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Rural populations in western Europe from the late 18th century to the 1960s

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At the start of the 20th century, the majority of the population in western Europe was still living in the countryside (Rösener, 1994). Historical analyses however have mostly focused on urban and industrial areas, which are presumed to have initiated demographic change and socio-economic progress during the 19th century. Despite important studies (Alter et al., 2010; Moriceau, 2002; Rosental, 1999; Vanhaute et al., 2011) that have contributed to deconstruct some myths and misconceptions about the rural world, the social history of rural populations during the last two and a half centuries remains largely unexplored. In a rigid dichotomy with the urban, mostly imposed by the use of aggregated statistics for the 19th and 20th centuries, the rural world often appears traditional and conservative.

With these notions in mind, we invite authors to write articles for EPS on one of the three following themes:

a. Migration in the countryside

The 19th century was characterized by a rapid and huge increase in mobility and migration. The dominant paradigm is that of a rural exodus and rural depopulation, with a mass migration of people from the countryside into the cities. However, as was demonstrated by P.-A. Rosental (1999), this is an extremely narrow perspective on rural migration. There was for instance a significant amount of return migration (from urban and industrial areas) and short distance migration within or between (sub)rural areas. Yet, the importance and the nature of these movements remain largely unknown. Did migration differ according to the agricultural system? What kind of role did migration play in the demographic system (population control) of these rural areas?

b. Rural populations and socio-demographic change

The European Fertility Project (Coale, Watkins, 1986) has shown that the 19th fertility decline started in the cities and that rural fertility was generally higher than urban fertility. This diffusionist model, with innovation spreading from the urban elite to other segments of the population and from the cities to the countryside, has resulted in an image of rural people as rather hostile to new and modern behavior. However, some local studies and in particular research on proto-industrialization have highlighted the innovative capacities of rural populations. The fact is that these studies remain rare.

c. Social and demographic diversity in the countryside

Few studies have highlighted the disparities of economic structures and demographic behavior in and between rural areas. While comparative approaches to the urban/rural are frequent, the rural world is usually considered as a whole, devoid of any internal variation. Some recent studies however have identified important differences using the concept of agro-systems (Van Bavel, Thoen, 1999; Jessenne, Rosselle, 2008). These systems, defined as sets of spatially coherent rural production systems, with

roots far older than the 18th century, seem to have been characterized by specific social and demographic behaviors. We solicit articles that analyze such regional differences.

- Alter G., Oris M., Neven M., (2010), « Le déclin de la fécondité dans les campagnes de Belgique orientale », *Histoire de la population de la Belgique et de ses territoires*, Eggerickx T., Sanderson J.-P., (eds), Actes de la Chaire Quetelet 2005, Presses Universitaires de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, pp. 489-525.
- Coale A.J., Watkins S.C. (eds) (1986), *The decline of fertility in Europe*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 484 p.
- Jessenne J.-P., Rosselle D. (2008), « L'histoire rurale de la France du Nord à la fin du Moyen Âge au XXe siècle », *Pour une histoire décloisonnée des campagnes septentrionales*, *Revue du Nord*, 90, 375-376, pp. 303-334.
- Moriceau J.-M., (2002), *Terres mouvantes. Les campagnes françaises du féodalisme à la modernisation, XIIe-XIXe siècle*, Fayard, Paris, 445 p.
- Rosental P.-A., (1999), *Les sentiers invisibles. Espace, famille et migrations dans la France du 19^e siècle*, Editions EHESS, Paris, 255 p.
- Rösener W., (1994), *Les paysans dans l'histoire de l'Europe*, Seuil, Paris, 344 p.
- Van Bavel B., Thoen E. (1999), Land productivity and agro-systems in the North Sea area. Middle Ages -20th century, Brepols, Turnhout, 382 p.
- Vanhaute E., Devos I., Lambrecht T. (eds.) (2011). *Rural economy and society in north-western Europe, 500-2000. Making a living: family, labour and income*, Brepols Publishers, Turnhout, 347 p.

Timing

- Deadline for submission of titles and abstracts (ca. 350 words) is September 15th 2012.
- Decision of acceptance of abstracts is October 2012.
- Final date for submitting articles will be March 31st 2013.

Abstracts and articles should be sent to Thierry Eggerickx (thierry.eggerickx@uclouvain.be) and Isabelle Devos (Isabelle.Devos@ugent.be). With a copy to Nicole Thumerelle, Editorial Office (nicole.thumerelle@univ-lille1.fr).

Note to authors

Authors can submit articles in English or French. Abstract, key-words and title of the article should be submitted in *both* languages. Articles should not exceed 45,000 characters including footnotes, references, illustrations and charts. Tables and charts should be readily formatted for reproduction and submitted electronically. Figures and maps must be sent in separated files (tiff, jpeg, etc)

All articles are peer reviewed. Each author whose submission is expected to have committed himself/herself not to withdraw his/her text and not to submit it to another journal or series during the period between its approval by the Editorial Committee and its publication. Authors retain ownership of copyright and all other rights with respect to their submissions. Authors are solely responsible for their articles published in *Espace Populations Sociétés/Space Populations Societies*.

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