

# **Call for Papers: *Advances in Life Course Research* Special Issue on Young Adult Life Courses in the Global South**

## **Special Issue Editors:**

- Ignacio Cabib – Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
- Adam Cooper – Human Sciences Research Council South Africa
- Anette Fasang – Humboldt University Berlin
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- Yang Hu – Lancaster University

**Deadline for Extended Abstracts:** 31 April 2023

**Deadline for Full Papers:** 31 December 2023

## **Overview of the Special Issue**

The life course approach is the dominant interdisciplinary framework for understanding the determinants, patterns, and consequences of work and family lives. Life course research remains heavily focused on a small number of Western countries, which constitute less than 15% of the global population. By contrast, only a few studies explicitly use a life course approach to study work-family lives in regions commonly associated with the Global South., Western-centrism in mainstream life course research leads to a limited and biased understanding of human lives, which is increasingly untenable in a multi-polar, deeply interconnected world. The life course paradigm can provide a useful framework for understanding the nature and variation of human life courses in the Global South.

To understand the structural and cultural realities that shape life courses in Southern contexts, however, life course researchers need to expand their theoretical and methodological repertoire. Protracted economic stagnation and instability, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath, a lack of decent jobs in formal labor markets, as well as limited social protection, complicate the transition to adulthood in many low and middle-income countries, with varied implications for family formation, living arrangements, and work and career development. At the same time, cultural globalization, educational expansion, economic development and

crises, and the enduring legacies of colonialism have shifted social norms and aspirations associated with becoming an adult.

Young adulthood, approximately the age range between 16 and 35, is often considered the most crucial phase in the adult life course. It is a “demographically dense” time in which most major life transitions take place, including the transition from school to work, leaving the parental home, and starting a family. It is particularly important to understand young adults’ work-family life courses in the Global South. Many Southern societies experience a “youth bulge” combined with widespread youth unemployment. As a result, many young people are unable to achieve their desired career and family trajectories, and they are stuck in a protracted “waithood.” The lack of opportunities for young adults is seen as a root cause of many contemporary global problems, including social unrest, radicalisation, crime, and irregular migration.

Against this background, this special issue uses a life course lens to study young adult work-family life courses in low- and middle-income countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America using both qualitative and quantitative empirical approaches. It asks four overarching questions:

- What **theoretical perspectives** do we need to understand agency in young adult life courses in the Global South? For example, how can concepts such as waithood, “hustling,” improvisation, and vital conjunctures contribute to our understanding of young adults’ work-family lives in low- and middle-income contexts?
- How do **structural and cultural contexts** shape young adult life courses in different world regions? For example, how do norms around the appropriate timing and ordering of life course transitions vary across global contexts, and how have they changed over time? Which macro-structural institutional features are particularly consequential for young adult life courses in contexts of widespread unemployment, informal employment, and a lack of effective policies guiding and securing life transitions, such as entering employment and becoming a parent, in young adulthood?
- What **empirical evidence** do we have on the nature of and variation in young adult work-family lives within and across countries in the Global South? For example, do we observe a “delayed transition to adulthood,” as in the Global North? Is there a stratification of young adult life courses by socio-economic status within Southern countries, and how does it compare with known patterns of the Global North?

- How do young people **navigate the transition to work and family formation** in contexts of material hardship and economic instability? For example, what coping strategies do they use to make a living in a context of widespread unemployment and limited social protection?

### **Instructions for Authors**

Papers submitted to the Special Issue should engage with one or more of the questions mentioned above. We will consider research using a diverse range of qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods. Both case studies focusing on a single context and cross-national comparative analyses are welcome. We are particularly interested in receiving contributions from scholars based in the Global South.

Interested authors should develop an extended abstract of up to 1,500 words (excluding references), including a discussion of the theoretical framing, research methods, (preliminary) results, and (expected) contributions to knowledge. Abstracts should be submitted by 31 April 2023 to [rjg85@cam.ac.uk](mailto:rjg85@cam.ac.uk). Abstracts will be assessed against the following criteria:

- (a) responsiveness to the call;
- (b) degree of potential to enhance our understanding of young adult life courses in the Global South;
- (c) scientific merit;
- (d) likelihood of successful completion within timeline;
- (e) fit with other submissions;
- (f) applicability to journal mission.

Author(s) of accepted abstracts will be invited to submit a full paper. We expect to communicate the decision of abstract acceptance by the end of May 2023. Full papers will be processed on a rolling basis and are due by 31 December 2023 at the latest. They will be sent out for double-blind peer review and will also receive comments from the Special Issue editors. The invitation to submit a full paper does therefore not guarantee inclusion in the Special Issue, but invited submissions should have a good chance of acceptance.

Full submissions should follow the journal's Guide for Authors

([https://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws\\_home/717637?generatepdf=true](https://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/717637?generatepdf=true))

Enquiries about the Special Issue can be addressed to any of the editors mentioned above.