This brief is intended to provide an overview of research produced by the Changing Family in Asia Cluster at the Asia Research Institute.

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This third research brief provides a brief summary of her article, which looks at how state policies can have long-standing impacts on youth adults’ life chances.

Between 1966 and 1978, millions of Chinese urban high school graduates were rusticated from their cities of origin, many spending several years engaging in hard agricultural labor before returning to home. Most of them were once known as the hot-blooded “Mao’s Red Guards,” owing to the vital role that they played in the early years of the Cultural Revolution (CR). These rusticates are now labeled as the “Lost Generation” because of their deprived youth, spent in the mountainous areas or farming villages. The wide participation in the CR led to the disruption of formal education for the youths nationwide. Those adolescents who managed to remain in the cities found little or no opportunity for education or professional training.

Compared to the broad consensus that the rustication episode markedly interfered with life course transitions of the affected generation, the results on how enduring the impact of the rustication was on the career development of the rusticates are inconclusive. Hence, this article focuses on the labor market status of the Cultural Revolution Cohort (CR cohort) by considering the intervening movements between the time when they joined the urban labor force and the time approaching the end of their careers. This holistic analysis intends to: 1) disclose the differences in employment trajectories that members of the CR cohort have followed; and 2) answer the question of whether the rustication experience became an asset or a liability for those affected in the post-reform era.

Data and the Method

Data come from the 2003 China’s General Social Survey (2003 CGSS), a multi-stage stratified national probability sample of around 6,000 individuals. The analyses in this article use a subsample of 1,759 individuals born between 1947 and 1960. Of the respondents, 494 were rusticated during the CR; more than half of them spent longer than five years in the countryside.

The 2003 CGSS provides detailed information on individuals’ employment histories: respondents, who were presumed to have worked before, were asked to give details of each job they undertook as well as any changes of employment status, such as exit to housekeeping or unemployment. The sample produces 1,599 observed employment sequences, 808 of which are distinct.

The optimal matching technique is chosen to analyze employment sequences, given that it is capable of piecing together the chain of events and presenting a complete picture of what careers look like. It identifies similarities or dissimilarities between employment sequences; the
comparison results help to generate clusters of employment trajectories driven by the data. A multinomial logistic regression examines how cluster memberships relate to the state-initiated rustication experience in youth and family resources.

**Main Results**

Results of analyses show that the CR cohort falls into four employment trajectories. Their descriptions are shown in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>N (%)</th>
<th>Brief Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 1: Working class, upward trajectory</td>
<td>270 (16.9%)</td>
<td>Dominated by long spells in managerial work, sometimes preceded by short spells working in industrial or service sectors, or serving in the People’s Liberation Army.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 2: White-collar worker, stable</td>
<td>341 (21.3%)</td>
<td>Typical white-collar working life: long and continuous spells in professional or clerical work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 3: Blue-collar worker, stable</td>
<td>722 (45.2%)</td>
<td>The largest cluster. Typical blue-collar working life: long and continuous spells in industrial or service work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 4: Working class, downward trajectory</td>
<td>266 (16.6%)</td>
<td>Working life is cut short by spells of unemployment. Industrial work are typical types of occupations before being unemployed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further regression results suggest that the effect of being rusticated increases the likelihood of membership in the “Working class, downward” trajectory cluster, characterized by unemployment in the later stage of their career. Also, longer duration of the rustication episode enhances this effect. This confirms the early hypothesis which states that the extended stay in the countryside made those rusticates vulnerable to labor market retrenchment. They were less-prepared for educational opportunities when colleges were reopened than those who returned to cities earlier. Thus, it delayed their entry into work while others had accumulated enough skills and survival strategies in the workplace. As opposed to former rusticates, non-rusticated respondents are more likely to experience the “Working-class, upward” and the “White-collar work, stable” trajectories.

Besides the rustication experience, educational and political credentials are strong indicators of the two types of employment trajectories leading to elite positions, more so than father’s occupation and educational attainment. Military service was the channel that party officials used to protect their children from the forced migration program. Children of party members had a higher probability of being in an employment trajectory characterized by a short spell in the military, working for 25 years, and then holding a managerial position. Father’s party membership also decreased the likelihood of children being in the working-class employment trajectory.

**Further Information**

For further reading of the article on which this research brief is based, please visit the website of the Annals: http://ann.sagepub.com/content/646/1/172.abstract?patientinform-links=yes&legid=spann;646/1/172

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Editors of this issue: Qianhan Lin and Tharuka Prematillake.
Forthcoming International Conference and Call for Papers

Discrepancies between Behavior and Attitudes toward Marriage and Fertility in Asia
Organized by the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore

The Changing Family in Asia Cluster is pleased to announce that the conference, ‘Discrepancies between Behavior and Attitudes toward Marriage and Fertility in Asia,’ will take place on 13 - 14 February 2014, at the Asia Research Institute in Singapore. The abstract submission deadline is on 31st July, 2013.

The purpose of this conference is to promote a better understanding of the puzzling discrepancies between family attitudes and behavior in Asia: when family behavior is fast “modernized” and “westernized” but people seem to still think “traditionally” and “Asian”. The historical pro-family values that endorse universal and early marriage and children are still prevalent in various Asian societies. Yet, dramatic demographic transformation is under way: fertility level rapidly decreasing to close or below replacement level. In societies like Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea and Japan, fertility has reached the lowest low-level in the world; age at first marriage has also increased greatly with “effective singlehood” in some Asian societies even longer than in Western societies. Further, family behavior is not all homogenous: cohabitation and extramarital fertility are relatively rare in most Asian countries although low fertility and late marriage are prevalent.

This conference opens a discussion forum to unfold the puzzles of “transformed behavior and lingering attitudes” regarding marriage and birth giving in Asia. We invite researchers to explore mechanisms regarding contradictions and consistencies between family formation attitudes and behaviours in Asia: particularly the roles of states, religion and cultural norms, and the interplay between attitudes and economic circumstances.

- Commonalities and Variations of Family Attitudes in Asia
- Continuities and Changes of Family Attitudes in Asia
- Is “Asian Family Values” a Meaningful Term? Conceptualization and Theorization
- State Family Policies: Understand the Institutional Context of Family Attitudes and Behavior
- Religion and Social Norms: Understand the Cultural Context of Family Attitudes and Behavior
- Interaction between Family Attitudes and Economic Development: Women’s Education and Employment
- Reciprocal Association between Attitudes and Behavior regarding Marriage and Fertility
- New Data on Attitudes regarding Marriage and Fertility

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More details can be found here:

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