This volume is the proceedings of the second annual University of Victoria-National Sun Yat-Sen University Social Sciences Symposium, held in Taiwan in April 2000. The theme of demography is explored in the context of Sino-Taiwan society, with special attention being given to migration to Canada. Emphasis is placed on the centrality of the Chinese family as a core structure. The nuclear family is universal but has undergone considerable transformation and erosion in the industrialized west, most recently with the legal judgements on same-sex marriage. In the Confucian societies of Asia-Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea — the traditional family remains the undisputed central core and even in post-Mao mainland China, Confucian family values are dominant. Migration tests the viability of the Chinese family, and as centuries of overseas Chinese experience has demonstrated, both nuclear and extended family structures reinforce adaptation while preserving a core of Chinese cultural values.

To the extent that political systems can influence development, there is overlap. Several authors examine this relationship with reference to Taiwan, Mainland China, and Latin America. The volume’s final three chapters deal with the central political issue in Taiwan, namely relations with the People’s Republic of China, across the Taiwan Straits. This is the key to maintaining democracy and the preferred mode of development in Taiwan.