

Editor: Dr Melanie Channon

The British Society for Population Studies Newsletter

Welcome to Winchester!



Enjoying BSPS with my then 2-year-old in 2018, the last time the conference was in Winchester.

It has been three years since I last sat down to put together a newsletter and in that time a lot has changed. Still, I am immensely happy to be able to write a conference newsletter once again and to see so many colleagues in real life for the first time since before the pandemic.

However, for many of you this might be your first BSPS conference in-person, or your first conference of any kind in-person. For all of you I have some tips:

- This is one of the friendliest conferences you will ever go to! But, it still might seem daunting. That's ok—you'll find your feet.
- People wearing red lanyards are on council and happy to help you out. This is the third time we've held the conference in Winchester in the last decade so many of us know the area well now.
- Come along to the Postgrad and early career mentoring session, 7pm-8pm on Tuesday, upstairs in The Stripe.
- If you enjoyed someone's talk or poster then tell them. If you don't want to do it in person then drop them an email. You'll make someone's day!
- Go to some talks that are completely unrelated to your research. You'd be surprised by what you can learn and

the inspiration you might get.

- Don't be afraid to ask questions, but also don't worry if you don't have any.
- You don't have to go to every single session—give yourself a break every now and then.
- However, try to attend the poster session even if you don't have a poster. Mingle with people and use those posters as a starting point for interesting conversations.

For everyone, please come and enjoy our plenary talks. On Monday we have Rachel Franklin and Andy Tatem discussing the changing data ecosystem in demography; on Tuesday Ian Diamond will be talking about measuring population and their characteristics; also on Tuesday our early career plenary speaker Diego Alburez Gutierrez will be talking about 'Kinequality': studies at the intersection of demography, kinship, and inequality.

As ever, please do say hi, email me mdc51@bath.ac.uk, or tweet me [@drmelchannon](https://twitter.com/drmelchannon). Suggestions and submissions for the newsletter are always welcome!

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The Future of Demography: Spotlight on PhD Researchers

Joe Strong (Postgrad rep)

PhD researchers have been hard at work since our last BSPS, and we asked them what work they would like us to spotlight. Take a read of all the fantastic, varied, exciting work being done, and make sure to note the names – many will be at this year's conference! BSPS PhD members come from around the world and are researching across a range of topics and themes, and their thinking and work on some of the most complex and pressing issues will trailblaze for years to come.

Below are just some of the incredible works from PhD researchers, that will shape the future of our field.

Fertility

Maria Palma, UCL, has recently published their work on *Medically assisted reproduction and mental health and social outcomes in late adolescence* in the European Journal of Population (2022)

Orsola Torrisi, LSE, published their third paper from their thesis in the Journal of Marriage and Family, entitled *Young-age exposure to armed conflict and women's experiences of intimate partner violence* (2022)

Migration

Jonne Thomassen, University of Groningen, has their work out on *The roles of family and friends in the immobility decisions of university graduates staying in a peripheral urban area in the Netherlands* in Population, Space and Place (2020).

Carolina Coimbra Vieira, Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, published their latest work in PlosOne; *The interplay of migration and cultural similarity between countries: Evidence from Facebook data on food and drink interests* (2022)

Xinyi Zhao, University of Oxford, recently published their work on gender disparities in Scientometrics, entitled *Return migration of German-affiliated researchers: analyzing departure and return by gender, cohort, and discipline using Scopus bibliometric data 1996–2020* (2022)

Mortality

Mary Abed Al Ahad, University of St Andrews, recently published a paper in Applied Spatial Analysis and Policy, entitled *Does Long-Term Air Pollution Exposure Affect Self-Reported Health and Limiting Long Term Illness Disproportionately for Ethnic Minorities in the UK? A Census-Based Individual Level Analysis* (2022).

Joan Damiens, UCLouvain, published their latest article, *Do tenants suffer from status syndrome? Homeownership, norms, and suicide in Belgium*, in Demographic Research (2022)

Luca Dei Bardi, Sapienza University of Rome, published with co-authors in BMJ Open on *Socioeconomic inequalities in health status and survival: a cohort study in Rome* (2022)

Ariel Karlinsky, Hebrew University, published on *Tracking excess mortality across countries during the COVID-19 pandemic with the World Mortality Dataset* in eLife (2021)

Benjamin-Samuel Schlüter, UCLouvain, published with colleagues *Heterogeneity in subnational mortality in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic: the case of Belgian districts in 2020* in BMC Archives of Public Health (2022)

Serena Vigezzi, University of Southern Denmark, published their latest work in Demographic Research on *Divergent trends in lifespan variation during mortality crises* (2022).

James Watson, The University of Liverpool, has their latest paper out on *The Impact of Demographic, Socio-Economic and Geographic Factors on Mortality Risk among People Living with Dementia in England (2002-2016)* in Int J Environ Res Public Health (2021)

Youth and Aging

Grace Chang, LSE, has recently published an article from their PhD thesis, entitled *How is Adolescents' Time Allocation Associated with their Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy? Evidence from Four Developing Countries* in The Journal of Development Studies (2022)

Klara Raiber, Radboud University, has their latest work out in Feminist Frontiers, entitled *Are the gender gaps in informal caregiving intensity and burden closing due to the COVID-19 pandemic? Evidence from the Netherlands* (2021)

Spotlight on Research:

Dr Diego Alburez-Gutierrez,

BSPS Early Career Researcher Winner 2022

I am a social scientist with a strong interest in the demography of kinship. My academic career started in Guatemala, where I obtained a BA in *Anthropology* (2014) from the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala. After working as an applied anthropologist for a couple of years, I moved to London to pursue an MSc in *Social Research Methods* (2014) and later a PhD in *Demography and Population Studies* (2018), both at the London School of Economics and Political Science. My PhD dissertation—supervised by Arjan Gjonça, Tiziana Leone, and Ernestina Coast—considered the demographic effects of genocide by focusing on the violence committed against the Maya Achi people by the Guatemalan government. For this work, I received the *Otto Hahn Medal* from the Max Planck Society in 2019. That same year, I joined the newly created *Lab of Digital and Computational Demography* at the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research (MPIDR). Working here as a postdoc, I learnt much about model-based demography and computational social science from Emilio Zagheni and colleagues. In 2022, I established the [Kinship Inequalities Research Group](#) at the MPIDR, which I will continue to lead until 2027.

Broadly speaking, my research is concerned with inter-generational family processes. I am particularly interested in ‘kinship inequalities’, or the differences in kin presence, availability, and resources that create distinct environments for individuals to develop, support each other, and obtain a sense of shared identity (as defined in [Alburez-Gutierrez et al 2022](#)). My previous research on the topic has focused on things like [the lived experience of](#)

[death](#) (Alburez-Gutierrez, Kolk & Zagheni 2021), [the inter-generational transmission of memory](#) (Alburez-Gutierrez 2022), and [the multi-generational demand of care time](#) (Alburez-Gutierrez, Mason & Zagheni 2021). Moving forward, I want to continue promoting the study of kinship in demography from an empirical, theoretical, and methodological perspective. I am particularly invested in improving our understanding of populations in the global South, who face the greatest challenges in most respects. I am thrilled to have an opportunity to do this from the Kinship Inequalities Research Group at the MPIDR.

The Kinship Inequalities Research Group is hiring up to two postdocs! Please [consider applying](#) before the [September 19 2022](#) deadline.

I thank the British Society for Population Studies for this recognition and to all the people who have helped me along the way and without whom none of this, and I mean none of it, would have been possible.

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Diego's early career plenary will be on Tuesday 6th September, 4.45pm-5.30pm in the Stripe Lecture Theatre

References and recent publications

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Abortion, contraception and family building practices across the First Demographic Transition: new views from Europe

Workshop report, June 10th, 2022

Report by Violetta Hionidou, Newcastle; Eilidh Garrett, Edinburgh

This online workshop, hosted by the British Society for Populations Studies and Newcastle University, brought together scholars from across Europe and beyond to consider how historical demographers might begin to reconceptualise the first fertility transition, or transitions, in Europe. By asking speakers, and the audience, to examine and debate the concept of 'birth control' and question the ways this has been measured in the past, the organisers hoped to encourage discussion of how research might move forward and away from the focus on 'parity-specific stopping behaviour'. The latter concept has, it may be argued, increasingly hobbled thinking on fertility decline since the publication of the findings of the Princeton European Fertility Project in the 1970s and 1980s. Despite many years of research, the origins of first fertility transition, and how it was achieved, remain uncertain.

A number of authors have questioned the orthodoxy that certain groups within Europe's various societies began to adopt contraceptive methods to achieve a 'desired family size' with the rest of the local population later following their example. However the weight of evidence on alternative interpretations has not yet accumulated sufficiently to unseat the accepted wisdom, and students have to read far and wide across disciplines and national boundaries to gain a thorough understanding of the critiques offered. One of the aims of the workshop was to bring together researchers challenging findings of the Princeton project, ultimately hoping to offer alternative interpretations of the observed patterns.

With this aim in mind, the workshop was arranged into four sessions. The first addressed abortion, a form of birth control which has received relatively little attention in Northern and Western Europe but has been more extensively studied in countries in the South and East of the continent, where it appears to have been used more widely. In her introduction, organiser Violetta Hionidou touched on the fact that recent work on early twentieth century Greece had shown that emmenagogues and coitus interruptus were widely thought of, and used, as fertility enhancers. It was perhaps an easier step for women there to adopt these methods as a form of birth control, than it

might have been in countries where abortion was seen as a clandestine procedure of last resort.

The three papers in the session discussed abortion in Southern and Eastern Europe. Lucia Pozzi (Queensland) considered 'Catholicism, contraception and abortion in

1946 advert for a Douche from *Thesaurus*, a popular woman's magazine in Greece

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Abortion, contraception and family building cont...

Italy between the 19th and 20th centuries'; Yuliya Hilevich (Gronigen) discussed 'Abortion and Infertility in Ukraine before and after World War Two'; and Bartosz Ogórek (Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences) addressed 'The abortion culture in interwar Poland and its role in the demographic transition'. Pozzi focused on the role of the Catholic church which shaped not only beliefs and private behaviours in late nineteenth- and twentieth-century Italy, but also political decisions and the work of physicians, which cumulatively had a strong effect on the reproductive choices made by women and couples. Hilevich and Ogórek's papers emphasised that abortion was a method of birth control in Central and Eastern, as well as Southern, Europe and was a method based on a decision taken once pregnant, rather than as a means of preventing conception. All three speakers highlighted certain institutions' role in shaping people's perceptions and attitudes to fertility and fertility-related behaviours, touching on the part played by the Church, the law, education, medicine, politics and gender relations. Together their papers demonstrated how the same factors could produce rather different outcomes within particular contexts. Collectively, the papers made a strong case that researchers in North and Western Europe should revisit the question of whether populations there may have resorted to abortion more often than has been acknowledged, and, if not, to ask: 'why not'?

The Princeton Study developed tools designed to look for and measure parity-specific stopping behaviour. The two papers in the second session demonstrated that these tools failed to recognise other forms of fertility control, and presented new tools better suited to identifying spacing or postponement, which may potentially have had a

greater impact on reducing fertility in the early stages of the fertility transition. Martin Dribe (Lund) discussed work co-authored with Edoardo Redivo and Francesco Scalone (both Bologna) on data from the Scanian Economic-Demographic Database, 1830-1960. Dribe explained how cure models can be used to identify stopping, spacing and postponing behaviours. His results indicated that stopping and spacing occurred simultaneously during Scania's fertility decline. He also demonstrated that cure models can be used to identify the development of different fertility-related behaviours among sub-groups within a population. Alice Reid (Cambridge) also considered spacing and stopping, but in the context of Great Britain in the decades before 1911. She argued that to understand *why* fertility declined we need to understand how past societies thought about their fertility and should be careful not to interpret their behaviour as arising from norms and belief systems that may not have emerged until decades later. Using fertility calculations based on the Own Child Method and reconstructed birth histories, she argued that neither parity specific limitation nor birth spacing contributed to the early stages of the British fertility transition. Before World War II couples did not have a 'target family size', decided at the beginning of their marriage, but appear to have adjusted their fertility in response to changes in their circumstances. Reid called for historical demographers to engage more with those studying fertility declines in the contemporary world where parity-specific limitation is not apparent.

The third session of the workshop looked at fertility behaviours in a variety of settings. Sadly, Hilda Bras (Gronigen) had to withdraw her paper on 'Low fertilities in a high fertility society in the nineteenth century' because of ill health. Stephanie Thiehoff (Southampton) examined the 'Space, forerunners and diffusion' in England and Wales, between 1851 and 1911. Thiehoff was able to demonstrate that 'spatial diffusion mechanisms contributed significantly to the decrease in fertility' and confirmed that the growth of non-conformist religions, married women's work and increasing education all encouraged couples to reduce their fertility. Cara Delay then spoke on 'Fertility and Crisis in Ireland, 1845-1923'. Although the Irish have been portrayed as failing to 'participate in the European fertility decline' and their fertility as 'determined by circumstances, not individual agency', the country's criminal court records relating to cases of abortion reveal that some individuals, including married women, were making rational, conscious decisions to avoid carrying a pregnancy to term, and a proportion of them

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Abortion, contraception and family building cont...

were succeeded in doing so. Delay echoed previous speakers by underscoring the extent to which institutions such as the Church and the Law impact on people's behaviour. She also pointed out that the records which the institutions create can influence, and indeed warp, understanding of fertility-related behaviour which is often heavily loaded with cultural, social and economic meaning. The final paper in the session, presented by Tommy Bengtsson (Lund) and co-authored with Martin Dribe, again using individual-level data from Scania, this time from 1766-1864. The paper addressed the question of whether fertility in pre-transitional Europe was always outside Coale's 'calculus of conscious choice'. Following a number of status groups, the authors considered whether couples controlled their fertility when faced with short-term economic crises by observing fertility in each 3 month period of the 2 years following selected grain price fluctuations. The strongest responses were seen in the 6 months immediately after an upward price hike which – in the absence of migration – strongly suggests that couples were aware that bad times were coming and deliberately restrained their fertility in order to cope. This very fine grained analysis, reveals that populations with 'natural' fertility can still have control over their childbearing, a point which has significant implications for our understanding of fertility transition.

The final session of the workshop was given over to discussion. Barbara Okun (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) and Simon Szreter (Cambridge) were asked to react to the papers in light of their own research. Okun commended the papers on the range of topics they covered when considering fertility: religion, gender relations, spousal dynamics, geography, society and economics. However, to study fertility-related behaviours in isolation from mortality, migration and the wider context of the demographic transition was, she argued, to hurt the study and understanding of fertility and fertility decline. Szreter called for more qualitative, contextualised local studies, including oral history projects conducted in countries where recent fertility declines had taken place. He felt that greater understanding was needed of the spectrum of 'human reproductive variability' and suggested that there was considerable scope for cross-fertilisation between those studying fertility and researchers working in fields such as health, government policy, economics, gender relations, and disaster management.

The discussion was then opened to the floor. Some 35 people had registered for the workshop from across the world and participants readily engaged with the debates, although the online format perhaps restricted the potential for in depth conversations between those with similar research

interests. It was pointed out that many European countries are still trying to measure the timing, speed, and extent of their first demographic transitions as they lack appropriate sources, although those going through relatively recent transitions had the advantage that they could conduct oral history surveys to gain first-hand accounts from those who had lived through a transition. The reported experiences could be very illuminating. It was agreed that greater understanding of the variety of sources available in different parts of Europe was needed, as this might open up new avenues of research. It was also acknowledged that more cross-European studies of the beliefs and values which different nationalities and sub-groups hold concerning fertility and

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fertility-related behaviours could broaden understanding of how fertility decisions were (or were not) made. It was widely agreed that 'new ways of thinking' about fertility decline needed to be adopted in order to move away from the narrative of the first fertility transition which focuses heavily on contraception rather than birth control, stopping rather than spacing or postponing, and marital fertility

Abortion, contraception and family building cont...

rather than overall fertility. Several of those present suggested that greater understanding and appreciation of how attitudes and social norms in the individual countries of Europe were shaped by the law, religion, medicine and much else, would enhance awareness of the nuances of fertility transition across the nations and regions of Europe. Understanding of another country's experience might encourage researchers to ask new questions about fertility decline in their own country. Use of new techniques or previously neglected sources might re-energise avenues of research which had stalled.

As one participant put it: 'We need to restart our thinking around the fertility decline'. First, however, historical de-

mographers need to systematically re-evaluate the methods, assumptions and conclusions of the Princeton European Fertility Project, which has so dominated thinking on the subject for too long. The legacy that the Princeton project has left embedded in current thinking needs to be understood, so that any unhelpful elements can be discarded and the helpful elements built on. Only then will it be possible to design programmes of research which offer clearer, more inclusive, understanding of the 'where', 'when', 'who' and 'why' of Europe's many fertility transitions. This workshop, it is hoped, was a first step along that path.

FREE VIRTUAL TRAINING WORKSHOPS

Fertility Analysis by Birth Order and Parity-specific Fertility Projections

The ESRC-funded [FertilityTrends](https://www.fertilitytrends.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/) project is organising two free, half-day, virtual training workshops this Autumn on methods for Fertility Analysis and Projection. Participants can attend either or both of the workshops, which will be held on Zoom. The workshops contain theoretical and practical components, with computer demos performed in R (code will be made available). The workshops are aimed at national and local government statisticians, social and demographic researchers, and others who are interested in understanding how to analyse fertility trends and make projections for the future. Situations where this is important include planning maternity services and anticipating demand for school places.

Further details are given below. To find out more information and register, please go to: www.fertilitytrends.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/training-workshops/

Fertility Analysis by Birth Order

Friday 30 September 2022, 2-5pm UK time

This workshop introduces parity-specific fertility measures and methods to calculate fertility rates by birth order, including practical R computer demos using individual-level data. Such methods are useful because they enable the detection of underlying changes in fertility patterns with greater precision.

Instructors:

[Dr Bernice Kuang](#), [Prof Ann Berrington](#) (University of Southampton, UK)

[Dr Sarah Christison](#), [Prof Hill Kulu](#) (University of St Andrews, UK)

Parity-specific Fertility Projections

Friday 7 October 2022, 2-5pm UK time

This workshop introduces a method to produce fertility projections by birth order with associated uncertainty, including practical R computer demos using population-level data. Parity-specific projections account for a crucial mechanism of fertility dynamics and thus could increase reliability.

Instructors:

[Dr Joanne Ellison](#), [Prof Jakub Bijak](#), [Prof Erengul Dodd](#) (University of Southampton, UK)

Teaching Historical Demography: Reconciling Disciplinary Approaches

A British Society for Population Studies/Economic History Society Workshop

Researchers and students studying historical demography come from a wide range of disciplines including anthropology, demography, epidemiology, economics, economic history, family history, medical history, social history, geography and population data science. This multidisciplinary makes the field vibrant, but it also means that students tend to learn about key historical demographic phenomena from a particular disciplinary background.

The approaches different disciplines use to consider key phenomena such as the fertility decline, epidemiologic transition, Malthusian population dynamics, the European Marriage Pattern and mass migration vary considerably. For example, when discussing the reduction in mortality and shift from infectious to non-communicable causes of death since the nineteenth century, each discipline may emphasise different aspects of the transition in teaching. Epidemiologists might focus on quantitative aspects of Omran's macro theory (1971) of epidemiologic transition. Demographers might emphasise calculating mortality rates and the pitfalls of cause of death registration. Economic historians might place mortality decline in the broader scope of changing living standards across the Industrial Revolution. Economists might concentrate on estimating the causal drivers of the transition. Geographers might address how spatial patterns of mortality changed over time. Historians might highlight the development of the sanitation and hygiene movement and changes in medical understandings of disease. The literature recommended and the methodologies used to explore these topics will often be discipline-specific. Intellectual standpoints too may differ: post-modernists and post-structuralists would, for example, question the concept of transition as a universal trajectory of "development".

When studying from a particular disciplinary perspective, students are not always aware of the diverse approaches to historical demography. This means that students entering postgraduate studies in the subject often come with rather different training backgrounds and skill sets, and many do not feel confident engaging with or critically assessing work undertaken in other fields.

To promote greater understanding and collaboration across disciplines, we are organising a **one-day workshop on Teaching Historical Demography, Reconciling Disciplinary Approaches**. This is supported by both the **Economic History Society** and the **British Society for Population Studies** and will be held at LSE in late January 2023 (final

dates and schedule TBC). We hope that the meeting will be predominantly in-person, but will plan to have an online element too. We intend to record the discussion and to make it available after the workshop.

The purpose of the workshop is to bring together people teaching and researching historical population studies in a wide range of disciplines to 1) identify the differences in the way each discipline approaches the teaching of and research in historical demography and 2) begin to build a consensus on the key concepts, methods and approaches that students of historical demography should be taught regardless of discipline. We wish to encourage those attending to discuss the way that their disciplines teach topics and approaches in historical demography; describe the research training and skills that they—or their discipline—believe students of historical demography need to acquire; and consider the benefits and challenges they have encountered when collaborating with colleagues trained in other disciplines.

To start this process, we invite you to complete a short questionnaire, which can be found via the link: <https://forms.gle/j59mihxaC9ojFs196>. Please feel free to fill in the questionnaire even if you are not planning to attend the meeting, as this will help us identify particular topics on which to focus. By responding, you will signal your interest in the teaching of historical demography, and we will be very happy to send you further details of the workshop.

Please can we have responses by September 12th 2022.

We hope that greater exchange and mutual understanding will improve and widen the experience of students to whom historical demography is being taught.

For further information, please email Eilidh Garrett at: eilidh.garrett@btinternet.com.

Thank you

from the organising team:

Neil Cummins (LSE), Eilidh Garrett (Edinburgh),

Eric Schneider (LSE), Nicola Shelton (UCL)

and Wendy Sigle (LSE)