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Long Shadows of History: Persecution in Central Europe and Its Labor Market Consequences

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Abstract:

We analyze the extent and effects of job-related persecution under communist regimes in the Czech Republic and Poland using a representative sample of individuals aged 50+ from the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe. Retrospective information collected in the SHARELIFE interview offers a unique chance to relate past and current labor market outcomes to experiences of persecution reflecting the historical developments in Central Europe in the 20th century. Individual level data with details on labor market histories is matched with information on the experiences of state oppression. On-the-job persecution is found to have significant effect on job quality assessment and is strongly related to reporting of distinct periods of stress in both countries. Consequences of on-the-job persecution seem to have been much more severe and longer lasting in the Czech Republic, with significant financial effects of job loss or discrimination. This is explained by the greater degree of state control over the labour market in the former Czechoslovakia compared to Poland and different characteristics of the dissident groups in both countries.

Text: See [Discussion Paper No. 6130](#)



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