

## Title

Revolutionary transition: Inheritance change and fertility decline by Marc Goni, Victor Gay and Paula E. Gobbi

## Abstract

We test Le Play's hypothesis that France's early demographic transition was triggered by the harmonization of inheritance practices after the French Revolution. In 1793, the Loi de Nivôse effectively abolished impartible inheritance practices that excluded non-heirs and women from inheriting. We develop a theoretical framework predicting a decline in fertility under the new inheritance regime because of indivisibility constraints in parents' assets and a delay in marriage ages of women. We test these hypotheses with a newly compiled map of inheritance practices before the French Revolution and demographic data from the Données Henry. Using a difference-in-differences framework, we find that the inheritance reform reduced fertility by half a child on average.