

Summary [LILI](#)

The household, defined as a group of individuals living under the same roof, is a key statistical category which has been used for several decades to link family and dwelling. Gradually, the dwelling has become the place that identifies the family group, with the notion of family being replaced by that of household. It was in the 1950s and 1960s that the family/dwelling equivalence became firmly grounded both in reality and in representations. A standard family, the nuclear family, necessarily corresponded to a standard dwelling – a social housing unit, followed by a first house purchase – as the nuclear family became independent of the kinship group. Yet, over the last ten years or so, a broader family group has been emerging in response to various factors, notably the rise in unemployment and the difficulties in obtaining and paying for a dwelling, its function being to mitigate the effects of an economic crisis that is affecting young people in particular. Unlike the household, the family group covers a territory with very variable boundaries. Identifying the space occupied by these potential or established links constitutes a new challenge, moving beyond the unique spatial reference whereby one household corresponds to one dwelling. With the growth in reconstituted families spread over several households, transnational families buying property in their home country, couples living together on a part-time basis because of work commitments or personal preference, older adults wishing to live independently, young people engaged in higher education and studying in several different locations, etc., there is a growing need to understand the space in which family members evolve, with a view to capturing the “meaning” of this space and its role in shaping family bonds. This space can be analysed on several levels: at the individual level, to capture the fact that some individuals move between several dwellings, not only successively but also simultaneously; at the level of the family group which occupies this space and which must be identified; and last, at the level which corresponds to the functional aspect of the territory thus defined and whose attributes can be explored, along with its influence on individual, migratory and familial behaviours.

The project team has helped to introduce this theme in the next round of the *Famille* survey, renamed *Famille et Logements* (family and housing), which will take place in 2011, in conjunction with the census, on a large national sample (400,000 individuals aged 18 and over). We aim to create and coordinate a multidisciplinary synergy for the production and analysis of these original datasets. Geographers, family sociologists, statisticians and demographers work at the crossing point between places and human relationships, and must rely on data which rarely associate these two aspects. A large-scale survey addressing both the spatial configuration of families and the functioning of family spaces will provide a unique opportunity to mobilize the energies of a large team on a shared and complex object, with a view to developing an integrated and innovative approach to the question.