

The Transformation of the East Asian Family in the 21st Century

Birth rates throughout East Asia have fallen to all-time lows in the 21st century, leading to rapid population aging across the region. Japan was the first country to experience low fertility, with a birth rate that has gradually declined since the late 1970s and now more or less stabilized at a level far below the population-replacement rate. Why has this happened, despite the Japanese government's many attempts to change the situation through government policy? This talk examines the root causes of Japan's low birth rate and the misguided policy attempts to address it. I conclude with implications for the rest of East Asia.