Return to ~~Schooling~~ Holiday
The potential impact of school holiday reform

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Motivation

Last year when visiting a school in Marseille, Emmanuel Macron revived the debate on the school holiday, which he considers too long and believes increases inequalities between students from different financial backgrounds.
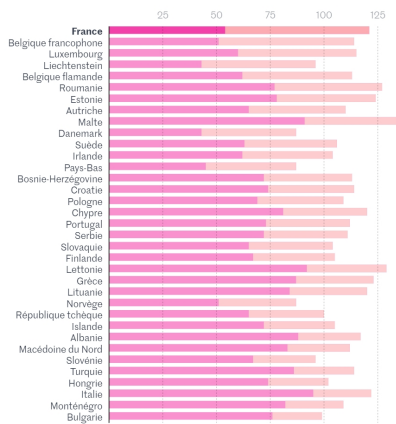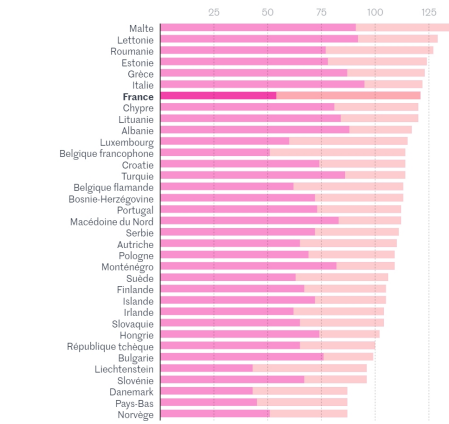
- ▶ What is the right length of school holiday, and what should we do with it?
- ▶ (Long) school holiday
    - cons: summer learning loss (+ crammed school day), increase in social inequalities, working parents.
    - pros: for obvious reasons (who doesn't like holidays?)
- ▶ Potential reform
    - Rearrange the school calendar, e.g., shorten the summer holiday.
    - *"Vacances apprenantes"* initiatives (learning holidays).

Background: Length of holiday across Europe

The data is from Eurydice, visualized by lemonde.fr[1]

Overall holiday:

Small holiday:

Background: Vacances Apprenantes initiatives

Questions and related literature

Objective: compare the impact of **modifying the academic calendar** with **learning holiday initiatives**.

► Performance measure: academic, physical, mental?

► The difference between before and after holiday or the end of year performance?

Data: OECD PISA project across European countries. Survey from the *Vacances apprenantes* program[2]

Literature: mostly in education research. In the US, there are Cooper et al. (2003); McMullen and Rouse (2012) on the impact of year-round schooling reform. In the UK, Kromydas et al. (2022); Morgan et al. (2019) studied the impact of summer holiday on inequality, mental health and cognitive ablities.

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[2]which does not exist for the moment.

Treatment: Length of holiday

Treatment:

- ▶ The length of school holiday is fixed by the education ministry. Everyone has to comply. The length varies between countries/regions.
- ▶ Policy change from $D = d$ to a set of $D = d'$.

Potential outcome: After D days of holiday, the performance $Y_i(D)$.

Treatment effect parameter: $ATE(X) = E(Y_i(d') - Y_i(d)|X)$.

Treatment: Learning holiday

Since this is not compulsory, there will be the usual issue of selection. [3]
Treatment: "Vacances apprenantes" initiatives.
Potential outcome: $Y(1)$ of attending the program.

$$Y(1) = \mu_1(X) + U_1$$

Choice: $D = 1\{\mu_D(X) > U_D\}$.
Treatment effect parameter: MTE (and others)

- X initial performance, family background etc. [4]
- Z/X the instrument that affects the choice of attending the program, e.g., distance to the summer school camp.

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[3] To be honest, I am glad that there's selection otherwise I won't able to relate the proposal to the MTE literature.
[4] The vacances apprenantes program is targeted at children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

History

- "A legacy of the farm economy"?
- The rise of urban schools and the need for a break during the hot summer months.
- A time for leisure, travel, and family bonding.

Thanks!

References I

Cooper, H., Valentine, J. C., Charlton, K., and Melson, A. (2003). The effects of modified school calendars on student achievement and on school and community attitudes. *Review of educational research*, 73(1):1–52.

Kromydas, T., Campbell, M., Chambers, S., Boon, M. H., Pearce, A., Wells, V., and Craig, P. (2022). The effect of school summer holidays on inequalities in children and young people's mental health and cognitive ability in the uk using data from the millennium cohort study. *BMC Public Health*, 22(1):154.

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