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Emerging Social Issues Division

Social Policy and Population Section

### *Asia-Pacific Population Journal*

**Article** **Patrilines, Patrilocality and Fertility Decline in Viet Nam**

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**Abstract** Vietnamese families are patrilineal and patrilocal. To conform to a patrilineal, patrilocal model, couples must fulfil the demographic precondition of raising at least one son to adulthood. Among the "mid-transitional" cohorts reaching reproductive ages in the late 1940s and the 1950s, the proportion fulfilling this precondition was unprecedentedly high. Among the "post-transitional" cohorts reaching reproductive age after about 2005, the proportion fulfilling the precondition will be much lower. Many couples have evidently been willing to forgo conformance with the patrilineal, patrilocal model. This could be taken to mean that patrilineal, patrilocal norms are relatively weak in Viet Nam. A review of the available evidence suggests, however, that the norms are strong. It appears, then, that fertility decline has seen couples making different trade-offs between the conformance with the patrilineal, patrilocal model and other objectives. Trade-offs of this sort are awkward for models which distinguish sharply between wanted and unwanted births. The continued need for trade-offs may also presage a weakening in the patrilineal and patrilocal model, and presents an opportunity for policy makers wishing to shape any such changes.

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