

**Call for Papers to Special Collection at *Demographic Research***

**Title: De/Re-institutionalization of Asian Families?**

**Special Collection Guest Editors:**

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At the turn of the millennium, sociologist Andrew Cherlin (2004) introduced the influential thesis of the deinstitutionalization of American marriage, emphasizing the declining importance of marriage in intimate relationships, its weakening link to family formation, and the erosion of norms governing marriage and familial life. Inspired by this thesis, numerous studies have applied it to the transformation of Asian families, offering empirical evidence in support of the framework. These studies highlight rising trends of cohabitation (Cheng, 2023; Lesthaeghe, 2020), childlessness (Jones et al., 2009; Teerawichitchainan & Ha, 2024; Wang & Mu, 2025), divorce (Cheng, 2014; Chen & Yip, 2018), and men's participation in domestic care work (Lui & Chou, 2019), among others.

Although Asian families share some of the transformations observed in the West, they have unfolded more moderately and in ways that often diverge from Western trajectories. The literature shows that, even today, Asian families maintain a strong linkage between marriage and reproduction (Raymo et al., 2015), limited long-term cohabitation (Cheng, 2023), persistent gender inequality in the household (Kan et al., 2022) and the enduring influence of parental authority in multigenerational families, even as its force has waned (Davis & Friedman, 2014; Donner & Santos, 2016; Jones, Hull, & Mohamad, 2011; Lui, 2021). At the same time, pressures of modernity have fueled rising numbers of single-person households and never-married people (Cheung & Yeung, 2021; Jones, 2005), ultra-low fertility (with no signs of rebound) (Jones & Gubhaju, 2009), and split-household arrangements (Fan, 2021; Mu & Yeung, 2022). Both the persistence and transformation of family life highlight the distinctiveness of Asian societies (Raymo et al., 2015; Yeung, et al., 2018).

This special collection revisits the de-institutionalization thesis, and we argue that the characteristics of family and marriage sets Asia apart from the West under conditions of

compressed modernity, in which economic, political, social, and cultural transformations occur in an extremely compressed manner—both temporally and spatially—producing the dynamic coexistence of historical and modern social elements (Chang & Song 2010). It offers a timely evaluation of changes amid global forces of modernization and individualization in Asia, the world's most populous region marked by shared histories and cultures yet diverse in its trajectories.

In addition, drawing on contributions primarily from East and Southeast Asia (while remaining open to perspectives from other parts of Asia, including Central, West, and South Asia), we recognize the diversity among countries in this region, which have undergone uneven development over the past half-century (Jones & Yeung, 2014; Yeung, 2022). By emphasizing such differences, we seek to illuminate the varied forces of transformation and modification in Asian family and marriage systems.

The contributions to this special issue will allow us to answer the following key questions:

- 1) To what extent, and in what ways, have Asian family institutions—whether characterized by deeply entrenched patriarchal foundations rooted in gender and generational hierarchies, or by bilateral kinship systems more common in parts of Southeast Asia—been reconfigured under the pressures of modernization, globalization, and individualization?
- 2) How do these transformations differ across Asian societies, and what continuities persist despite these forces of change? These differences provide a valuable vantage point for theorizing family diversity in Asia and for refining broader frameworks of family change.

**The ambition of this special issue is to fill critical gaps by offering new empirical evidence, introducing innovative data sources, advancing cross-country comparative perspectives, and employing multi-method approaches.** The volume interrogates the de-institutionalization thesis by providing insights into these phenomena, their driving forces, and, most importantly, their implications for family structures, practices, and power dynamics—an area often overlooked in Western literature, which largely emphasizes countries following the trajectory of the Second Demographic Transition. Beyond this, the collection aims to advance theoretical debates on family change and dynamics more broadly, using Asian cases to refine, challenge, and extend

prevailing frameworks.

Despite a growing body of literature on family transformations in Asia, research remains uneven (Raymo et al., 2015; Yeung, 2022). **While the Guest Editors welcome empirical analyses on Asia broadly defined, contributions on underrepresented Asian societies are particularly encouraged. To illuminate how global forces intersect with local norms to drive family change across diverse contexts and over time, comparative and/or trend studies are especially desirable.** Overall, this special issue aims to integrate diverse findings and theoretical perspectives, offering a regional synthesis that contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the shifting landscape of families in Asia and illuminates the implications for marriage, fertility, intergenerational relationships and support, and social policies.

Submissions can be made starting from 1 November 2025 via [Demographic Research's online submission form](#) as a part of the Special Collection on 'De/Re-institutionalization of Asian Families?'. We ask prospective contributors to closely follow [the journal's guidelines](#). **The deadline for the submission is 28 February 2026.**