At the beginning of the 1970s, the countries of north-western Europe were affected by major changes that lastingly affected the various dimensions of family behaviour, household structure and composition. There was a significant increase in divorces, while individuals were marrying at increasingly later ages. At the same time, there is a significant decrease in the number of marriages in the population: individuals are marrying less and later. This disaffection with marriage does not imply a rejection of the couple and unions since nonmarital cohabitation is developing. Moreover, couples are having fewer and fewer children within marriage (births outside marriage are increasing significantly), reflecting a disconnection between marriage and procreation. These different trends constitute real breaks with previous family models and have an impact on the evolution of household structure. Households diversify, decompose and re-compose frequently, which has consequences for residential choices, whether forced or not, and for housing needs.

The transformation is deep, since it is not a change in a single family dimension, but in the entire process of family formation and household formation. Numerous theories have been formulated to explain these transformations, including the Second Demographic Transition (Van de Kaa and Lesthaeghe, 1986), economic theories (Becker, 1981; Oppenheimer, 1997), the gender revolution (Goldscheider et al., 2015), the Pattern of Disadvantage (Perelli-Harris and Gerber, 2011) and the explanation based on the economic uncertainty generated by globalization (Blossfeld et al., 2005).

Empirical studies on contemporary changes in family behaviour and household composition are large and the various aspects explored in the literature are very varied. However, the spatial dimension of these transformations is more rarely addressed. Some studies reveal significant regional disparities in these demographic behaviours (Munoz-Pérez, 1991; Decroly, 1992; Prioux, 1993; Lesthaeghe and Neidert, 2009; Kulu, 2012; Walford and Kurek, 2016). Others focus on the persistence of historical spatial structures, including the spatial continuity between the first demographic transition (18th-20th centuries) and the second demographic transition (Lesthaeghe and Lopez-Gay, 2013; Klüsener, 2015). Finally, some studies have looked at the evolution over time of spatial structures of family behaviour, highlighting a process of spatial diffusion of innovation (Shorter et al., 1971; Vitali et al., 2015).

Despite the growing interest in the spatial dimension of these contemporary changes over the last fifteen years or so, geographical knowledge on the subject is still limited and fragmented. This issue of *Space Populations Societies* is therefore open to any contribution that can contribute to a better knowledge and understanding of the spatial structures and dynamics of contemporary changes relating to nuptiality, family behaviour and new household structures and compositions. The papers proposed for this issue of *Space Populations Societies* may fit at least one of the following three axes:
1. Spatial dynamics

A few studies have highlighted a process of spatial diffusion of innovation, for example for non-marital fertility (Vitali et al., 2015) and single-parent families (Caltabiano et al., 2019), but also a process of social diffusion (Nazio, 2008).

Paper proposals could study the spatial dynamics of family and household change, i.e. how the spatial structures of these demographic behaviours evolve over time. It will be appropriate to describe and explain the geographical pattern of these dynamics, but also to identify observable regularities. However, we will give a particular attention to papers that fit within this framework of spatial diffusion, and to papers with a temporal dimension that will make it possible to study these changes since their beginning (in the early 1970s). Papers addressing the mechanisms of social diffusion of demographic behaviours are also welcome.

2. Explanation of spatial structures

Paper proposals may also focus on explaining spatial structures, i.e. identifying the determinants that explain the geographical disparities in the different dimensions of family transformations and household situations. Several directions can be envisaged.

First, the papers may compare the various existing explanatory theories (cultural, economic, gender-based, etc.) (Lappegard et al., 2014). Which theory is the most relevant to explain the observed spatial distributions?

The papers may also highlight original determinants, or determinants little addressed by the various existing theories, such as housing for example.

Then, the papers may question boundaries as spatial discontinuities in terms of transformations in demographic behaviour (Klüsener et al., 2013). Do political, cultural and linguistic borders constitute spatial ruptures and barriers to spatial diffusion? Do they explain part of the observed spatial distribution?

Finally, the papers can further the work carried out on the spatial continuity between the first demographic transition and the emergence of contemporary demographic behaviours. To what extent do the spatial structures of the past explain current spatial structures?

3. The role of migration in changing family behavior

Demographic transition theory has often been criticized for ignoring the migration component (Piché, 2013). This remark can also be made to the vast majority of empirical work on contemporary transformations in family behaviour and household situations. The proposals for papers could study the role of migration on demographic change in the territories. Does migration accelerate family transformations or, on the contrary, does it slow them down? Papers may also address the link between internal and/or international migration and changes in individual behaviour. How does the family behaviour of migrants evolve? Does the migrant maintain the behaviour of the territory of origin (socialisation hypothesis) or on the contrary adapt to the norms of the host territory (adaptation hypothesis)? Do migrants arriving in a territory constitute a
selected group of individuals whose pre-migration behaviour is already similar to that of the host population (selection hypothesis)? Or is it migration itself that disrupts the demographic behaviour of migrants (disruption hypothesis)?

**Structure of the paper proposal**

Authors interested in this issue of *Space Populations Societies* should send an abstract which should include the following elements:

- The axis in which the proposed paper will fit
- The research questions and working hypotheses
- An explicit statement of the data that the authors will use in their paper
- Level of geographical observation chosen (administrative or other)
- The methodology envisaged

This issue of *Space Populations Societies* does not set any limits concerning the geographical area of study. Proposals for papers may deal with both developed and developing countries and may be based on empirical research as well as on more theoretical considerations. They should study **one or more of the following dimensions of family transformations**: marriage/civil union, divorce, cohabitation outside marriage, new household structures, births outside marriage, postponement of the average age at first marriage, forms of union and dissolution of unions, single-parent families, infertility, remarriages, etc.

**Papers in English are welcome.**

**Calendar**

- Deadline for submission of paper proposals (title and abstract of about 1-2 pages): **May 4th 2020**
- Selection of abstracts by the Editorial Board: **June 2020**
- Deadline for submission of articles to the Editorial Committee: **December 1st 2020**
- Publication guidelines: [https://journals.openedition.org/eps/3344](https://journals.openedition.org/eps/3344)
- Publication of the issue in **May 2021**

**Contacts**

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Bibliography


