Long-term Effects of Childhood Exposure to Persecution: Human Capital, Marriage Market, and Intergenerational Outcomes

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Introduction

• Historical persecutions against some social group(s) based on religion, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, etc.
• Little attention paid to persecution survivors, especially children. Policy implication for post-persecution period.
• Investigated the long-term consequences of early-life exposure to persecution:
  ➢ Individual human capital development;
  ➢ Marriage sorting across social groups.
• Compared impacts across childhood stages: 0-6, 7-12, and 13-18 years old.
• Key findings: Longer early-childhood (0-6) exposure to persecution leads to:
  ➢ Worse human capital outcomes;
  ➢ Distorted marriage choices.

Institutional Background

• Massive persecution activities against “bourgeoisie” during class struggle period (1950-1976) in China.

Main Results

Fig 2: Time trend of human capital outcomes by family class group

Tab 1: Effects of exposure to persecution in three life stages (e.g. education attainment)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exposure 0-6*Non-red</th>
<th>0.209*** (0.063)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposure 7-12*Non-red</td>
<td>-0.118** (0.059)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure 13-18*Non-red</td>
<td>-0.043 (0.051)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Mechanisms

• Health: more likely to be short and underweight.
• Education: hardly explaining marriage market outcomes.
• Mental trauma: worse subjective well-being.
• Personal perception: believing more in social status.

Conclusions

• Most critical long-term development period: early childhood (0-6 years old).
• Early childhood exposure to persecution:
  ➢ less education, lower cognitive skills, and less income;
  ➢ a spouse with poorer human capital outcomes;
  ➢ a spouse from non-persecuted classes.
• Overall, "black" classes affected most significantly.
• Gender difference:
  ➢ Male: stronger impacts on human capital development;
  ➢ Female: more indirect effects through marriage.
• No evidence of transferring to the further next generation.

Data & Methodology

• China Family Panel Studies (CFPS): 2010-2016
  ➢ a nationally representative biennial longitudinal survey;
  ➢ 29 provinces, including 4 municipalities.
• Difference-in-difference strategy:
  ➢ Class variation;
  ➢ Cohort (Exposure) variation;
  ➢ Controls: individual characteristics, cohort, group & county F.E.