Finally, within each event, participants were randomly selected to take part in the survey using PPS. Therefore, at the individual level, we assigned a different probability of being selected to Syrian refugees and Turkish nationals for both age groups in order to reflect the actual composition of the program participants. Overall, the sample included 1305 adolescents and young adults and 685 children. Since the primary objective of this study is to examine social cohesion among Syrian refugees and Turkish nationals, we only use data from the control group in the descriptive part of the study and the full data to evaluate the impact of participating in events of the BILSY program on social cohesion. The descriptive part of the study is based on a sample of 666 adolescents and young adults (12-30 years) and 350 children (6-11 years).

II.2 Measuring social cohesion – adolescents and young adults

The average age of respondents in the sample is 17 years, and 61 percent of the sample respondents are below 18 years of age (Table 1). The percentage of females among the Syrian sample is 40 percent, which is similar to the percentage of females among Syrian refugees in Turkey (Cagaptay and Yalkin 2018). About 56 percent of respondents in the sample are Turkish nationals and 44 percent are Syrian refugees, representative of equal participation of both nationalities in the GIZ project. On average, Syrian refugees in our sample had been in Turkey for almost 5 years. Most of our sample is from urban areas, as almost all refugees are located in urban areas. Only about one percent of Syrians in our sample still lived in a refugee camp. 74 percent of the sampled individuals were in school, while 26 percent have finished, stopped or never went to school. However, a significantly higher percentage of Turkish nationals attend school as compared to Syrian refugees. About 90 percent of Syrians refugees in our sample could speak at least some Turkish.

Our measure of social cohesion for adolescents and young adults draws from Kuhnt et al. (2019) and WFP (2018) to find suitable and context-specific proxies of social cohesion. Specifically, Kuhnt et al. (2019) focus on the dimensions of *sense of*

belonging and *trust*. Adapting from WFP (2018), we add a third dimension to the measure of social cohesion – *relational capacity*.

The first dimension of *sense of belonging* focuses on relationship with individuals or groups that have a similar trait/identity marker as the respondent. Respondents were asked to report their perception of sense of belonging with ten different groups – family, people of same age, religion, gender, interests, people living in the same neighbourhood, same city, living in Turkey, with people who belong to same country of origin as the respondent, and with people who speak the same language. For each group, respondents were presented with a statement – I feel a sense of belonging to the “group name”; and they had to respond if and to what extent they agree with the statement. For this purpose, a 4-point hedonic scale – strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree – was used.

Similar statement based questioning patterns were used to elicit perceptions for the groups of the other two dimensions as well, using the same 4-point hedonic scale. The second dimension relates to *trust*. Respondents reported their perception of trust towards seven groups – their family, friends, strangers, neighbours, Syrian nationals, Turkish nationals and people of a third (non-Syrian, non-Turkish) nationality. The participants of our study were either Turkish nationals or Syrian refugees and we focus on perceptions within (referred to as same nationality from here on) and across (referred to as different nationality from here on) these two groups. Therefore, we use the responses for trust towards Syrian and Turks and information on nationality of the respondent to construct two new groups – trust towards people of same nationality as the respondent and different nationality than the respondent. These new groups are used in the analysis in place of responses for trust towards Syrians and Turks. Trust towards all other nationalities is covered in the last group - trust towards third (non-Syrian non-Turkish) nationality.

The third dimension, *relational capacity*, relates to social interactions which can contribute substantially to social cohesion. Direct personal contact can reduce bias and prejudice and improve attitudes towards refugee population (WFP 2018). This dimension can be further divided into two sub-categories. The first sub-category is *willingness to make friends*. Respondents were asked about their willingness to make friends with three groups – Turkish nationals, Syrian nationals and a third (non-Syrian non-Turkish) nationality. Here again, similar to the trust dimension, we create two new groups – willingness to make friends with people of same nationality and with people of different nationality – to replace responses for willingness to make friends with Turks and Syrians in the analysis. The second sub-category refers to *interaction*

and sharing space. In this sub-category, respondents were asked about their perception of working together with others. This sub-category considers overall perceptions towards other members of the society and does not focus on a particular group identity. Respondents were asked about four aspects of interactions with others – willingness to work together with others, to learn together with others, to help others, and to work together with others to solve problems. For both sub-categories, we used the same statement format of interviewing as described earlier.

Discrete variables, taking four values corresponding to the 4-point hedonic scale, were created using the data to represent perceptions towards each group or aspect discussed above. We also re-classified the 4-point hedonic scale in two categories – agree (combining strongly agree and agree) and disagree (combining strongly disagree and disagree) for each group/aspect of the three dimensions of social cohesion to create a dichotomous variable.

II.3 Measuring social cohesion – children

Our sample comprises of 350 children; 182 took part in the dictator game, and 168 in the trust game (Table 2). The mean age of our sample is 9 years, and the sample is evenly distributed between males and females. The distribution by nationality in this age group is similar to that we observe for adolescents and young adults.

Questions on proxies of social cohesion such as those used for adolescents and young adults may appear too abstract and difficult for children. Therefore, we decided to utilize behavioural games to estimate social cohesion in this age-group. Following OECD definition of social cohesion, we opted to employ *altruism* and *trust* as meaningful dimensions for our analysis, which were captured through a dictator game and a trust game respectively. These games are widely used in the literature to assess altruism and trust for both adults and minors (Benenson et al. 2007; Chen et al. 2013; van den Bos et al. 2012). Many studies (such as Alan et al. 2020; Gilligan et al. 2014; Osborne et al. 2018) have used them in contexts of forced migration, war, and post conflict settings to measure variations in social cohesion.

Children could play only one of the two games due to logistical reasons. Each child was paired by the enumerators with one randomly selected Turkish and one randomly selected Syrian child. Each game was played in two rounds – once with the Turkish partner and once with the Syrian partner. The order was random. Children had to make decisions on the allocation of tokens between themselves and their partner in both games. At the end of the experiment participants exchanged the tokens

they won for stickers. Once the game finished, enumerators distributed stickers to all children, even if they did not engage in the game.

Dictator game. Each participant (dictator) was given an endowment of four tokens before the start of each round. They were then asked to decide how they would like to allocate the tokens between themselves and their partner (receiver). The interviewer emphasized that children were free to donate all, some or none of their tokens. Dictators were also informed that the donations were anonymous. Dictators only knew the nationality of the receiver, and no other characteristics. After the dictators made their choice, they put their donation in an envelope that the enumerators delivered to the receivers. As mentioned above, the enumerators repeated the process twice, once for the Syrian and once for the Turkish receiver.

The main outcome variable of this game was the number of tokens donated by the dictator in each round. Using this outcome variable and information on nationality of the dictator and the receiver, we construct two new variables – donations made by the dictator to the receiver of same nationality and donations made by the dictator to the receiver of different nationality. Both variables are count variables that take integer values from 0 to 4.

Trust game. We designed a simplified version of the trust game used by van den Bos et al. (2012) due to time and organizational constraints. There were no endowments in this game. Participating children (trustor) were presented with two options from which they had to choose one. First option was keeping two tokens for themselves and allocating no tokens to their partner (trustee). The second option was to share four tokens with the trustee and leave the allocation decision to the trustee. If a trustor chose the second option, they were additionally asked how many tokens did they expect the trustee would allocate to them, referred to as ‘expected trustee’s transfer’. The trustor played two rounds, one with the Turkish and one with the Syrian trustee at a random order. Similar to the dictator game, trustors were informed that their identity was kept anonymous from the trustees but they knew the nationality of the trustees. Once the game was over, the interviewers delivered each child the tokens they chose.

Using the responses of this game we construct two sets of variables. The choice made by the trustor was coded as a binary variable – taking value 0 if the child chose the first option (not to trust the trustee) and taking value 1 if the child chose the second option (to trust the trustee). Similar to the dictator game, we further construct two binary variables - trust towards the trustee of same nationality and trust towards the

trustee of different nationality. A second set of variables is based on the number of tokens the trustor expected the trustee to allocate back to them. These variables were constructed only for those trustors who selected option 2. Again, we construct two new variables – expected trustee's transfer from trustee of same nationality and of different nationality. These variables take integer values from 0 to 4 depending on how many tokens the trustors thought they would receive back from the trustee.

III. Social Cohesion among adolescents and young adults

In this section we report the responses of the study participants for the three dimensions of social cohesion. Responses to 4-point hedonic scale are presented in figures 2-5. We also present results for the dichotomous variable constructed from the 4-point hedonic scale (described in II.2) in Table 3. Responses by nationality are presented in column 2 and 3, and difference between the two is presented in the last column.

III.1 Sense of belonging

The majority of the respondents (over 95 percent), irrespective of the nationality, feel a strong sense of belonging with their families (Table 3 (column 1)). However, this sense of belonging decreases slightly as we move away from direct personal interactions to community-based interactions. 82-87 percent of the respondent feel a sense of belonging to people with same attributes such as age, gender, religion, country of origin, speaking same language and who have same interests. About three-quarters of our sample report having a sense of belonging with the people in same neighbourhood and same city. There is no statistically significant difference between sense of belonging reported by Syrian refugees and Turkish nationals (Table 3 (column 4) and Figure 2¹). While high sense of belonging is considered a direct measure of social cohesion, these groups do not capture reciprocal perceptions which are equally important for a cohesive society.

We also asked respondents to rank the three groups they feel the strongest sense of belonging to. While family is the first response for most of the sample, there are differences for what ranks second. People with same interests rank second for Turkish nationals, but Syrian refugees rank people of same religion at the second place.

¹ We present figures for only six groups out of total ten, which had the most contrasting results. Others can be made available on request.

We also checked if there is any statistically significant difference in sense of belonging by gender as females bear a higher burden of war and displacement (Asaf 2017). We find that, as compared to Syrian men, Syrian women are significantly less likely to feel a sense of belonging to family. Also, in comparison to Turkish men, Turkish women are significantly less likely to feel a sense of belonging to their neighbours.

III.2 Trust

Next, we consider the *trust* dimension (Table 3 and Figure 3). Like *sense of belonging*, we begin by enquiring about trust towards family members, gradually broadening the spectrum to local community, country and rest of the world. Three variables – trusting people of same nationality, trusting people of different nationality and trusting people of any third nationality – are particularly interesting here. These help us to understand reciprocal perceptions between Syrian refugees and Turkish nationals which are not captured in the *sense of belonging* dimension.

A high percentage of respondents report trust towards friends (about 87 percent) and family (about 83 percent); (Table 3, column 1). Respondents are significantly more likely to trust people of the same nationality in comparison to people of different nationality. Only 50 percent of our sample report that they trust strangers.

There are however significant differences between perceptions of Turkish nationals and Syrian refugees towards some groups (Table 3 and Figure 3). The gap between trusting people of same and different nationality is higher for Turkish nationals as compared to Syrian refugees. This supports the evidence found in other studies (Erdogan 2020) for adults that reciprocal perceptions are poorer among Turkish nationals as compared to Syrian refugees. In non-reciprocal perceptions, compared to Turkish nationals, Syrian refugees are less likely to trust strangers, neighbours, and people of third (non-Syrian non-Turkish) nationality.

As above, we examine if there is a statistically significant difference between perceptions of females and males. We find that as compared to men, females are significantly less trusting, especially towards these groups – family, neighbours, and people of different nationality. We also find that as compared to Turkish men, Turkish women are significantly less likely to trust family and neighbours; and in comparison to their male counterparts, Syrian women are significantly less likely to trust strangers and Turkish nationals.

III.3 Relational capacity

92 percent of respondents report that they are willing to make friends with people of the same nationality and 87 percent are willing to make friends with people of different nationalities (Table 3). There is no statistical difference between Syrian refugees and Turkish nationals for both these groups. However, Turkish nationals are significantly less willing to make friends with Syrians as compared to making friends with other Turkish nationals (Table 3 (column 3)), again showing greater perception of social distance by Turkish nationals as compared to Syrian refugees. Syrian refugees report no statistically significant difference between willingness to make friends with other Syrians or Turkish nationals. Gender differences are only significant for Syrian women; Syrian women are less willing to make friends with other Syrian women as compared to the willingness of Syrian men to make friends with other Syrian men.

The last panel of Table 3 and Figure 5 present results for second sub-category of *relational capacity – interaction*. More than 80 percent of the respondents report willingness to interact with others on all four aspects considered in the study (Table 3 (column 1)). But there are significant differences by nationality. Syrians show a higher willingness to interact with others for three of the four aspects of this sub-category. They are more open and receptive to integration with Turkish society. This has been reported by other studies as well (Erdogan 2017; Ziss 2019). Similar to results from other studies (WFP 2018), as compared to men, females in our sample are significantly more willing to interact with others.

IV. Social Cohesion among children

IV.1 Dictator Game

On average, dictators gave 2.7 tokens out of 4 to receivers of same nationality and 2.2 token to receivers of different nationality (Table 4); the difference between the two is statistically significant. When comparing by nationality of the dictator, we find no statistically significant difference in the number of tokens given to the receiver, irrespective of the nationality of the receiver. In both cases, dictators donated more than 50 percent of the endowment, which reflects high levels of altruism.

The distribution of number of tokens donated by nationality of the dictator are presented in Figure 6. Unlike averages, we find some differences by nationality of the dictator here. When the receiver was of the same nationality, we find no statistically significant difference at the lower end of the distribution, about 1 percent of dictators of both nationalities gave nothing to a receiver of same nationality. But at the upper

end of the distribution, 38 percent of Turkish and 26 percent of Syrian dictators gave all 4 tokens when the receiver was of same nationality. The difference between Turkish and Syrian dictators is statistically significant. As compared to Syrian dictators, Turkish dictators were more likely to donate all 4 tokens to a receiver of same nationality.

At the lower end of the distribution, there is significant difference in the behaviour of the dictators by their nationality. About 7 percent of Turkish and 15 percent of Syrian dictators gave nothing when the receiver was of different nationality, that is, as compared to Turkish dictators, Syrian dictators were more likely to not donate anything to a receiver of a different nationality. There was no such difference at the upper end of the distribution, 23 percent of dictators of both nationalities gave all 4 tokens when the receiver was of different nationality. When the receiver was of different nationality, dictators from both nationalities were more likely to split the tokens evenly.

IV.2 Trust Game

Figure 7 shows the choices made by children in the trust game. Choosing option 1 corresponds to trustor not trusting the trustee and option 2 to trustor trusting the trustee. There is no statistically significant difference between trustors of both nationalities when it comes to trusting a trustee of same nationality. However, as compared to Syrian trustors, a Turkish trustor was less likely to trust a trustee of different nationality. This result for Turkish children is similar to what we observed for other age groups, that they perceive a higher social distance to Syrians than vice versa.

Next, we discuss the expected trustee's transfer. Table 4 shows that on average, trustors of both nationalities expected more than an equitable transfer from their trustees. As with dictator games, there is no statistically significant difference between behaviour of Turkish or Syrian trustors. Additionally, both Syrian and Turkish trustors expected a higher allocation from a trustee of same nationality compared to a trustee of different nationality. The percentage of trustors who expected zero transfers is very low (Figure 8).

V. Immediate impacts of the BILSY project

The BILSY project was implemented with the aim of improving social cohesion among adolescents and young adults, and children. The program relied on positive contact to reduce victimization and stereotyping and to enhance trust and reciprocity among

Syrian refugees and Turkish nationals. In the non-formal component of the BILSY project, various types of recreational activities (called events) outside the context of formal education (such as cultural, recreational and sporting events) were organised. As mentioned before, the selected events were randomly allocated to control and treatment group. Control group was interviewed before, and treatment group was interviewed after their participation in BILSY project. This allows us to assess the immediate impact of the BILSY project.

Our identification strategy relies on the randomization of time of interview/game rather than treatment assignment. All the participants of our survey received treatment at some point. We identify as control group all those who had not received treatment by the time of the interview/game and as treatment group all those who had taken part in a BILSY program activity before the interview/game.

The internal validity of our identification strategy relies on the assumption that no confounders affect any of the two groups systematically. This could have been a relevant concern if we systematically collected all the data on untreated individuals before collecting data on treated individuals. Most of the BILSY activities lasted for one day, limiting the time difference between data collection for control and treatment groups. We can also rule out self-selection into the survey as 98% of the children who were invited to take part in our data collection agreed to participate. Treatment and control groups are balanced on relevant characteristics for both age groups and both games.²

V.1 Immediate impact – adolescents and young adults

The total sample comprises of 1305 respondents, of which 666 belong to control group and 639 to treatment group. We use linear probability models to examine the impact of program participation on the three dimensions of social cohesion used in the study.

We find no impact of the program on the *sense of belonging* and *trust* dimensions of social cohesion for respondents of either nationality. For the third dimension, *relational capability*, we find that compared to Turkish nationals, Syrian refugees are significantly more willing to make friends with people of a third nationality (non-Syrian non-Turkish) after participating in the program. This finding is however, not robust to adjustment for multiple testing. No other results were statistically significant.

² Results are available on request.

V.2 Immediate impact – children

Our sample size comprises of 685 children, 351 took part in the dictator game (182 in the control and 169 in the treatment group), and 334 participated in the trust game (168 for the control and 166 for the treatment group). Negative binomial regression models were used for the outcomes – tokens donated and expected trustee's transfer. Linear probability model was used for the outcome variable trust towards trustee.

For the dictator game (Table 6), we find that participation in BILSY program has no immediate effect on the number of tokens given by the dictator to the receiver of same nationality. However, when the receiver is of different nationality, the treatment has a positive effect on the number of tokens donated. There is no difference by nationality of the dictator. For the trust game, we find no immediate impact of the treatment on the probability of trustor trusting the trustee. This holds irrespective of the nationality of the trustor and trustee. For the expected transfer amount, the only significant immediate impact is observed when trustor is Turkish and the trustee is Syrian, Turkish trustors expect lower trustee's transfer from a Syrian trustee after participating in the BILSY program. However, the findings for both dictator and trust game are not robust to an adjustment for multiple testing.

VI. Discussion and Conclusion

We can draw several conclusions based on the results from our study. *First*, social cohesion among adolescents and young adults is relatively high as compared to other studies (Kuhnt et al. 2019; WFP 2018). This finding holds for children as well. Our results show that children in our sample are more altruistic than children in other studies in both conflict and non-conflict settings (Alan et al. 2020; Engel et al. 2011). Thus, unlike adults, the age-groups considered in our study seem well integrated in Turkish society.

Second, out-group bias is lower in our study sample as compared to other studies. Mironova and Whitt (2018) find favourable bias for co-ethnic groups in Kosovo and a bias against out-groups. Though both Syrian and Turkish children are more altruistic towards other children of same nationality, when paired with a child of different nationality they are more likely to divide the endowment equally.

Third, when it comes to trust, our results are similar to other studies. We also find that reciprocal perceptions of trust are lower among Turkish nationals as compared to Syrian refugees. Turkish nationals are less willing to make friends and interact with Syrian refugees while the vice-versa is not true. This conclusion also holds for

children. While a substantial proportion of children choose to trust other children, but reciprocal trust among Turkish children towards Syrian children (percentage of Turkish children trusting Syrian children) is comparatively lower. Higher social distance perceived by Turkish nationals as compared to Syrian refugees is a common finding across studies. Erdogan (2020) argues that Turkish nationals have accepted Syrians reluctantly and maintain a “conscious distance” with them.

Fourth, some of the social cohesion indicators for *sense of belonging* and *trust* show low cohesion among females, particularly Syrian females. Syrian women spend most of their time at home and have a low labour force participation rate (UN Women, 2018). Thus, they have limited exposure to Turkish society, fewer occasions to practice Turkish language and therefore to bond with the local community.

Finally, for the third dimension of *relational capability*, female adolescents and young adults show higher social cohesion than males. This is contrary to results for the other two dimensions discussed above, but these results are consistent with the findings of WFP (2018) that women are becoming progressively more open towards Turkish nationals over time. Also, UN Women (2018) finds that despite having limited contact with local communities, Syrian women believe that establishing relations with Turkish nationals is important.

One must note that the participation in the BILSY program was voluntary, which may raise concerns about generalization of the results of this study. However, any such program is likely to have voluntary participation, whether it is implemented by the government or any other agency. We did not find strong effects of participation in events of the BILSY program on social cohesion. There could be several possible reasons for this finding. The first is the short duration of the activities; 70 percent of activities lasted a day or less. Successful interventions, such as the ones evaluated in (Alan et al. 2020a) and (Boucher et al. 2021), provided a prolonged exposure to positive (İçduygu and Şimşek 2016) interactions. Second, the heterogeneity in the type of activities could also be partially responsible for the lack of significant effects. It is possible that some events were more effective in increasing social cohesion than others, but due to lack of data we cannot investigate each activity separately. Third, the traumatic experiences of war and displacement play an important role in shaping the attitude towards in-group and out-group members and are difficult to change.

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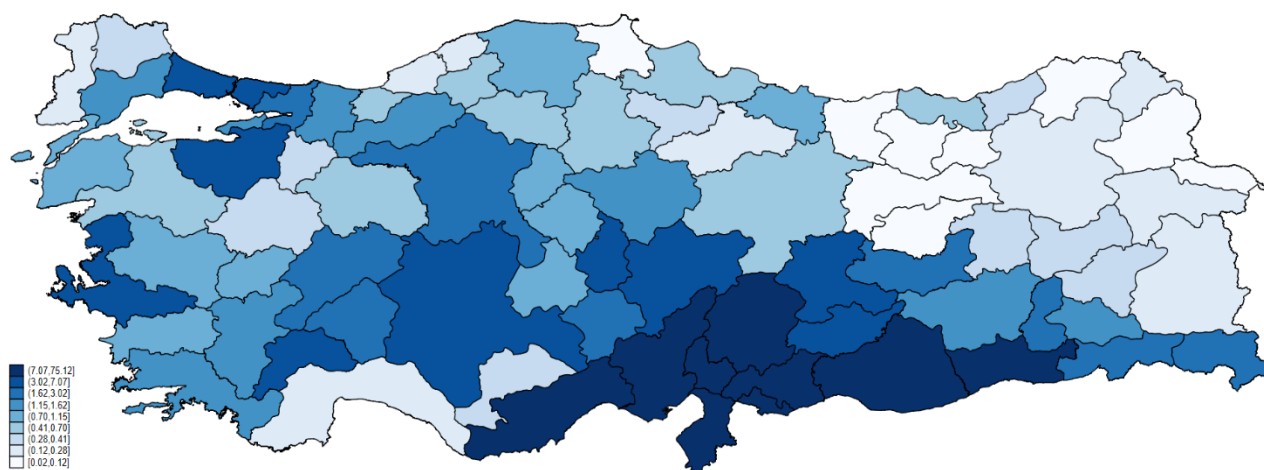
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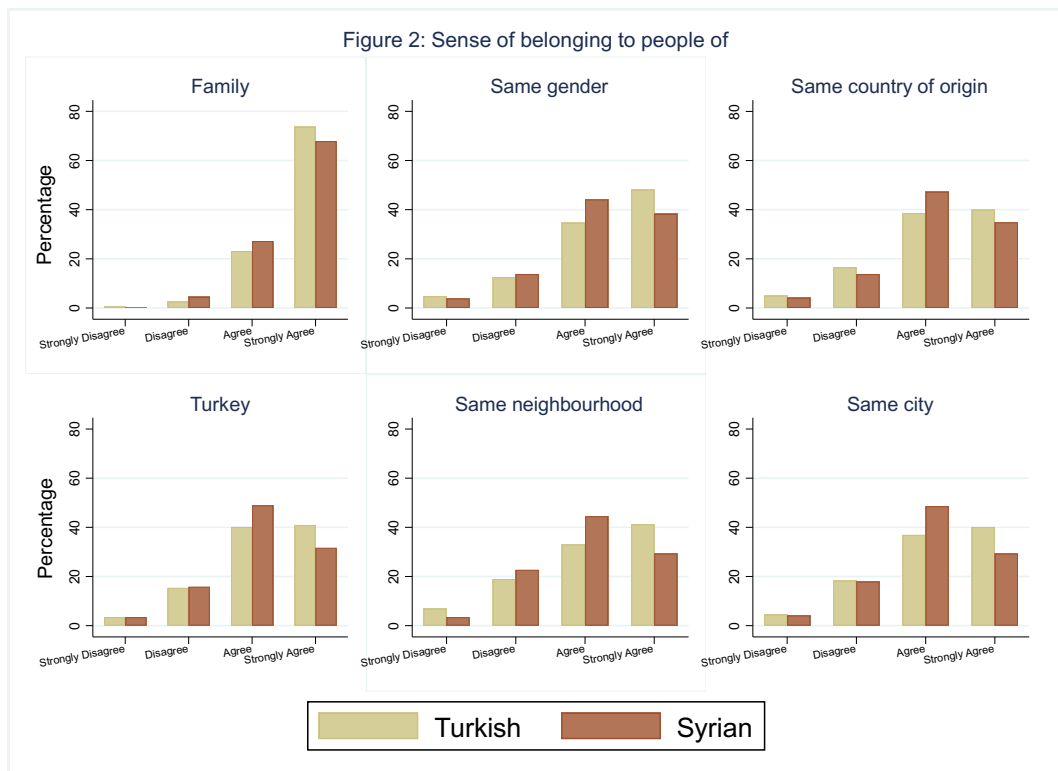
Tables and Figures

Figure 1: Share of Syrian refugee over total population by province (2021)



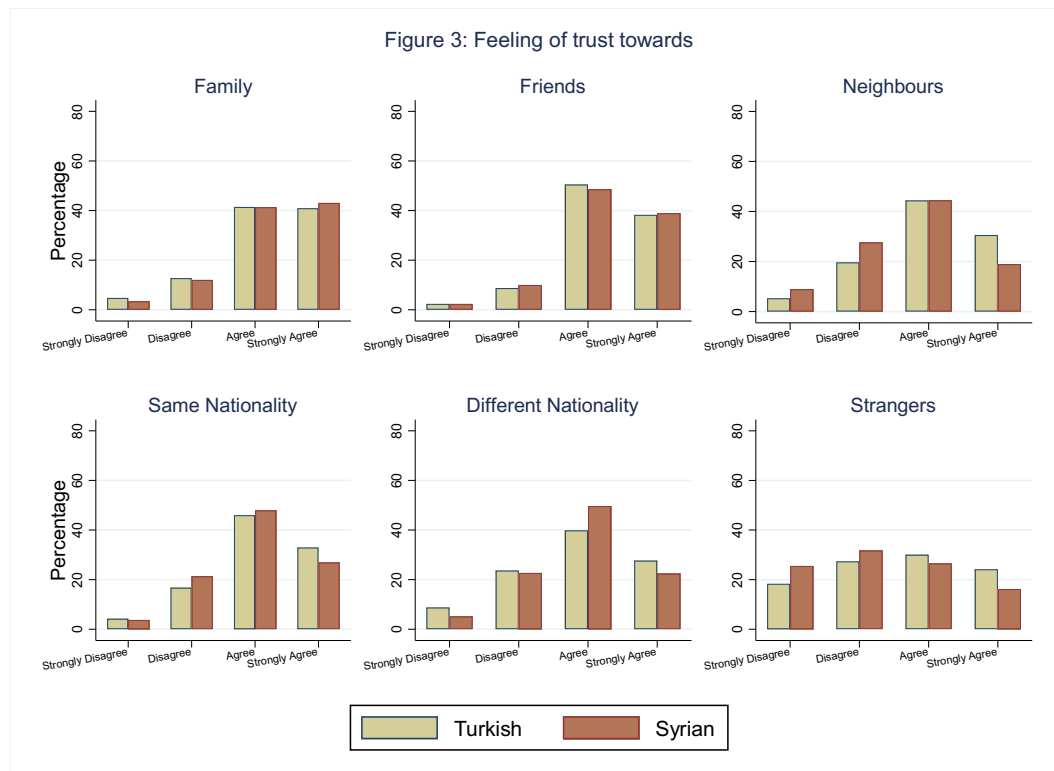
Notes: Drawn by author using Turkish Directorate General of Migration Management data (2021)

Figure 2: Reported perception of adolescents and young adults (aged 12-30 years) for the first dimension of social cohesion – *Sense of Belongingness* – with various groups



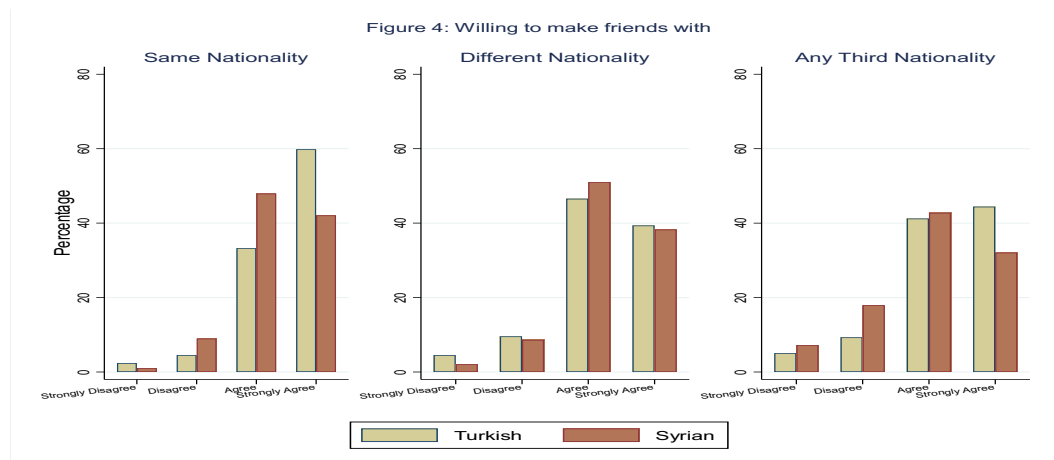
Notes: Respondents were presented with a statement – You feel a sense of belonging to “group name” and they were asked if and to what extent they agree or disagree with the statement. A 4-point hedonic scale was used to record responses – strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly disagree – which are presented here.

Figure 3: Reported perception of adolescents and young adults (aged 12-30 years) for the second dimension of social cohesion – *Trust* – towards various groups



Notes: Respondents were presented with a statement – You trust “group name” and they were asked if and to what extent they agree or disagree with the statement. A 4-point hedonic scale was used to record responses – strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree – which are presented here. Same nationality refers to within group cohesion for Syrians and Turks. Different nationality refers to cohesion between Syrians and Turks.

Figure 4: Reported perception of adolescents and young adults (aged 12-30 years) for the third dimension (first sub-category) of social cohesion – *willing to make friends* – with various groups



Notes: Respondents were presented with a statement – You are willing to make friends with “group name” and they were asked if and to what extent they agree or disagree with the statement. A 4-point hedonic scale was used to record responses – strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree – which are presented here.

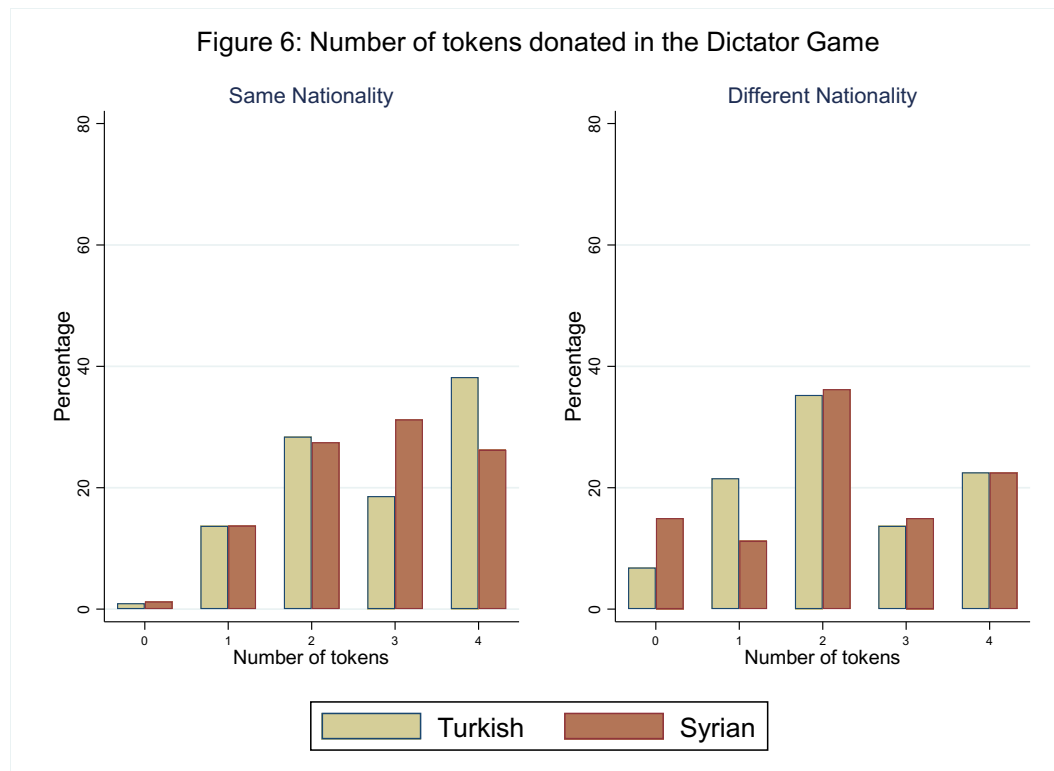
Same nationality refers to within group cohesion for Syrians and Turks. Different nationality refers to cohesion between Syrians and Turks.

Figure 5: Reported perception of adolescents and young adults (aged 12-30 years) for the third dimension (second sub-category) of social cohesion – *interaction* – for various aspects



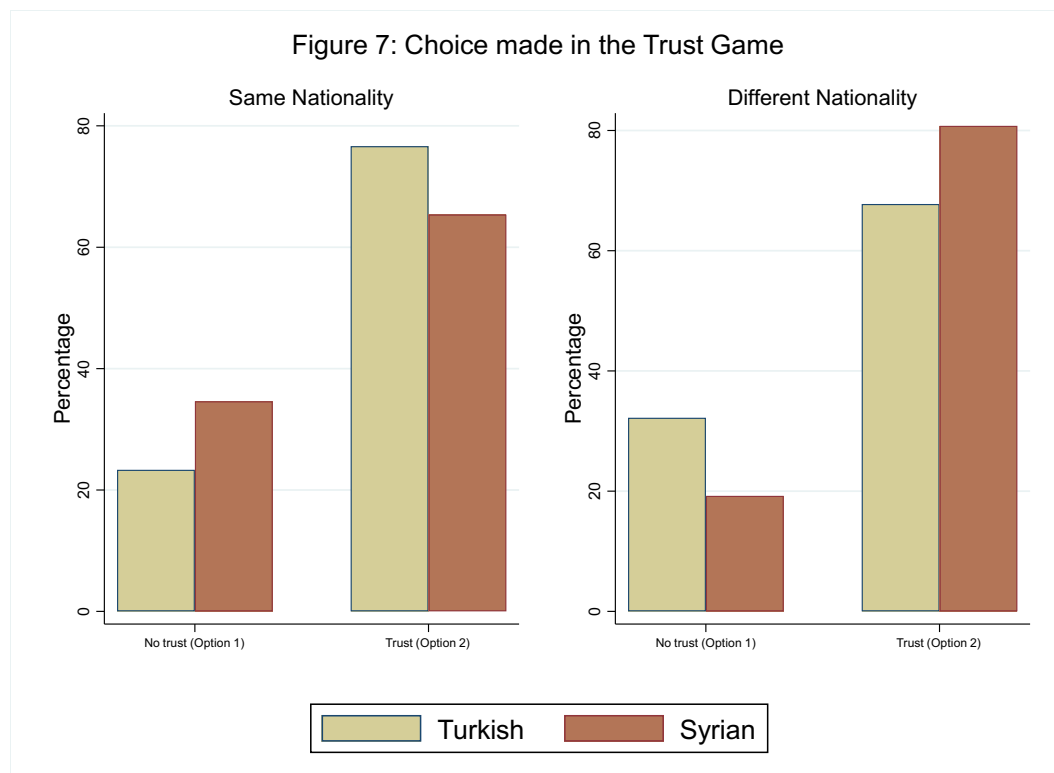
Notes: Respondents were presented with a statement – You are willing to “aspect name” and they were asked if and to what extent they agree or disagree with the statement. A 4-point hedonic scale was used to record responses – strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly disagree – which are presented here.

Figure 6: Number of tokens donated by the dictator in the Dictator Game played by children (aged 6-11 years)



Notes: Same nationality refers to within group cohesion for Syrians and Turks. Different nationality refers to cohesion between Syrians and Turks.

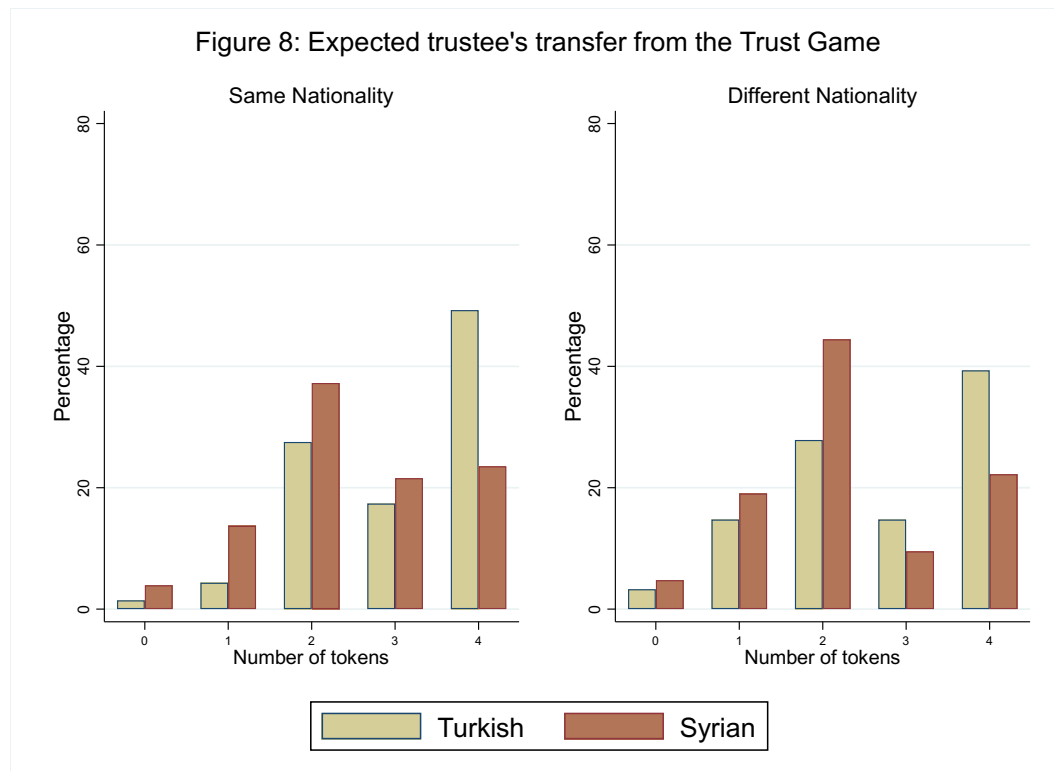
Figure 7: Choice made by trustor in the Trust Game played by children (aged 6-11 years)



Notes: Trustor was presented with two choices to trust or not trust the trustee.

Same nationality refers to within group cohesion for Syrians and Turks. Different nationality refers to cohesion between Syrians and Turks.

Figure 8: Expected Trustee's transfer by the trustor in the Trust Game played by children (aged 6-11 years)



Notes: Trustor were asked to guess how many tokens they expect the trustee to allocate back to them. Same nationality refers to within group cohesion for Syrians and Turks. Different nationality refers to cohesion between Syrians and Turks.

Table 1 – Summary statistics for adolescents and young adults (aged 12-30 years)

Variables	Full Sample	Syrian Refugee	Turkish National	Difference (2) – (3)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Age (years)	17.5 (0.2)	17.3 (0.3)	17.6 (0.3)	-0.3 (0.04)
Female (%)	46.5 (1.9)	40.3 (2.9)	51.3 (2.6)	-11.0 (3.9)***
Attending school				
Currently, yes (%)	73.7 (1.7)	59.7 (2.9)	84.6 (1.9)	-24.9 (3.4)***
Went in past (%)	23.1 (1.6)	34.8 (2.8)	14.1 (1.8)	20.7 (3.3)***
Never went (%)	3.2 (0.7)	5.5 (1.3)	1.3 (0.6)	4.2 (1.5)***
Place of residence (%)				
Urban areas	87.8 (1.3)	79.7 (2.4)	94.1 (1.2)	-14.5 (2.7)***
Rural areas	8.0 (1.0)	13.4 (2.0)	3.7 (1.0)	9.7 (2.2)***
Refugee Camp	1.4 (0.4)	3.1 (1.0)		
Others	2.9 (0.6)	3.8 (1.1)	2.1 (0.7)	1.7 (1.3)
Time since in Turkey (months)		56.1 (1.5)		
Living condition (%)				
Better than other	45.3 (1.9)	35.2 (2.8)	53.2 (2.6)	-18.0 (3.8)***
Same as others	43.4 (1.9)	44.1 (2.9)	42.8 (2.6)	1.3 (3.9)
Worse than others	11.3 (1.2)	20.7 (2.4)	4.0 (1.0)	16.7 (2.6)***
Speak Turkish	95.3 (0.8)	89.7 (1.8)	99.7 (0.3)	-10.1 (1.8)***
Speak Arabic	48.5 (1.9)	97.9 (0.8)	10.4 (1.6)	87.6 (1.8)***
Observations (#)	666	290	376	

Standard errors in parenthesis. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 2 – Summary statistics for children (aged 6 to 11 years), by type of game

Variables	Full Sample	Dictator Game	Trust Game
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Age (years)	9.1 (0.1)	9.5 (0.1)	8.6 (0.1)
Female (%)	46.3 (2.7)	46.7 (3.7)	45.8 (3.9)
Syrian	45.1 (2.7)	44.0 (3.7)	46.4 (3.9)
Speak Arabic (%)	48.6 (2.7)	47.2 (3.7)	50.0 (3.9)
Speak Turkish (%)	90.0 (1.6)	92.3 (2.0)	87.5 (2.6)
Observations (#)	350	182	168

Standard errors in parenthesis. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 3 – Perceptions of adolescents and young adults (aged 12-30 years) on three dimensions of Social Cohesion, by nationality

Variables	Full Sample	Syrian Refugee	Turkish National	Difference (2) – (3)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>Sense of Belongingness</i>				
With Family	0.96 (0.01)	0.95 (0.01)	0.97 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.02)
With people of -				
Same age	0.87 (0.01)	0.86 (0.02)	0.88 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.03)
Religion	0.84 (0.01)	0.86 (0.02)	0.83 (0.02)	0.03 (0.03)
Gender	0.83 (0.01)	0.82 (0.02)	0.83 (0.02)	0.00 (0.03)
Similar interest	0.87 (0.01)	0.87 (0.02)	0.88 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.03)
Same Neighbourhood	0.74 (0.02)	0.74 (0.03)	0.74 (0.02)	0.00 (0.03)
Same country of origin	0.80 (0.02)	0.82 (0.02)	0.78 (0.02)	0.04 (0.03)
Same language	0.83 (0.01)	0.83 (0.02)	0.83 (0.02)	0.00 (0.03)
Living in same City	0.77 (0.02)	0.78 (0.02)	0.77 (0.02)	0.01 (0.03)
Living in Turkey	0.81 (0.02)	0.81 (0.02)	0.81 (0.02)	0.00 (0.03)
<i>Trust towards</i>				
Family	0.83 (0.01)	0.84 (0.02)	0.82 (0.02)	0.02 (0.03)
Friends	0.88 (0.01)	0.88 (0.02)	0.89 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)
Strangers	0.49 (0.02)	0.43 (0.03)	0.54 (0.03)	-0.11 (0.04)***
Neighbours	0.70 (0.02)	0.63 (0.03)	0.75 (0.02)	-0.12 (0.04)***
People of same nationality [†]	0.77 (0.02)	0.75 (0.03)	0.79 (0.02)	-0.04 (0.03)
People of different nationality [†]	0.70 (0.02)	0.72 (0.03)	0.68 (0.02)	0.05 (0.03)
Any third (non-Syrian non-Turkish) nationality	0.61 (0.02)	0.54 (0.03)	0.67 (0.02)	-0.13 (0.04)***
<i>Relational capability</i>				
<i>Making friends with people of</i>				
Same nationality [†]	0.92 (0.01)	0.90 (0.02)	0.93 (0.01)	-0.03 (0.02)
Different nationality [†]	0.87 (0.01)	0.89 (0.02)	0.86 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)
Any third (non-Syrian non-Turkish) nationality	0.81 (0.02)	0.75 (0.03)	0.86 (0.02)	-0.11 (0.03)***
<i>Interaction</i>				
Working together with others	0.90 (0.01)	0.92 (0.02)	0.88 (0.02)	0.04 (0.02)*
Learning together with others	0.86 (0.01)	0.92 (0.02)	0.81 (0.02)	0.11 (0.02)***
Willing to help others	0.84 (0.01)	0.86 (0.02)	0.82 (0.02)	0.04 (0.03)
Solving problems with others	0.89 (0.01)	0.92 (0.02)	0.87 (0.02)	0.05 (0.02)**
Observations (#)	666	290	376	

Notes: Standard errors in parenthesis. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

1. For each dimension, we collected data for various groups/aspects. The third dimension – *relational capability* – comprises of two sub-categories – *willingness to make friends* and *interact*.

2. The respondents reported their perceptions using a 4-point hedonic scale. They were converted to binary variables where value 1 implies positive perception (higher social cohesion) and 0 implies

negative perception (lower social cohesion). The estimates in the table are based on the binary variables.

+ Same nationality refers to within group cohesion for Syrians and Turks. Different nationality refers to cohesion between Syrians and Turks.

Table 4 – Outcome of Dictator game and Trust Game played with children (aged 6-11 years), by nationality of the participant

Nationality of player →	Turkish	Syrian	Turkish	Syrian
	Same Nationality partner		Different nationality partner	
Dictator Game				
Number of Token donated	2.8 (0.1)	2.7 (0.1)	2.2 (0.1)	2.2 (0.1)
Trust Game				
Percentage choosing to trust the trustee	77.7 (0.5)	65.4 (5.4)	67.8 (4.9)	80.8 (0.5)
Expected trustee's transfer	3.1 (0.1)	2.5 (0.2)	2.7 (0.2)	2.3 (0.1)

Standard errors in parenthesis. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Same nationality refers to within group cohesion for Syrians and Turks. Different nationality refers to cohesion between Syrians and Turks.

Choosing to trust the trustee implies choosing option 2 in trust game.

Table 5 – Immediate impact of the BILSY program on adolescents and young adults (aged 12-30 years) – coefficients from LPM model

Variables	Treatment	Syrian	Treatment*Syrian
<i>Sense of Belongingness</i>			
With Family	-0.03 (0.19)	-0.02 (0.21)	0.01 (0.73)
With people of -			
Same age	0.01 (0.75)	-0.03 (0.39)	-0.01 (0.83)
Religion	0.00 (0.94)	0.02 (0.48)	0.02 (0.70)
Gender	-0.02 (0.65)	-0.01 (0.87)	0.04 (0.45)
Similar interest	0.02 (0.58)	-0.01 (0.84)	0.00 (0.97)
Same Neighbourhood	0.05 (0.29)	0.01 (0.80)	0.01 (0.93)
Same country of origin	0.06 (0.14)	0.04 (0.29)	0.00 (0.95)
Same language	0.00 (0.98)	0.00 (0.93)	0.02 (0.70)
Living in same City	0.03 (0.45)	0.02 (0.64)	0.01 (0.88)
Living in Turkey	0.01 (0.88)	0.00 (0.95)	0.02 (0.79)
<i>Trust towards</i>			
Family	-0.01 (0.87)	0.01 (0.61)	0.00 (0.93)
Friends	-0.04 (0.24)	-0.01 (0.71)	0.05 (0.26)
Strangers	0.03 (0.59)	-0.07 (0.31)	0.11 (0.24)
Neighbours	0.01 (0.82)	-0.10 (0.07)*	0.11 (0.15)
People of same nationality ⁴	0.00 (0.92)	-0.05 (0.32)	0.07 (0.24)
People of different nationality ⁵	0.04 (0.55)	0.06 (0.30)	0.04 (0.60)
Any third (non-Syrian non-Turkish) nationality	0.06 (0.22)	-0.07 (0.13)	0.05 (0.48)
<i>Relational capability</i>			
<i>Making friends with people of</i>			
Same nationality ⁴	0.01 (0.60)	-0.04 (0.14)	0.02 (0.58)
Different nationality ⁵	-0.03 (0.43)	0.04 (0.28)	0.03 (0.51)
Any third (non-Syrian non-Turkish) nationality	-0.04 (0.28)	-0.07 (0.03)**	0.10 (0.05)**
<i>Interaction</i>			
Working together with others	0.01 (0.70)	0.05 (0.07)*	-0.01 (0.76)
Learning together with others	0.02 (0.70)	0.12 (0.00)***	-0.09 (0.06)*
Willing to help others	0.02 (0.58)	0.02 (0.47)	0.00 (0.99)
Solving problems with others	0.03 (0.37)	0.06 (0.04)**	0.00 (0.93)
<i>Observations (#)</i>			

Notes: Standard errors were bootstrapped using wild bootstrap due to few clusters.

p-value from wild bootstrap in parenthesis. * indicates significance after wild bootstrapping the standard error *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

1. For each dimension, we collected data for various groups/aspects. The third dimension – *relational capability* – comprises of two sub-categories – *willingness to make friends* and *interact*.
2. The respondents reported their perceptions using a 4-point hedonic scale. They were converted to binary variables where value 1 implies positive perception (higher social cohesion) and 0 implies negative perception (lower social cohesion). The estimates in the table are based on the binary variables.
3. The models were estimated using linear probability model. Other controls in the model include age and gender of the respondent, location (urban or otherwise), dummy for survey areas closer to border and project line fixed effect (the informal component of BILSY program was organized through 4 project lines).
4. Same nationality refers to within group cohesion for Syrians and Turks.
5. Different nationality refers to cohesion between Syrians and Turks.

Table 6 – Immediate impact of the BILSY program on children (aged 6-11 years)

Variables	Dictator Game		Trust Game			
	Tokens donated to the recipient (Incidence rate ratios) ^a		Probability of trusting the trustee in Trust game ^b		Expected trustee's transfer (Incidence-rate ratios) ^a	
	Same Nationality ^c	Different Nationality ^d	Same Nationality ^c	Different Nationality ^d	Same Nationality ^c	Different Nationality ^d
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Treatment	0.93 (0.46)	1.20 (0.02)**	0.07 (0.33)	0.01 (0.91)	0.93 (0.23)	0.82 (0.04)**
Syrian	0.96 (0.77)	0.98 (0.73)	-0.09 (0.26)	0.16 (0.06)*	0.80 (0.06)*	0.83 (0.35)
Treatment*Syrian	0.93 (0.63)	0.80 (0.42)	0.08 (0.24)	0.00 (1.00)	1.08 (0.56)	1.43 (0.08)*
Age	1.03 (0.05)*	1.00 (0.94)	0.01 (0.36)	0.01 (0.52)	1.02 (0.26)	0.99 (0.43)
Female	1.06 (0.60)	1.11 (0.36)	0.01 (0.78)	0.04 (0.49)	0.99 (0.86)	1.19 (0.10)
Project line 2 ^e	1.08 (0.28)	1.19 (0.16)	0.17 (0.09)*	0.06 (0.63)	1.09 (0.27)	1.06 (0.58)
Project line 3 ^e	1.02 (0.86)	1.03 (0.89)	0.10 (0.28)	0.22 (0.03)**	0.98 (0.74)	0.90 (0.43)
Constant	2.09 (0.02)**	2.06 (0.03)**	0.57+++ (0.00)	0.43 (0.08)*	2.63+++ (0.00)***	2.90+++ (0.00)***
Observations (#)	351	351	333	333	257	252

Notes: Standard errors were bootstrapped using wild bootstrap due to few clusters.

p-value from wild bootstrap in parenthesis. * indicates significance after wild bootstrapping the standard error and † indicates significance after Bonferroni's correction ***, +++ p<0.01, **, ++ p<0.05, *, † p<0.1

a. The model was estimated using negative binomial model.

b. The model was estimated using linear probability model.

c. Same nationality refers to within group cohesion for Syrians and Turks.

d. Different nationality refers to cohesion between Syrians and Turks.

e. The informal component of BILSY program was organized through 4 project lines. At the time of our survey, events were being organised in only three of the four project lines. Project line 2 and 3 capture project line fixed effects.