Using Compulsory Schooling in Turkey to Explore the Causal Effect of Education on Attitudes
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Literature in various social sciences (mainly sociology and educational psychology) document “effects” of education on attitudes. Most of this literature is observational in nature and so we cannot rule out the possibility that people with different attitudes, or perhaps the propensity to develop different attitudes, simply choose to pursue different types or levels of education. In this work, I use a large change in compulsory schooling to isolate the causal effect of education on attitudes. In 1997, compulsory schooling in Turkey increased from 5 to 8 years of schooling. This resulted in a large increase in completed schooling in affected birth cohorts relative to those just a little older than them, as well as an increase in the fraction of the treated cohorts who completed at least 8 years of schooling. I use World Values Survey data from 2001, 2006, and 2011 to examine attitudes in domains including religion, work, family, and gender roles.