

The Effect of Affirmative Action on Targeted and Non-Targeted Students: Evidence from Low-income priorities in Paris High Schools

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Abstract:

Since 2008, school choice in Paris has an income-based affirmative action component granting low-income students preferential treatment in high school admissions. This policy is implemented as part of a centralized school choice procedure that assigns students to public schools based on a version of the Gale-Shapley deferred acceptance mechanism. Students' priorities are determined using a point system that takes into account students' academic performance and their district of residence. Low-income students, representing approximately 20 percent of high school entrants, are awarded a large bonus which gives them full priority at all public high schools within their district. Using comprehensive administrative data on the period 2004-2015, we exploit the introduction of this bonus in 2008 as a natural experiment to investigate the effects of income-based affirmative action on the high school outcomes and college access of both targeted and non-targeted students.