

論文導讀 — Curriculum and National Identity: Evidence from the 1997 Curriculum Reform in Taiwan

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1 What is the question raised in the paper

The paper investigates the effect of the curriculum reform in junior high in Taiwan, which introduced more Taiwan-oriented content, on national identity. Specifically, the author ask if the students exposed to new curriculum incline to consider themselves Taiwanese relative to Chinese or both, using the question from Taiwan Social Change Survey (TSCS).

2 Why should we care about it

The education system could be an important tool for building national identity which facilitates the governance of state. However, the empirical works about the causal effect and the underlying mechanism are still scant. The authors thus provide empirical evidence in the context of the junior high curriculum reform in Taiwan.

3 What is the author's answer

The main results can be summeried by 3 points. First, the students tend to consider themselves as Taiwanese under new curriculum, when aged from 18-23. Second, students with more intensive exposure (academic track) and less Taiwanese prior belief (low-Hoklo proportion town) exhibit stronger effect. Finally, there is little effect for those who aged from 24-30, suggesting no persistent effect of curriculum reform.

4 How did the author get there

The authors exploit the sharp change in curriculum content between students born in 1984 August (old curriculum) and 1984 September (new curriculum). By an RD design, the authors isolate the curriculum effect from the society national identity trend over cohorts (in month). More, the results are quite robust to the choice of polynomial order and bandwidth.