



Objective

To compare school outcomes of students in religious schools versus students in public schools using population data from the Netherlands

Background

Religious schools enjoy a high academic reputation

Percentage of U.S. Adults Who Rate Types of Schools As... Table with columns: Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor and rows: Independent, Religious, Charter, Home, Public.

However, religious minority schools seen as problematic

New York City Questions English, Math and Science Taught at Yeshivas
Inspectorate investigates Islamic schools for homophobic teaching materials

Literature

- Meta-analysis of over 90 studies (Jeynes, 2012) religious school advantage of about 0.15 SD in primary education and 0.17 SD in secondary education
Studies using treatment effect bounds to separate the effect of religious schooling from private schooling: religious school advantage explained by selection effects

Contribution

- Administrative population data (1999-2007 cohorts) from the Netherlands where state has been funding religious schools since 1917: same funding irrespective of religion
Catholic, Mainstream Protestant, Orthodox Protestant (e.g., Evangelical, Baptist), Islamic, Jewish, and Hindu schools
We study both primary (high-stakes standardized test) and secondary education (diploma attainment, tertiary education enrolment)

Methods

Oster (2019) bounds

- Comparing students in religious vs public schools if the selection on unobserved characteristics is just as large as the selection on observed characteristics

Results

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS Table with columns: All children, Public, Catholic, Mainstream Protestant, Orthodox Protestant, Jewish, Islamic, Hindu and rows: Sex, Origin, Household education, Household income, Mother's age at birth, Household structure, Family transitions, Household size, Birth order, Number of schools, Number of children.

Note: The coefficient is significantly different from the baseline coefficient of children in public schools in column 2 at the 5 percent level using a two-tailed z test for continuous variables and a two-tailed test of proportions for categorical variables.

BOUNDING THE CAUSAL EFFECT OF RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS ON CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENT, DIPLOMA ATTAINMENT, AND ENROLMENT INTO TERTIARY EDUCATION

Table with columns: School denomination (ref: public), Standardized test core in primary education, Diploma attainment in secondary education, Tertiary education enrolment and rows: Catholic, Mainstream Protestant, Orthodox Protestant, Jewish, Islamic, Hindu, Number of children.

Note: Bootstrapped standard errors are in parentheses (1,000 replications). R^2_max is set at 1.3 times R^2 from the regression including all controls as recommended by Oster (2019). The selection ratio is set at 1, indicating that the selection on unobserved characteristics is as high as the selection on observed characteristics.

Conclusion

- Children in all but Jewish schools perform better on the standardized test than children in public schools
The benefits of religious schooling were largest for children in Islamic and Hindu schools
In the longer run, the influence of religious schooling faded out

