

## Curriculum and National Identity:

### Evidence from the 1997 Curriculum Reform in Taiwan

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#### 1. *What is the question?*

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The author examines the causal effect of textbook reform in 1997 that shifted from Chinese perspective of history to Taiwanese historical perspective on individuals' national identity. Other than the direction of the effect, this paper also suggests that, in the long run, the effect of the textbook reform is not persistent.

#### 2. *Why should we care about it?*

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Traditionally, national identity plays a key role in forming a nation state and be a way for national leaders to unite a state to fight against its enemies. Also, mandatory education in modern society is deemed as a tool to shape the people in a country. In terms of future wars, cultivating patriotism is a must-be goal in the education. The reform in 1997 provided an opportunity to scrutinize the pure causal effect of the textbook contents. Since the factors of patriotism formation often coincide altogether, this makes casual effect of patriotic textbook content difficult to estimate.

#### 3. *What is the author's answer?*

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The paper suggests that content reform can alter preferences over political institutions and national identity as suggested in other literature. The degree of influence is related to three factors, prior beliefs, the degree of exposure. Last, the effect is not persistent when students are over 30.

#### 4. *How did the author get there?*

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The authors use the identity survey data from the Taiwan Social Change Survey and the curriculum reform in 1997 as a cut-off to run Regression Discontinuity Design. Also, they use cohort study to examine the long run effect and academic and vocational track as explanatory variables.