

# **Population Movement and Policy in France 1750~2005**

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## **Preface**

This paper was prepared for an international conference which was held in Seoul on 15-16 December 2005 on relevant policies to offset low fertility.

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## Summary

Over the last quarter of a millenium, France experienced a binary population history, first a radical demographic slowdown, leading to a stagnation (1745-1945), then a sudden upsurge (1945-2005). Such an important reversal can find no other explanation than the strength, continuity, flexibility, adaptability and completeness of the pro-fertility policy since WWII; the adverse consequences of population decline and ageing had produced a consensus among the ruling elites, in favor of a need for strong family support program . France, which had the lowest fertility in the world, in now preserved from a fertility collapse; her TFR is the highest in Europe.

This unique case is a lesson for policy-makers: fertility trends are related to collective and private initiative; they can be a matter of public policy (children are future citizens, workers, taxpayers, and so on). In countries which implemented appropriate and vigorous family planning programs, the fertility transition occurred earlier, later, and even deeper, to the point that it went too far, frequently falling much below the ideal of replacement, thus creating undesired effects in societies which are concerned. Reciprocally, fertility is also malleable in the symmetrical sense, when couples cease to

have more children than they want: in post-industrial societies, the average ideal family size is usually close to two, but the effective one is growingly smaller; the missing number of children is about one fourth, sometimes bigger, and close to one half; the new life style increases dramatically the obstacles to childbearing and increases strongly the cost of children. If these obstacles, which depend upon the institutional context of each society, are properly identified by polls and consequently alleviated, the determinants of fertility choice are modified and potential parents tend to have a family size which is closer to their desire, thus removed upwards.

The difference between the dream (two children, and sometimes more, like in France) and the reality (the observed TFR) or the average number of children missing per woman is a concept equivalent of the symmetrical one used by policy-makers in developing countries, where the effective fertility is higher than the desired one. To the so-called "latent demand for family planning" corresponds a "latent demand for family support". The TFR has frequently fallen to values between 1 and 1.2; it tends to a social minimum; the gap is close to one half of the replacement target. On the contrary, in France, where the socio-economic context is more open to the needs of future generations, the TFR is close to 1.9; the corresponding international difference shows a first margin for fertility recovery, or policy effectiveness. This incidence is crucial for the future: a small deficit is manageable and can

be partially compensated for by reasonable controlled immigration streams; depopulation can be avoided in the short run and limited in the long range future; a huge birth deficit implies a quasi-irreversible spiral of depopulation and exponential ageing ( more precisely a total inversion of the age pyramid), and a rapidly growing shortage of labor, that means consequently an unmanageable immigration need.

Obstacles to fertility are manifold; we can simplify by using a three dimensional categorization: money, space, and time; a pro-natalist package can be implemented to give couples access to the free choice of their number of children. Having no child is easy and - with the present contraceptive techniques- virtually costless, but the burden of having children is growing rapidly in modern urban context: food, clothing, health, mobility, housing, education, opportunity cost for working women, etc. People who decide to have at least two children have a much lower standard of living than childless couples; they ensure the survival of the society, but they are penalized. Their choice is not really "free", it is costly for them, and the return goes to the country as a whole (future labor force, taxpayers, innovators), not to themselves; the game is unfair.

*The French "fertility package"*: the relative generosity of the family allowances, the special social housing policy in favor of large families, the public school and health system, the existence of pre-elementary schooling that is both early and public, the protection of

working mothers and creation of flextime job opportunities, the system of direct taxation which takes into account the "contributive capacity", that is the number of children living in the family.

*The effectiveness of policy measures*

-the recovery of the post war years was more sudden and powerful than in the homologous countries of the West. France experienced an inversion of its international ranking in fertility.

-the demographic characteristics of the baby-boom (by parity or family size) corresponded to the raising of the family allowance rate (or scheme).

-the revival assumed greater importance than elsewhere since it generated 28 cohorts (1946-1973), instead of usually 20, with numbers a third higher than those of the previous cohorts (instead of about 10 to 15% elsewhere, in the Allied countries of Europe), and the following fertility "crisis", after the 1960s was more limited.

-the timing of the fertility recovery (or inflexion) followed the timing of the reforms by social category: first, civil servants, at the time of WWI, then wage-earners of the private sector (in the 1930s), until the last social group (independent workers, namely peasants, in the 1950s).



Unfortunately, it is impossible to assess the effectiveness of each individual policy measure: fertility is related to an endless list of factors.

*The feminist paradox*

In France, new mothers born since the 1970s have benefited from quasi -universal university schooling, access to paid activities, limited reproductive life span (breastfeeding practices come back to fashion, but the existence of safe artificial milk has limited the duration of intense mobilization of the mothers' body from 2-3 years to a couple of months). But motherhood is more stressing; it is a personal choice and responsibility, lived in a much lonelier environment than in the past, and with the constant reference to the professional alternative in the mind: new aspirations, such as self-accomplishment on the job, or financial autonomy, have emerged. Many institutions indeed facilitate the fertility "free choice"(to have or not to have babies); the cost of a " statistically normal" family (2 children) is difficult, but affordable. The social context is feminist; in spite of the rigidity of the labor market legislation, there is a strong protection against discrimination; women are welcome in many job-creating sectors (banking, consulting, insurance, high tech as well as direct services to dependents);

On the contrary, in machist societies, women are less respected, more subordinated and, more overburdened by union and family; in Italy, for example, fathers spend only 22

minutes per day to their children, or two times less than their French counterparts and three times less than the Scandinavian ones. In feminist contexts, they are partially empowered, whereas in machist societies, although better achievers at school, they live in a patriarchal and sexist setting, with permanent discrimination at home and outside; subjection which was abolished during childhood, teenage and university years resurfaces with marriage (domination of the husband, extended family control), and reinforces with the birth of every child. Youth expectations and dreams are annihilated by the inertia and weight of the tradition.

"Women are the future of men", says the biologist; with the new reproductive technologies, women control their body and the unique real power: life or death of families and societies. Fertility is not a fatality; it is a matter of feminism: the road to survival is open only to feminist societies. Political will can help.

## **Chapter 1. Introduction: an unusual demographic destiny**

**Over the last quarter of** a millennium, France experienced a binary population history, first a radical demographic slowdown, leading to stagnation (1755-1945), then a sudden and sustained upsurge (1945-2005): table 1, appendix. Such an important reversal can find no other explanation than the strength, continuity, flexibility and completeness of the pro-fertility policy implemented since WWI ; the demographic weakness , leading to loss of power, desertification, depopulation, ageing and reduced productivity performance progressively had shown its impact on security and welfare .The ruling elites progressively decided to launch a family support program which peaked in the aftermath of WWII, but, in spite of a slow erosion, continued to modernise and face new challenges, such as the growing metropolisation, the nuclearisation of the family, the lengthening educational phase of children, the rise of female labor force participation, and so on.

This unique case is a lesson for policy – makers: fertility trends are related to collective public and private initiative. In countries which implemented appropriate and vigorous family planning programs, the fertility transition usually occurred earlier, faster, even deeper, to the point that it went too far, sometimes falling much below the ideal of replacement, thus creating undesired effects in

societies which are concerned. Reciprocally, fertility is also malleable in the symmetrical sense, when couples cease to have more children than they want: in most post-industrial countries, the average ideal family size is close to two, but the effective one is growingly smaller; the missing number of children is about one fourth, sometimes much bigger, and close to one half; the new lifestyle multiplies the obstacles to childbearing and increases dramatically the cost of children. If these obstacles, which depend upon the institutional context of each society, are properly identified by polls and consequently alleviated, the determinants of fertility choice are modified and potential parents tend to have a family size which is closer to their desire, thus removed upwards.

France, a country of smallholders, has for a long time been highly populated, and was even readily compared in the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century to the Chinese world (Braudel, 1986). It was here, from 1760 onwards, that revolutionary ideals, such as emancipation from divine authority, abolition of royalty and a quest for liberty and equality, were born.

The secular decline in fertility was in keeping with this context and reinforced by the reform of the civil code, which abolished primogeniture in relation to succession and introduced equality of treatment among the siblings of the same family by partition of inheritance in equal shares. It was from this that arose the risk of fragmenting plots of land, which was later to be so highly

disliked for its direct contribution to impoverishment.

It was in this way, with a good century in advance of its neighbours in Western Europe, that France started upon its secular decline in fertility. In certain regions, such as the Southwest, Normandy and the mountainous areas, the movement arose even earlier and was more marked. It was therefore a rural society that was the first to initiate this movement. As early as 1850, before the change in fertility had arisen in the other countries of Western Europe, the fertility rate was no more than an average of 3.5 children per woman (table 1, appendix), and had indeed already covered half the distance separating tradition (5 or more children) and modern times (2 children or less). Associated with the rural exodus, this weakness in fertility (well below the replacement threshold on account of the high early death rate of the period) did not take long to create pockets of depopulation and even global depopulation by the end of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century.

An overview of the long-term tendencies supports this diagnosis. Finally, the reconstitution of the completed fertilities of the cohorts shows that, since the Napoleonic era and with the exception of the 1919-1946 cohorts that participated in the post-war *baby-boom*, all the female cohorts have had (taking into account the mortality of their epoch), a fertility below the replacement level. Consequently, ever since the middle of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, the economy has been under-manned both in agriculture and industry, and has had to call upon foreign immigration. Here again, the situation was contrary to that prevailing in the neighbouring

countries, which were still in a phase of high fertility and decreasing mortality, and sending an ever-greater demographic surplus towards the New Worlds. Napoleon wanted soldiers, irrespective of their nationality. A half-century later it was workers who were to arrive. Immigration towards France was to become a structural feature (table 2, appendix). In spite of the intensity of the naturalisation policy adopted in 1851 and reinforced at the end of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, the total population numbered 7% of foreigners. In consequence of the low fertility, France only participated marginally in the great wave of population that peopled the Americas.

There was another lesser-known but important feature specific to France: its relative excess mortality (reflection of a poorer state of health), which was to endure until the 1950s. Disturbed by the losses in World War I, frightened at the prospect of a German revenge, demoralised by its economic backwardness, subject to immobility (lack of construction, rigidity of institutions and regulations), crushed by the sugar beet growers and drink salespeople, it remained a victim of the serious social scourges of tuberculosis and alcoholism. Most of the dwelling places were old, dilapidated, devoid of comfort, and particularly lacking in sanitary installations. The smallest village could count several taverns. The numerous and powerful home distillers were not only protected, but privileged. This health situation contributed to obstructing the population momentum of the country, and to increasing absenteeism from work and lowering the productivity

of the labour force. It recovered in a spectacular way after the 1950s, when France became one of the countries where average life expectancy was the highest.

Until the 1940s, sub-fertility, immigration and excess-mortality made France a special case. The turnaround linked to the reconstruction and family policy of the war-period gave to her *baby boom* a more powerful and durable character. As for the phase of sub-fertility introduced into the industrial world of the 1960s, it has, up to the present, affected France less than its chief partners (except for the US), and this preservation appears to be linked both to a collective mentality (see the Euro barometer reviews on the ideal family), and to a population policy that, although admittedly inadequate, is better adapted than that within the neighbouring countries. This historic reversal is clearly insufficient to curb the decline in the French share of the world population: 3.4% in 1750; 2.5% in 1900; 1.7% in 1950; 1.0% in 2000. Recent decades have certainly been marked by an acceleration in population growth in the less developed countries, but it is on the European scale that the results are most significant. Estimated at 28 million inhabitants in 1800, the French population on the present territory occupied 2<sup>nd</sup> place in Europe after Russia (40 million), and represented just over 15% of that of the continent (180 million). In 1939, with its 42 million inhabitants on the eve of the war, the weight of France halved (7.9%). Due to the early decline in fertility (a good century before the other Western countries) and the lower fall in mortality, the population increased by only 50%, whereas it doubled or tripled in the

neighbouring countries of the North. It must also be stressed that from 1870 to 1940, in the absence of foreign immigration, the French population would have diminished.

Associated with the rural exodus, this weakness of fertility (which was well below the replacement level of generations at that time, given the highly premature death rates before childbearing ages) did not take long to create pockets of depopulation, and even global depopulation at the end of the XIXth century. It is appropriate therefore to analyse here the three large components of the policy that provoked this distinctive drive towards lesser growth (until 1945), and then the stronger growth than other European countries since 1945, with its policies relating to childhood, fertility, public health, and international migration.

All across the rest of the West, France was considered as the “sick man” of Europe (Spengler, 1938). Hitler went even further, proclaiming that France was a “degenerated nation”: demographic weakness attracts jealousy from the enemy.



## **Chapter 2. Population and policy motivation**

### 2.1 Demographic movement compared

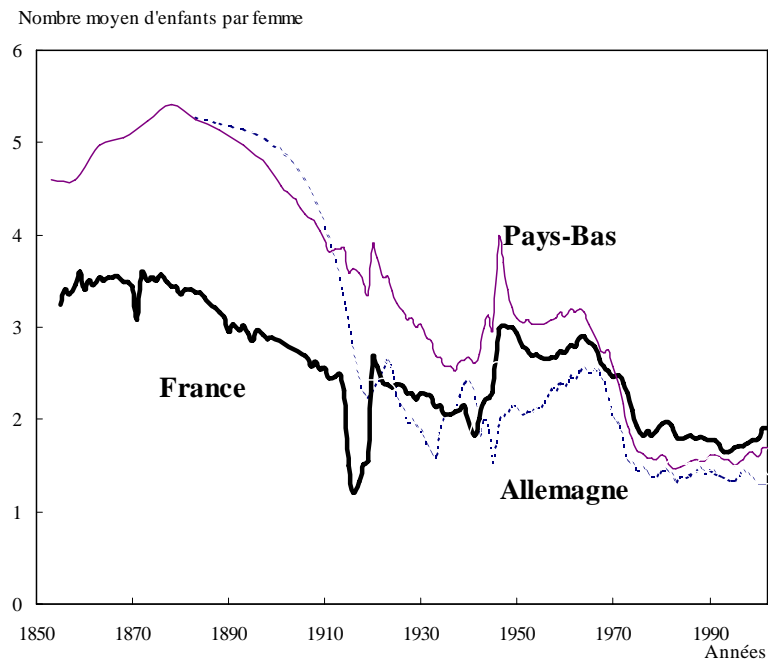
The singularity of the French fertility policy can only be understood by reference to the historical context of a relative decline in France and an increase in the power of her larger neighbours, at a time of tension when the number of men still played a strategic role in military confrontations.

Between 1850 and 1950, with a stable territory, the population of France increased by only 16%. This was despite the fall in the death rate, the relative initial youthfulness of the population pyramid, and the migratory contribution that Alfred Sauvy (1945) estimated at five million people around 1940. The relative growth in a century had been two times lower than during the following period of scarcely 40 years (1950-1988). All the other great countries in the industrial world had evolved in the opposite direction. Between 1850 and 1950, the other European countries (except Russia) taken as a whole, saw their overall population growth exceed 100 %, whereas, between 1891 and 1946, France experienced a long stagnation in its total numbers, since, within the framework of its present frontiers, although it had turned 40 million since 1891, the population in the 1946 census was still 40 million! France had therefore experienced a cessation of

population growth just at the time when it was at its peak in most of the other European countries. As a result, the changes in ranking have been profound and irremediable. It should be recalled that in 1850, France was more highly populated than Japan or the United States.

In 1945, France was in the forefront of demographic stagnation and ageing, and in its secular decline in fertility a good century in advance (figure 1). The death rate was higher than that of England. This was abnormal for adult ages, especially for the male sex, and due to two main causes: tuberculosis and alcoholism. Compared with other countries at the same level of socio-economic development, food in France was satisfactory, but its living accommodation was frankly insufficient and its drinking excessive. The increasing number of insane people in asylums had arisen through alcohol dependence, yet two years of restrictions on alcohol during the war sufficed to halve the number of confinements. In Paris, where the restrictions were better observed than elsewhere, the fall was 90% (Sauvy, 1945).

**Figure 1. Total fertility rates in France, Germany and the Netherlands,  
1855 - 2002**



### *The German eruption*

The contrast between France and Germany, and the known military consequences, are clearly visible in the birth rates of the two countries during the period 1841-1900 (table 1).

**Table 1. Birth rates in France and Germany (per 1000 inhabitants)**

| Period    | France | Germany |
|-----------|--------|---------|
| 1841-1850 | 27.4   | 36.1    |
| 1851-1860 | 26.3   | 35.3    |
| 1861-1870 | 26.3   | 37.2    |
| 1871-1880 | 25.4   | 39.1    |
| 1881-1890 | 23.9   | 36.8    |
| 1891-1900 | 22.2   | 36.1    |

Already weak during the 1840s, the French birth rate continued to fall until the end of the century (– 20%), in order to move towards a hitherto unknown value of 20‰. It was quite the reverse in Germany where the birth rate was maintained at a clearly higher level to the order of 35 to 40‰. This difference was for a long time to be an influence in the power struggle. The German age structure still remained young for many decades, and only fell after 1900. This fall was drastic, however, and the total fertility rate was divided by 3 in 33 years, passing from an average of 5 children per woman in 1900 to 1.6 in 1933. But in 1913, disequilibria in the mobilisable forces (to the order of 2 to 1) was such that the National Assembly had to lengthen the period of military service.

### *The English takeoff*

In pre-revolutionary France, fertility was hesitant and relatively high, with on average more than five children per woman. The revolutionary period and the first half of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century (1790-1850) marked a profound change, in that the

total fertility rate fell from 5 to 3.5, and the change in fertility was therefore halfway between the pre-transitional and the cohort replacement levels. The epoch of the Second Empire (industrialisation and the birth of modern capitalism) was characterised by a halt in the fall, and even a slight rise. The decline resumed at the end of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century to the point where the total fertility rate became less than an average of 3 children per woman – a level without parallel (and at a time it should be recalled when fertility in Germany was still above 5 children per woman)

English development was quite different. The earlier industrial revolution created thousands of jobs and people found employment at early ages. They were then able to get married more easily and earlier, and have larger families. (Deane and Cole, 1967; Kindelberger, 1964). An extraordinary growth in fertility was then to be observed, which attained its historical maximum towards 1820 with an average of 6 children per woman, whereas the long-term tendency before the industrial revolution had only been between 4 and 4.5.

The following table compares the course of total fertility rates (the average number of children per woman) in France and England, in ten-year periods between 1760 and 1900:

**Table 2. Total fertility rates (average number of children per woman)**  
**France and England 1760-1900**

| Period    | France | England | Difference | Period    | France | England | Difference |
|-----------|--------|---------|------------|-----------|--------|---------|------------|
| 1760-1769 | 5.21   | 4.88    | + 0.33     | 1830-1839 | 3.76   | 5.25    | - 1.49     |
| 1770-1779 | 5.06   | 5.21    | - 0.15     | 1840-1849 | 3.57   | 5.00    | - 1.43     |
| 1780-1789 | 5.13   | 5.24    | - 0.11     | 1851-1860 | 3.43   | 4.97    | - 1.54     |
| 1790-1799 | 4.91   | 5.67    | - 0.76     | 1861-1870 | 3.50   | 5.22    | - 1.72     |
| 1800-1809 | 4.43   | 5.76    | - 1.33     | 1871-1880 | 3.43   | 4.91    | - 1.48     |
| 1810-1819 | 4.37   | 6.07    | - 1.70     | 1881-1890 | 3.25   | 4.35    | - 1.10     |
| 1820-1829 | 4,18   | 5,98    | - 1,80     | 1891-1900 | 2,93   | 3,76    | - 0,83     |

The effect of this long swell in English fertility was impressive, accounting for a fivefold increase in the English population between 1750 and 1900, and for the massive emigration and supremacy of the English language, especially in the new worlds growing in population. At the end of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, 440 million people altogether, i.e. almost a third of humanity, had English as their official language. For 80 years (1800-1880), as is shown by the above table, the difference in fertility to the advantage of England relative to France was of the average order of 1.5 to 1.8 children per woman. It was the combination of an exceptionally high English fertility (5 to 6 children per woman) and an abnormally low French fertility that produced the contrast in their destinies – rise of the Anglo-Saxon

world and rapid relative decline of France and its language (we also refer to chapter 4 of volume I for a comparative analysis of the evolution of the French and English population pyramids). Since England, having turned exclusively towards the high seas, no longer had any continental ambition in Europe, its demographic domination had only indirect and negligible implications for the continent. But the repercussions of this excess fertility soon became universal, above all thanks to the supremacy of the United States.

## 2.2. Birth of a consensus

It was quite different in Germany, the military rival with continental ambitions, where nationalism had become virulent and where, according to the geo-politicians such as Friedrich Ratzel and especially Karl Haushofer, there had to be a conquest of the living space (*Lebensraum*) that the German people required. This was to be at the expense of Denmark, and later of France, with the loss of Alsace-Lorraine at the close of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. In his desire to build a "*thousand year Reich*", Adolf Hitler was to carry the application of this doctrine to its final conclusion, when in 1942-1943, his troops occupied almost all of Europe. In only 70 years the French territory was violated on three occasions: 1870-1871, 1914-1918 and 1940-1945. For long accustomed to dominating the European continent, France was living with the nostalgia of her

super power. From now on she was weakened (in the 1930s, let us repeat, she was at the forefront of demographic stagnation and ageing), and had lost confidence. Meanwhile, in 1940 she did not really rearm, and refused to fight – it was the “*phoney war*”. During the years of occupation she was to favour collaboration with Germany rather than with the Resistance.

But the Anglo-Saxon allies and the “Resistants” were able to galvanize the awareness of national unity and to create the feeling of a victory and of entry into a new era. It was essentially during the period at the end of the war that a whole series of institutions such as Social Security and the Commissariat Général au Plan (National Planning Body) came into being. A contemporary or retrospective consensus existed among the ruling elite, between such different individuals as Philippe Pétain, Charles de Gaulle, and François Mitterrand, which held that the defeat and occupation were linked to demographic weakness, and that national reconstruction had to come about through a revival of fertility. In the polls subsequent to the war, public opinion was unanimous in attributing the recovery of fertility to the payment of family allowances, and it is true that at that time they constituted a novelty and their relative amount was high.

The shock of the defeat in 1940 was present in all minds. Henceforth, the linkage to demographic anaemia stressed by the military general staff, was recognized by all classes of the population



The first indicator of the actual demographic state of the country came with the unexpected defeat by Prussia in 1870. This reverse (that followed the Prussian victory against the Austro-Hungarian Empire at Sadowa in 1866) was seen as a humiliation. One of the reasons put forward by contemporaries – apart from the deficiencies in training of the French troops – was mainly the greater numerical superiority of the enemy.

This type of analysis was then shared abroad, both by English specialists and their German counterparts; demographic differences were everywhere perceived as the main factor in changing the military equation. Population development was primarily viewed according to its external implications, in terms of shifting strategic equilibria. From this point of view, France was described as the seriously sick man (or woman) of Europe.

Nevertheless, right up to the German occupation, save for certain restricted circles, there were relatively few among the civil population who were aware of the real factors in the relative decline of the country. An association, however, was to play a leading role in the evolution of minds: the Alliance nationale pour l'accroissement de la population française (National Alliance for the Growth of the French Population). Founded in 1896 on the initiative of Jacques Bertillon, doctor and statistician, its aim was to alert opinion and the public authorities to the risks that “*depopulation*” involved for French society. Its most celebrated recruit was the writer Émile Zola (1899) who, at the time when the Dreyfus affair was in

full swing, wrote the famous novel *Fécondité (Fertility)*, in which he vaunted the delights of family life. Among its supporters it attracted influential Ministers, such as Adolphe Landry, author of *La Révolution démographique* (1934) and Paul Reynaud, inspirer of the CDF (*Code de la famille* – statutory family law of 29 July 1939). The CDF, which is seen as the originator of the new fertility policy, laid the foundations for a coherent and pro-natalist family legislation.

But in 1940, it was too late. Aware of its weakness and traumatised by the blood bath of 1914-1918 (almost every family had lost a son, nephew or cousin), the French people and its leaders were in fear of a well-trained and fanatic Germany. This was the *phoney war*. Invaded and occupied, France was subjugated, stripped and lost its freedom. Yet twenty years or so earlier, Georges Clémenceau had already issued a warning by declaring that the first of the clauses that should have figured in the *Treaty of Versailles*, was the “*need to have more children*”. Otherwise, whatever the clauses in the Treaty, “*France will have lost, since there will no longer be any French people* (remarks reported by Daniel Ceccaldi, 1957).

The best expression of national consensus occurred in late 1945, when the dependants’ allowance, the taxation principle based on ability to pay and faithful to Article 13 of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*<sup>(</sup> was adopted unanimously by Parliament. Despite some misunderstandings, this taxation device marrying concern for vertical equity (progressive tax rates

according to income level) and for horizontal equity (taking into consideration the number of children in the household) has been maintained up to present times. Lastly, the dependents' allowance is a moderating influence on the progressiveness of taxation, which – let it be said yet again – originated from the demands of the Revolution

### 2.3 Reason of State, social motivations and individualistic ideals

The population policy adopted in the developed countries of Europe from the 1930s onwards has for long been confused with that of the dictators of the extreme right: Nazi (Hitler) and fascist (Mussolini and Franco). Often tainted with racism (especially in Germany), this policy carried out a veritable policing of bodies and considered the individual as being an instrument to serve the requirements of the State (the “*1000-year Aryan Reich*” of Adolf Hitler, the reconstruction of the Roman Empire by Benito Mussolini, the conscience control by allying Church and State under Franco). After the war, it was the dictatorships of the extreme left that were to follow, with the deplorable precedent set by Stalin in 1936 (brutal prohibition of abortion, legalised in 1920). The most tragic case was that of Romania under the iron rule of Ceaucescu (1966), where abortion once more – the main regulator of births – was suddenly prohibited, provoking a wave of births of unwanted, and frequently abandoned, children. There, yet again,

the aim was that of power and completely unrealistic. The dictator wanted a population of 30 million people by the year 2000; the figure actually achieved was 22 million.

There is a tendency, nevertheless, to forget that present day family policies were initiated by the pluralist democracies from the 1930s onwards, as a response to fertility deficiency. Thus, the *Beveridge Report* (1943) in England, although primarily concerned with the struggle against poverty and unemployment, eventually reached conclusions similar to those of Adolphe Landry in France: that since family size, alongside unemployment, is the greatest generator of inequalities, it is necessary in order to overcome the dangers of depopulation to introduce a system that compensates for dependents.

It was, however, the work by Alva Myrdal, *Nation and Family* (1945) that formed the focal point in the reasoning of advanced urban societies, preceded since 1934 by a book on the fertility crisis in Sweden. Alva and Gunnar Myrdal raised the question of freedom of choice: to have children (monetary allowances, equipment) or not to have children (freedom of contraception and abortion); and pondered about the need to reconcile family and professional life. Alva Myrdal was to become Minister of Social Affairs and especially Nobel prize-winner. Already, in 1934, she and her husband had considered the challenge to freedom within a democracy represented by the demographic crisis (Myrdal and Myrdal, 1934), and more particularly within a social democracy.

Many ideas are common to England, France and Sweden. The French policy, often considered exemplary for the degree of protection it ensures for mother and child, is not solely the outcome of demographic preoccupations (number, continuity of institutions and reason of State). It is based primarily on social motivations, in particular the concern for equality that consists in guaranteeing a satisfactory level of well-being for all households, irrespective of size. It must be conceded, however, that the full exercise of freedom to choose the number of children is not independent of the conditions of daily life of the families (the cost of a child has become very high, and the contribution to this by public financing is only partial, thus causing budgetary problems for large families). Under these conditions, the two possibilities of choice are unequal – it is easier to defer the setting up of a family than to extend it

Nevertheless, for some fifty years (discovery of the contraceptive pill, which only became legal in France with the *Neuwirth Law* of 28 December 1967, and abortion, which was only authorized in 1975 by the *Weil Law*), the family policy in France has complied with a new ethical principle that requires the exercise of a new freedom, quickly to become fundamental – that of having only the children you want, and when you want them. It is probably because it associates some complex individualistic and sometimes contradictory ideals (such as the emancipation of women) with collective requirements for historical continuity and social solidarity that this policy has successfully resisted the hazards of political

life and found itself consolidated under the Vichy regime, as well as under the presidencies of General de Gaulle and François Mitterrand.

Thus, since the 1960s, a new dimension of individual freedom has gradually asserted itself – the freedom to control the number of one’s children and their moment of arrival. This happening concerns the couple, and even more the woman, especially where she has the possibility of contraception, abortion or sterilization. The right of a woman to dispose freely of her body has materialized with the perfection of safe anti-natal techniques that operate durably, if not permanently. Thanks to this medical progress, women have seen a thousand year dream become reality – that of having access to sex that is free from the fear of an unwanted pregnancy. Sexual pleasure has become an explicit component of individual happiness; it has opened the way to hedonism. The contraceptive revolution has ultimately been the matrix of the sexual revolution.

#### 2.4 Historical overview and recent trends

As already mentioned, there is a striking contrast between the pre-WWII era and the post-war period covering the latest six decades (1945-2005); the relative population recession was followed by a policy-induced recovery.

Table 1 (appendix) summarizes global demographic trends (population,

mortality, fertility) over three centuries (1750-2050). Since the end of WWII, the population of France has increased by more than half (40 million in 1945, 61 million in 2005). In spite of the impressive mortality decline and of the population momentum caused by the relative youth of the initial age structure, during the previous secular period following Napoleonic Empire (1815-1945), the corresponding population growth was only one fourth: 32 and 40 million respectively; furthermore, the latest half of a century period (1895-1945) was a period of population stagnation and rapid ageing.

The recent spurt (1945-2005) can be- in a preliminary analysis- split into three similar components: the mortality decrease, the direct above-replacement fertility impact (1946-1973), and the migratory surplus.

The TPF<sub>R</sub> (Total Period Fertility Rate) since 1975 is stabilized around an average of 1.8-1.9 children per woman. If we put aside the case of Catholic- with a still strong influence of the clergy- Ireland (a country of only 4 million inhabitants), where the TPF<sub>R</sub> is about 2.0 by 2005, alone in Atlantic Europe, and even more for the whole of the old continent (for which the score is lower), France seems to be preserved from a collapse and deemed to remain close to the equilibrium (replacement fertility). Such a trend, combined with regular immigration intake, should produce a prolongation of population growth in the next few decades: in the mid-XXI<sup>st</sup> century, the total population is likely to be between 70 and 80 million (even more if there is uncontrolled migration pressure

from the “South”).

On the contrary, countries ruined by communism under direct Soviet rule (a total of 400 million people in 1989, when the Berlin Wall fell), frequently experience depopulation by virtue of a vicious combination: relatively high mortality, unprecedently low fertility, strong outmigration. Russia and Ukraine, for example, lost 5 million inhabitants between 1990 and 2005 (153 and 148 in the first case, 52 and 47 in the second).

The migratory transition is a by-product of the demographic transition (natural balance inflation, then deflation). Thus, France was only marginally involved in the massive European transoceanic migration (1820-1913): barely about 1 or 2% of total streams.



## **Chapter 3. Population size and structure**

### 3. 1 Population size and ranking

Given the present “population momentum”(potential variation incorporated in the age structure), if population trends of the latest three decades (1975-2005) persist, the total population of France could, by the year 2050, become N° 1 in Western Europe, before that of Germany, followed by the U.K.: 74, 71 and 69 million respectively. Depopulation could be avoided before the 2030s.

France, which in 1750 had the third largest population (25 million) of the world, far behind the two eternal giants of Asia, first China (240 million) then the Indian Empire (200 million), experienced a continual drop in its international ranking: N° 20 among about 200 nations in the United Nations’ classification in the year 2000. Just a short remark at this stage: the population of the U.S. reached only 4 million at the time of the first census (1790), while that of tsarist Russia attained 20 million only at the beginning of the XIXth century. But in the first half of the XXIst century, this process of relative decline should stabilize: by the year 2050, the expected ranking is N° 21. As discussed, France would pass Germany and the U.K., but would be outpassed by Uganda, Yemen and possibly Thailand. Most countries with a future rapid potential rise in population (young age

structure, remaining high fertility), located in Central Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East are small-sized ones, thus contributing to this containment.

### 3. 2 Households- loneliness

The total number of households (a household is a group of persons living in the same home and supposed to share the same budget) was multiplied by three between 1850 and 2005 (Table 3, appendix): 8.4 million in 1850, 24.5 million in 2005. The corresponding multiplier for the global population was only 1.75. The average number of persons per household was already relatively small in the midst of the XIXth century: 4.4; as above-mentioned, at that time, fertility had crossed half the way from tradition (5 children or more per woman) to modernity (2 children or less). The TFR was, by far, the lowest on the planet.

With the process of family splitting (rising divorce and separation) and of population ageing (widowhood), an ever-increasing share of people will live in loneliness.

This is a secular, growing and apparently irreversible phenomenon. The first determinant is the mechanism of social atomization; it is the transition from the stage of “homo simplex” to “homo multiplex”. In traditional (rural) settings, the differentiation between individuals is weak; the society is predominantly made of illiterate peasants who do no travel, share the same views and expectations. Their

children or grand-children of the XXIst century are sophisticated and quite different persons in all major features of their daily life: human settlement (big cities), educational attainment, income span, professional qualification, degree of information, openness and tolerance, global historical and geographical knowledge, artistic, aesthetic or gastronomic tastes, etc. The society is an amalgamation of complex individuals, who are more various than ever, up to the point that for many of them, it becomes unrealistic to find ideal/proper life-partners (or spouses). Union, mating or couple formation tends to become utopia, permanent and fragile compromise, based on love, a volatile sentiment, thus this sudden rise in celibacy or non-union. This change is deeply-rooted in the post-modern way of life and not peculiar to French society; the only possibility to dampen its effects is to underline common challenges in human condition, whatever the age, sex, status, nationality, race, etc.: the sacred nature of life, initiation rites, basic duties and rights, sufferance, disease, death, social dialogue.

The second face of loneliness is quantitatively measurable; it is the proportion of persons living alone. In France, this percentage increased regularly since the XIXth century; it refers to what we call uni-personal or lone households. This category is diverse, embodying youth who have recently left the parental nest; single adults, divorced, childless, widowed; and lone elderly. This physical measure of loneliness can encompass a different meaning than social isolation, because the “lone” person can be at the center of a personal or family network and

thus regularly receive visitors, or be a visitor of close kinship. However, it is inside this category that we find the most vulnerable; many of them live either in desertified rural areas or in central cities; this a source of major challenge for long-range social policy management: the present share of lone households can reach one half in central metropolitan areas. As shown later, the older the age group, the stronger the Age-Specific Transitional Multiplier (ASTM).

In France, the number of people above the age of 60 will approximately double, whereas the number of people above the age of 80 will quadruple in the first half of the present century. Who cares for the dependents who are physically or/and mentally disabled? In mere all civilisations, only daughters, usually in their fifties, still on the job and sometimes with elder children at home: they are the so-called “sandwich” generation, stressed by their own health problems (menopause troubles) and social duties towards their blood relatives. Consequently, if there is no female blood behind, no valid partner, or no willingness to take ancestors at home, the oldest handicapped seniors run the risk to end their life in pain, social vacuum, often in anonymous “senior nursing homes”. Even at present, while the country is facing the ageing of **depleted** birth cohorts born before 1945, there is an exploding demand for such collective medicalized institutions. Immigrants coming from African cultures or even Mediterranean ones are usually shocked by this “individualistic” behaviour (most of them bring their older parents with them in the framework of “family reunion migration schemes”. In 2005, the global

share of lone households is around one third, and even one half in areas with strong demographic imbalances (desertified hinterland, unaffordable city centers); for the elderly, the proportion is still higher.

What will the future be like in societies of Europe and Asia where the dominating pattern of new families, at least in large urban areas, is the childless one? The most extreme case is that of highly educated women in machist contexts (Asia: Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Eastern continental China; Europe: Mediterranean region of Italy, Spain, Greece, ..., Oriental\_ and poverty-stricken\_ region of the former Soviet bloc (Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Caucasian republics, Central Asia, ...).

### 3.3 Consensual unions, extra-marital births, non-union, family disruption

Statistical indicators are to be handled with care. Such is the case for the percentage of “extra-marital “births (or “illegitimate” births in former classifications). The corresponding percentage in the West is skyrocketing: about 55% in Sweden, 45% in France and the U.K., much more for first-born children; but there is a vivid contrast with countries characterized by rigid moral control/tradition/machismo (Greece, Italy, Spain, former Western Germany, ...).

Freedom and individualism appeared centuries ago in countries like England, France or Sweden; in Eastern Europe, serfdom (a form of disguised

slavery) survived until the second half of the XIXth century; in Southern Europe, the extended patriarchal family and landlord continue to influence mentalities. The present divide is deeply rooted in history.

In the early-liberalised part of Europe, the invention and diffusion of the contraceptive pill (or alternative new medicalized and safe birth control technologies) opened the path to sexual emancipation, women's empowerment and right to sexual happiness; in conservative Europe, there is still a strong resistance to extra-marital births (and even to "unformal" cohabitation); this cultural feature is likely one of the major cause of the very low fertility, besides the quasi-total lack of family policy. In Atlantic Europe, new couples can experience the once-unbelievable dream of having sex without the anxiety of unwanted. pregnancies. In France, the quasi-totality of them has pre-marital sex (if they ever marry); it is a moral revolution driven by the technical (contraceptive) revolution: such a behavior in the 1960s, among their parents' generations was an exception (roughly 10%, as opposed to 90% today).

However, a legal substitute (but it is only a bilateral contract between partners) to official, religious and civil, marriage, that is the classical open ceremony (wedding), has recently appeared in order to provide protection to partners in case of separation (ownership, parental rights, financial provisions for abandoned mothers). This is called "civil pact of solidarity" and it is submitted to a judge. Its main target is not only to offer rights to common consensual unions,

but also to protect a vocal group: homosexual couples, who want to get same status as heterosexual ones (property, taxation, childbearing facilities through adoption, etc).

The meaning of “extra-marital” birth has radically changed over the last four decades. In the past, “illegitimate” children were mainly the result of “forbidden” (non marital) sex and unwanted, often condemned to moral reprobation and deep misery. The typical case was that of a usually young and poor mother (like a housemaid) abused by a married bourgeois employer, sticking to the traditional tradition: upper class wife, for respectability, mistress(es) for fun or bourgeois privilege. This has been magnificently described in XIXth century novels; the young pregnant single girls were frequently ignorant about sex, religiously opposed to abortion, considered as a crime and afraid by the high risk of infection and death during abortion manoeuvres. Social hypocrisy was frequent and the “romantic triangle” (husband/wife/mistress; or wife/husband/lover) were celebrated in the theater with the famous image of the “cocu” (the man who is victim of his wife’s infidelity). Now, union is more a matter of reciprocal love, and less related to facial values; thus, it is more fragile; most of out of wedlock births are planned by both partners making the modern couple and legally recognised by the father; very few occur outside a “stable” union (in that latter case, the “day-after” pill or abortion can wipe out the biological consequence of occasional intercourse and undesired pregnancy).

Given these limits, let us come back to crude data, which have a stronger meaning in terms of nuptiality than in terms of morality. All along the XIXth century France, and until the end of the 1970s, the percentage of out of wedlock births was low (under 10%); by 1970, it was even lower (one among sixteen). A sudden rise occurred during the latest three decades (1975-2005). Nowadays, it is above 45% (Table 4, appendix). But these children are planned, or at least *a posteriori* accepted; they are “legitimised” by a simple paternity recognition, even if there are no use of genetical identification procedures through DNA (like in Scandinavia). This trend exhibits a greater degree of sexual freedom or social permissiveness. One has to remain cautious and not idealise the new pattern; the risk of voluntary family breakdown is –at given duration of couple formation– higher than in previous unions (Bergouignan, Blayo et al.). The potentially greater welfare of the parents is gained at the expense of children’s one (Sullerot, 1992). The legal provisions are lesser than the official ones granted from the Civil Code to marriages; mothers often have difficulties to get their alimony and fathers to visit their offsprings; children are victims of a cruel blackmail; if a new union is formed, they can feel abandoned or “trahis” by the biological parent or in conflict with “other” children (born from a different “bed”, or union). Harmony between successive partners and derived children becomes an intricate psychological drama. This point has long been a taboo in family sociology: the individualistic ideology or the preference for the adults’ point of view, or, more plainly,



intellectual conformism did not allow the search for scientific truth. In the U.S., where sociological studies are more based on empirical evidence and built on panel data, the dark side of the coin has been shown by a book called: “Fatherless America”(Blankenhorn, 1995). A preliminary work in France (Archambault, 2002) also tends to give further evidence of similar adverse effects for children (school performance, emotional confidence, juvenile delinquency, unemployment).

There is a growing reluctance to live in marriage: people enter later in marriage and leave it earlier; they hesitate to contract a lifelong engagement. Until the female birth cohorts during the interwar period or on the eve of WWII, only a small fraction of women did choose (or were subject to) permanent celibacy: about 10% or less; then a sudden upsurge happened. Among cohorts born between 1971 and 1975, the proportion is about one third (Table 5, appendix); once again, the comparison is misleading, since the actual significance of celibacy is “no involvement in marriage”, and not singleness or virginity.

The voluntary dissolution of partnership is more frequent than ever before; if we consider all types of unions together, whether legal or informal, more than one third are presently broken after 10 years. Divorce -which can be directly provided by civil registers- is not limited to younger generations, but tends to spread among older ones, even among very old –seemingly united- couples. New types of reconstituted families emerge, with an unknown degree of complexity and overlapping generations: for example, a male divorcee with dependent

children can rebuild his life cycle around a younger mother and get children from her, thus creating a triple parenthood, and this for a temporary duration; this behaviour is sometimes labelled “successive monogamy”; this does not seem to limit global fertility. A wider spectrum of family types is gaining ground. For children in search of a clear model of identification, the reality is puzzled: on one side, there is a unique biological father; on the other, there are various possible social fathers and related “families”; as above-mentioned, this complexity can create psychological disturbances and intra-familial conflicts.

In the upper and middle class, a new lifestyle is spreading, at least among childless couples: “Living Apart Together (LAT)”; this is a free living arrangement between members either geographically close or distant, combining the advantages of oneself privacy and flexible shared time; it is also known as the “visiting partner” alternative. The precondition is dual resident (one for each); that is why it is selective by income (and age). It is premature to know the future prevalence of this new trend and its possible direct or indirect impact on fertility.

But a new positive factor is the rehabilitation of rural spaces. France is a rather vast land, with 36 000 communes, scattered all over the territory; the proportion of “secondary homes” is the highest in the world. Old former peasants’ houses are restored; many young couples also take the opportunity to settle there, work around (the transportation duration is then very short) all year long: people

like driving, the transportation network (roads, highways, high-speed trains) is dense, modern, reliable and speedy; local solidarities are strong, informal, convenient for childcare, a plot can be added to the home, giving a closed playground to the kids; this ecological and affordable lifestyle helps to realise the ideal “large” (at least three children) family model to people concerned. An economic revival takes place.

### 3.4 Family size

The mounting stream of individualism must not hide an other facet of reality: the strength of blood relations inside families and the proliferation of spontaneous social/ humanitarian associations (NGOs), encouraged by various laws (taxation, inheritance, donation, freedom of organisation, and so on,... like the unique and famous “Heart Restaurants”, giving free meals and shelter to the homeless during winter season ). Such a family- friendly climate gives optimism to young couples experiencing though labor market conditions, high housing and energy prices (they pay the price of both excessive comfort and income attributed to pensioners and territorial or State civil servants- a total of about 20 million citizens living with guaranteed mensal income- and also of the mismanagement of the Social Security Budget: see later).

According to Euro barometer surveys, among the former member countries

of the E.U.-15, France was alone to show a strong (and stable) preference for the 2-child model, followed rather closely by the 3-child ideal.

These attitudes are reflected in behaviours, as shown by Table 6 (Appendix). More than one third of marriages formed in the 1970s are 2-children marriages; the originality of France is in the share of 3-children families, which similar to that of lone-child families (about one fifth). As in most other advanced societies, “very large” families (families with at least 4 children) tend to become scarce: 140 per 1000 marriage cohorts of 1950, and, according to preliminary estimates, only 60 per 1000 marriage cohorts of 1980; but these figures are higher than in similar countries and the 4 children model has stopped to decline: it remains not marginal *per se and in terms of contribution* to the global fertility; it avoids a drop too far from the official (governmental) target of generational replacement. Contrary to common opinion, this fertility choice is, by far, not limited to immigrants.

But the question is to know if the study of marriages creates a social bias regarding family size of all unions. Until the 1980s, there was still a strong prevailing prejudice against extra-marital; then it gradually vanished, and there are reasons to assume that informal unions brought about less children. A convergence or catching up process can be at work since the beginning of the 1990s. Such an assumption has to be confirmed empirically, because marriage seems to be selective and more stable than consensual union.

Anyway, what is historically and internationally remarkable is the small prevalence of zero and one-child family. This major finding can be phrased by a simple sentence: the universal desire for survival through childbearing can be realised in the French setting.

### 3.5 Population ageing, 1775-2050

Given the one century advance in the secular fertility decline, population ageing -which is basically driven by the fall of natality (creating a narrowing basis of the age pyramid) - began in the second half of the eighteenth century.

As a consequence of this early and prolonged fertility decrease, France experienced the highest degree of population ageing in the world until the post WWII baby-boom. Sweden, in the second position, was far behind.

But one crucial aspect has to be reminded: the pattern of ageing was not of the same kind as the one observed in Less Developed Countries since the 1960s, like the Sub-Saharan ones, for example. In these latter cases, ageing was delayed by the time lag in fertility transition and was reversed by a first stage of rejuvenation, linked to the abrupt fall in premature mortality: the median age (the age that cuts the total population into two halves, one above that age and the other below) reached extremely low values, such as 15 years. In “old regime” France, before the modernisation of mortality, premature deaths were appalling; under

ordinary conditions (without wars, famines or epidemics), between 50 and 60% of newborn babies did die before the age of 20. Thus the share of the youth was not so high; the median age by the year 1775 was 29 years (instead of 15 to 20 years in Sub saharan Africa through the 1960s to the 1980s): at that time, thanks to the transfer of modern medical technologies, infant and juvenile mortality had dropped to incomparably lower levels than in traditional Europe. By the year 2005, the median age is 39, a bit lower than in other Western countries (except the U.S., where fertility is protected by family values). Contrary to Germany , Italy or Japan evidence, the number of “young” (under the age of 15) is still higher than the number of elderly (above the age of 65), and if fertility differentials persist in the next future, the gap will further widen. In the three above-mentioned countries, by the year 2030, the number of elderly is expected to be twice larger than the number of young: totally new and though political issues will dominate the political agenda: labor force shortages, immigration needs, loss of dynamism and self-confidence, challenges to prosperity and attractiveness (unemployment driven by the decline in demand), viability of “welfare system”, excessive supply of capital, with the correlated risk of outflow or depressing value of personal and collective property...

**The real and double face of population ageing: the spiral of the inversion of the age pyramid. The shortage of youth, or the possible end of future?**

One has to underline the real meaning of ageing: since fertility tends to

frequently maintain at much below replacement, the age structure is pivoting and reversing speedily, with an exponential pace at both extremes (exponential increase at oldest ages and exponential decrease at youngest ages).

Let us define a statistical indicator to measure the inversion of the age structure (Chesnais,1990). If we assume that the number of “young”, “elderly” and “very old” is equal to an index of 1 at the very beginning of the demographic modernisation/transition process and follow it through all the successive stages up to the end of the rise of the baby-boomers (born before the fertility transition) to the limit of the age scale (centenarians), we find that the number of young tends first to increase, then to fall below its initial value, while the number of elderly can be multiplied by coefficients of 15 to 20 and the number of very old (80 or more) can be multiplied by a coefficient of 60 (as illustrated by French data), sometimes 100 or more. This is a universal mechanism, a matter of pure age arithmetic. Its strength is ignored (future prospects underestimated the extension of the average life span and lived with the mathematical utopia of a post-transitional fertility stabilized at the equilibrium, with a steady TFR of 2.1 !); it is very powerful and will imply drastic reforms of social and economic policies. The further the time horizon, the stronger the Age-Specific Transitional Multiplier (ASTM) for the “very very old” people (table 8, appendix). In France, the number of male octogenarians all over the three centuries period 1775-2080 will be multiplied by a factor of about 120, and by 180 for females, whereas the global

multiplier for the whole population will be around 3. The “80+” age group will be the largest and could possibly reach ...15 million, or one fifth of the total population. Who will take care of the huge fraction of physically, mentally or psychologically vulnerable? Who will pay? Once again, let us keep in mind that the French scenario is moderate.

In the very long run, after a century or even less, countries with sustained very low fertility (TFR below 1.4 children per woman) will have much more “very old” people (80+) than “young” ones (less than 20 years). The conclusion is clear: **the older the age group, the stronger the multiplier; the top of the age pyramid will face a process of exponential increase** (the multiplier for the number of centenarians will tend to ...infinite!); **the bottom of the age pyramid will face the opposite process, that of an exponential decrease, the younger the age group, the smaller the multiplier; in many cases, the so-called “multiplier” will transform into a “divider”**. If we assume that: 1) the beginning of the demographic transition coincides with the secular mortality decline (end of “excess mortality shocks”, like epidemics or famines), thus with an acceleration of population growth from a pre-transitional level close to zero to a central peak comprised between 1.5 and 4%; 2) the final stage of the global population transition is reached when, under the impact of ageing and falling fertility, the growth rate of the population comes back to a post-transitional level also close to zero, then , after an initial increase due to the population



“momentum” and a drop of infant-juvenile mortality, the number of youth begins to drop exponentially and to fall under its initial value. The number of births, which shapes the future of the age structure can continue to diminish indefinitely; the age pyramid breaks into two parts, one which becomes obese (older ages), the other which becomes skeletal (younger ages); the idea of pyramid or triangle becomes a non-sense: the geometry is reversed; the age stratification takes the form of an inverted triangle; after about five decades of “very low” fertility (TFR under 1.4 children per woman), the median age climbs to unprecedented values of 55-60 years; the social fabric is grey and mostly made of retirees or potential retirees. In **Japan**, for example, the **number of births** reached its historical maximum at the beginning of the 1950s (a bit more than 2 million a year), now, by 2005, it is only 1.1 million and, under constant fertility assumptions, could prolong its decline to 0.6 million in the year 2050 and to 0.4 million in the year 2080; it means that it can be **divided by a factor of five** over a period of less than 130 years.

**Policy priorities must be adapted to prevent such a scenario of implosion and extinction; the usual argument forgets this vital challenge; the attention is focused on the ageing of the baby-boomers born before the secular fertility decline;** this is a naïve and myopic view; in any case, these cohorts are already born and policy measures have to be adopted to follow their ageing dynamics, through waves from decade to decade; but, at the end of the day ,

after their specific transitional period, **they will die, and the sudden, cumulative, above-mentioned reality will appear.** The main task of experts is to alert leaders on this risk of lasting and deepening imbalance (abrupt inversion of the age pyramid and massive depopulation). Passive policies do not prepare for the long-range future, they are blind; excess fertility and insufficient fertility are the two faces of the same medal: both have negative impact on societies; they create opposite disequilibrium's and bring far from the optimum (slow or zero growth). Let us imagine an illustration: a permanent TFR of 1 (or Net Reproduction Rate of 0.5) would tend to divide a population by around 60 in only two centuries, while the other extreme – symmetrical- scenario of a constant NRR of 2 (like in Nigeria all over the last half-century 1955-2005) would tend to multiply it by 60 over the same duration. **Fertility control is an imperative when it is excessive, that is either too high or too low.** The first phase of fertility decline alleviates burdens for parents and countries, after centuries of permanent stress for daily survival; it is the so-called period of demographic “bonus”; but, after a while, the landscape change, when the depleted birth cohorts enter the labor market and generate both a manpower shortage and a declining demand. In **France**, the change was slow and the public opinion could progressively experience the adverse impact of a low fertility and thus to understand the necessity to encourage a return to equilibrium. **Until the 1940s, the country was on a declining slope, but, as shown further, a voluntary and pro-active fertility stopped and reversed the trend.**

According to Sauvy – the founding father of French demography (1898-1990) – and his famous leitmotiv, “the XXIst century will be the century of ageing”. This phenomenon will reach totally unpredicted dimensions where the fertility decline is not kept under control. As some say, demography is destiny: yes, it shapes irreversibly the future; and no, fertility is not a fatality (see further).

## Chapter 4. Values, 1946-2005

### 4.1 Partnership, ideal family size: national and Eurobarometer surveys

The anteriority of the secular French fertility decline is related to material and ideational factors. Serfdom was abolished very early in history, by the end of the Middle Age. If we put aside the aristocracy, the army (knights), the clergy (priests), fishermen, and the nascent bourgeoisie (middlemen, craftsmen,...), the quasi-totality of the population was composed of peasants. Most of them were living on small plots. After the Great Plague (1348), which is supposed to have killed one third of the inhabitants, and the One Hundred Years War leaded by Joan of Arc against the British invasion the population progressively resumed its growth. An auto-regulation mechanism set into place, in order to avoid overpopulation and misery; a double-pronged marriage control – based on sexual discipline- was encouraged by the Church: higher permanent celibacy and delayed marriage.

The claim for “liberty and equality” accelerated with the Enlightenment climate and the philosophical works made by the Encyclopedists; by the end of the XVIIIth century, France had the longest and the safest network of roads (the tools of diffusion of “avant-garde” ideas) and the density of cabarets, even in remote villages was higher than that of today cyber clubs: social change spread all

over the territory, except in religious and isolated lands of the Atlantic (Vendée, Briton peninsula). The diffusion of revolutionary ideals was wide and precocious. People wanted to empower and to emancipate from self-proclaimed authorities like God, the King, the Lords, or nobles. As it was the case in England (the other first nation-state in Europe), individualism or self-consciousness/self-decision willingness appeared before the Revolutions (1688 in England, 1789 in France). In France, the predominance of small-sized farms created a fear of further impoverishment, in a context of limited space and stagnating agricultural productivity. Surplus population on smaller and smaller pieces of land would generate unavoidable excess mortality (conflicts, malnutrition, famines and related epidemics). Until the end of the XIXth century and even the mid XXth century, agrarian progress and industrialisation had difficulties to keep pace with the population pressure created by the rural mortality decline. The ideal of lone son (“héritier mâle”) became predominant. This paved the way to a relative strategic domination of the continental rival: Germany; in 1914, the potential number of young males who could be enrolled in the army was twice larger in Germany than in France (at that time, the “number of chests “was still decisive in military confrontations). Even if the French soldiers were very brave, the nation suffered heavy losses. In this society of rare heirs, most of families had been shaken by tragedy and condemned to despair: either their son, son in law, nephew, grand-son, cousin, etc., had been butchered on battlefields. But thanks to U.S.

military intervention, France was saved from German imperialism.

After this demographically-induced nightmare, the interwar society (1919-1939) was marked by a national obsession: to forget the drama by joy, entertainment, alcoholism, utopia, and denial of realities. France was living in the “crazy years”; on the other bank of the Rhine, Germany was also experiencing a moral breakdown: shock of the military defeat; humiliation of the Versailles Treaty (1919) : financial cost of war compensation, loss of territory, speedy secularisation, social destruct ration (hectic industrialisation and urbanisation), hyperinflation (1923), political instability (Weimar Republic), rise of nationalism and socialism .Then the country underwent the Great Economic Depression (6 million unemployed by 1932); Hitler took opportunity of this situation to impose the rule of the national-socialist (Nazi) party, in fact his own dictatorship upon a totally demoralised country; under the so-called “economic magician” Dr Schacht, the economy recovered (swift military build up); Poland, Czechoslovakia and Austria were invaded (1938-1939); then came the turn of France(1940). Hitler intended to do the same with the British Isles, but Churchill galvanised the energy of the islanders, who opposed a ferocious braveness, in spite of an “ocean of blood, sweat and weap” announced by their leader; France was too weak to resist: it was the third German occupation since 1870; the political leaders and all the population, except very few people, “collaborated” like a colony.

In 1942, virtually all continental Europe was occupied by the German

troops; like Napoleon, Hitler was defeated by the “Russian winter” (Stalingrad Battle). Again the industrial potential of the U.S. economy was dedicated to rearmament, which helped both the logistics of the Red Army and prepared the liberation by the Allied coalition: the Anglo-saxon D-day (6 May 1944) was the sign of the collapse for the Nazis invaders; with the aid of the Marshall Plan, Western Europe combined prosperity to democracy, while the Eastern part fell under the Russian communist dictatorship (the German occupation was replaced by a more backward and barbarous one: the Russian); the countries were ruined, isolated from the rest of the world, unable to modernise; those which are far from the West are still demoralised and not “de-communised”. All these devastated spaces presently face a deep identity crisis, reflected by their extreme sub-fertility. Such circumstances give a unique relative position to France in the demographic landscape. Paradoxically, the post-war political authorities and the public opinion behaved like victors and had a reflex of pride through a stronger baby-boom than in the other “Allied nations”.

This attitude persists since 1945. According to surveys regularly conducted by INED, the ideal family choice is clearly and constantly two, that is the medium one in modern times, while it was the small in previous periods. As mentioned above, France is now a peculiar country where more than one third of young couples declare that their desire is to build a family of at least three children or, in other words, a “growthist” pattern for themselves and the society; this

preference is not only ideational, but factual (Table 6, appendix); the share of families that ensure replacement and potential increase is relatively high (25%) and , by far, stronger than the childless type (16% among the 1980 marriage cohort. The trauma of 1940 (third invasion by Germany in only 70 years, and massive exodus of expelled people from embattled or occupied northern zones) humiliated the citizens, contributed to the emergence of a “demographic awareness “and to the social rehabilitation of the family, which became viewed as the core of personal happiness and effective material/moral support. The implementation of a strong and consistent family policy did the rest

#### 4.2 **Contraception, abortion** legalisation, sexuality

Let us now shift to technicalities. Demography is the science of life and death; the key point is to know if people want to grow, only to survive or wish to diminish their number and, incidentally, by what methods. Contraception was a folk and very popular method in past France, with a tremendous number of devices (sexual abstinence, marriage restriction, withdrawal, condom, vaginal protection, prolonged lactation,, religious prescriptions : interdiction of intercourse during two periods: CAREME,AVENT,...); abortion and disguised infanticide (abandonment) were also used. Open infanticide was rare: it was condemned as a “mortal sin” by the Church and punished as a crime by the penal



code.

With the reproductive medical revolution, contraception, abortion and sterilisation became safer (even if we know that new oral pills can be a risk factor for breast cancer) and morally accepted (except by the Vatican and the hierarchy of Catholic Church). But the legalisation was delayed by traditional bioethics. Pincus' discovery was made in 1953, contraception was authorised in 1967, abortion in 1975, and there is still a moral ban on sterilisation (which is not reversible and is a matter of public debate). Sterilisation, whether female or male is considered as a mutilation, a limitation of biological and personal potential: sexuality, in the common view, cannot be deprived from its basic divine function: pro-creation.

#### 4.3. **Family, religion, nation and Social norms**

The growing individualism-namely its feminist variant -has produced a distance from tradition: family, religion, nation, and work ethics.

Among new generations, most individuals do not attend the weekly religious service, have no elaborate sense of moral doctrine: the definition of good/bad; the limits of personal freedom, the sense of others' and common interest/property respect, the strict notion of duty, acceptance of hierarchy and authority, and of guiltiness, all this leading to a social fragmentation, loss of

global cohesion and public opinion abuses by vocal sub-groups, like the homosexuals: the society is horrified by paedophilia, rape and related crimes (assassinations), recidivism in sexual criminality, but permissive and blind to tackle seriously (repression and efficient medical treatment) the question of excessive tolerance in sexual deviation. Homosexual V.I.P. have notoriously committed offences and crimes against poor young children like orphans or third world boys or girls, or jail without fine or jail sentences. This misuse of basic social rules was expressed by the famous slogan of the Students Rebellion in 1968: "it is forbidden to forbid". This anarchist disrupted all institutions: family, school, nationhood, work ethics...It is obvious for paediatricians, for example, f—who observe the change in feeding practices: family meals at given hours and given diet (choice of various and healthy ingredients) become less common, thus favouring obesity and lack of dialogue, as in the usual American way of life.

But this moral revolution remains relatively soft: there is no struggle against the Catholic creed or the rapidly emerging Muslim religion, no "sex war", nor disparition of French proud. after millennia of misery, want, permanent survival stress, hard work, people can enjoy leisure, paid and long vacations,, early retirement, decent pensions, short labor week, good public medical care, cheap long distance mobility and travelling; only a small majority (mostly young adults are excluded from this privilege. This, of course, facilitates the realisation of fertility projects, through the alleviation of time constraints and creation of

social networks.

The emergence of a leisure class (mostly retirees) and leisure spirit works in favour of “short-termism”. Older generations (let us say people who took advantage of the “economic miracle” of the 1946-1973 period, or persons born before the mid-sixties (quinquenarians and older, except the very old); this was an historical parenthesis, with full employment and long-term contracts; now we have returned back to historical normality reality (slow growth, economic fluctuations, job insecurity): the children born from these generations are confronted to the trade globalisation and acceleration of productivity gains. Two possible reactions exist: either a feeling of victimisation (lack of self-esteem, loss of employability) or decision to seize opportunities of innovation, facilitated by the existence of a safety net (guaranteed minimum income). The strong vertical solidarity inside the family between the seniors who have more comfortable and regular income derived from work and capital accumulation, on one side, and the youngest living in a fragile position is very strong. If biological maturity appears earlier, economic autonomy is delayed: young couples avoid destitution by be lasting unions and having less offspring.

#### 4.4 Women's Status

##### 4.4.1 Historical background

The founding scientific work on women's economic status in modern life is probably that of Boserup (1970). The study of gender issues is now at the core of social studies worldwide; the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) of Cairo opened a path to political priorities and financial budgeting on all (often redundant) related programs.

The phase of industrialisation usually implied a regression of female life condition. But one has to keep in mind that in Western medieval societies, women were considered as equal to men; it was the period of "courtesy love"; Renaissance restored the Greek tradition, with the exaltation of the male body, of physical superiority and even homosexuality. In traditional peasant societies, the male are usually in charge of production (extra-domestic tasks), while women were centered on reproductive life (childbearing, pregnancy delivering, breastfeeding, nurturing, cooking, caring of home and of financial aspects,...). One can say that this division of labor was imposed by the permanent stress and threat of heavy mortality, and the imperative of survival. Then the early stages of industrialisation and urbanisation pushed men at the forefront of the society as breadwinners in a monetarising economy, replacing the barter one, when the decline of mortality made high fertility less necessary: women's role became less

vital for family and society.

#### 4.4.2 Aspects of women's equality: knowledge, money and power

To simplify, one can consider that from birth to death, three stages in gender transformation: access to education, access to financial autonomy (through independent activity), and finally access to private and public power (decision-making). In fact, equity stops with adulthood.

But for post- modern nation's destiny, the cost of children relies more and more heavily not on couples like in former rural and patriarchal societies, but on sole women. Girls are usually more regular and successful at school: in France, for example, the "Baccalauréat (end of secondary school diploma), as soon as 1963 ceased to become a man's privilege. At that time, girls began to have higher performance than their male counterparts. Now, by 2005, the proportion of girls among the total number of new laureates is close to 60%, thus largely predominant.

Similarly, in universities, most of students are girls, who tend to be "over-achievers"; if these graduates marry or enter in a union, they want first to realise a career (as a personal insurance), then a family, not the reverse as their mothers: they usually spent more years in the education system than boys of the same age, that is than their life partners. >From the very beginning of childhood to university, they were considered as equal to boys, at home as well as at school. On

the labor market, in spite of strong aspirations and political rhetorics, the picture is different: discrimination still exist (table 9, appendix); the gap in job status is too wide to be explained by a personal choice of a large category of women to care for their children, given their undeniable better affective and intuitive talents than fathers (zoologists know that females are biologically programmed to feed their offspring or same species' animals).

Post WWII generations were educated in a prosperous and demographic context opening equal opportunity for boys and girls; physical strength was less important in economic activity (mechanisation). From the mid-1960s onwards, the corresponding young women claimed for jobs as wage-earners, outside the home sphere, where they got neither consideration, nor money (spending capacity). With the tremendous productivity growth in material production (agriculture+ industry), the service sector expanded and progressively occupied the majority of the labor force. But the French social legislation was still backward: wives had to get the authorisation from their husbands if they wished to get a paid extra-domestic job. Until that time, the female active population (including the unemployed, according to the international statistical convention of the ILO) was rather stagnant, then – during the following 4 decades- it doubled (6.5 and 13 million respectively). This finding needs further specification.

The real female labor force participation rate experienced only a limited improvement: first, one has to consider the changing age structure (new

generation flows entering the labor market were larger by one third than those born before the baby-boom); second, the adverse impact of the economic recession which began in 1973 (first oil shock) was stronger for women than for men (between 1973 and 2004, the number of unemployed women skyrocketed from 0.2 to 1.4 million; now more than total unemployment affects women; third, during the same time span, the number of women working only part-time more than tripled (the present number of part-timers among women is nearly 5 times bigger than among men), while the female full-timers grew by only 20% !

The common statistical indicators are misleading: real women's empowerment on the labor market or in the political arena (as measured by the % of CEOs, MPs, or Ministers) is low. The same is true for the intimate division of labor; the idea of "new fathers" is a legend: the average French fathers dedicate only 38 minutes a day to their children, as compared to one hour among Danish or Swedish ones.

What makes the difference with older generations is the free time spent together as partners in the couples and the quality of the dialogue/mutual respect. Union is a matter of shared love, of togetherness, of permanent adjustment, joy and pain exchange. Among the parental generations, dialogue was not frequent, sexual discussion about sex rare or inexistent; the idea of sexual pleasure for women sometimes viewed as a sin. Now, both partners are educated, less ignorant about sex as part of happiness; they share hobbies, and are more emotionally tied

to each other.

Women do not feel alone at home like “birds in a cage”; shopping, travelling, car driving, concerts, exhibitions, movies, TV, associations, personal computers and mobile phones,...are part of their daily universe. Old widows envy their grand-daughters who are so free and respected: a new trend is emerging among older married couples; each member wants a right to happiness and get rid of social pressure. Unhappy unions break after long decades of silence, submission, and sometimes physical or moral abuse.

In France as in other E.U. member countries, the taboo of family violence (namely battered or raped wives) is gradually surmounted since the 1990s studies; it begins to be systematically analysed through victimisation surveys. Violence inside the hidden, invisible, intimate sphere is no longer socially tolerated; rape is not mocked by the police (many women are now enrolled in the police force), rapists are severely denounced in the medias and punished by the justice. Since most of them have a pathological propensity to uncontrolled their sexual pulsions, and repeat criminal acts , a special file has been created and a monitoring system has been launched (GPS localisation electronic devices); rapists are known to be psychological maniacs prone to kill their victims: many of these girls/women do not dare to speak to relatives ( either they feel guilty or they know the man, are psychologically dependent of him and live under permanent threat if they reveal the “secret”; many of these victims have a lifelong difficulty to trust men and to



experience relaxed sex. The question is finally took seriously and sometimes “prioritised” by policy-makers.

#### 4.5 “Unwanted”/ unplanned pregnancies

Before the era of the pill, according to surveys conducted in clinics and hospitals after delivery, in France, approximately half of the newborn babies were not positively wanted at the time of conception. Of course, they were later accepted as a gift from God or nature. People were not yet fully living with the feeling of prosperity and were ready to accept fatality, “destiny”; most of them had at different times of their life cycle experienced deprivation and were adapted to “hard” circumstances. The notion of “poverty line” did not exist; its very actual meaning at present has to be put into biographical perspective: it must be considered not only at a given time in a given country, but also in relative temporal terms for all its citizens. Most of elderly experienced poverty, diseases, malnutrition during long phases of their life (wars, economic fluctuations, unemployment, housing shortage, absence of hygiene and comfort, family .....); they are accustomed to demanding work, precaution savings, low consumption and suffering. The generational gap is wide, and creating misunderstandings.

Free access to medicalised contraception (1967) and abortion (1975) were supposed to put an end to unwanted births. But it did not work so. An abortion

registration system was implemented; three decades after, the main conclusion is that the % of abortions for 100 live births did not change substantially, remaining around one fifth to one third. Many causes can intervene: the lack of sexual education, unprotected and/or occasional intercourse among teenagers, the reluctance of a fraction of women to the use of the pill (risk of breast cancer), and the less materialistic, more life-oriented mentalities of new immigrants, mainly of those born in Sub-Saharan cultures (with strong family and ethnic solidarity networks).

## Chapter 5. Population Policy

### 5.1 Public health policy

Defining the role of health policy in lowering mortality requires great subtlety, for the determinants of the main causes of death are multiple and intertwined.

#### 5.1.1 Initial delay

Towards 1930, life expectancy in France was 10 years lower than in the Netherlands (64 and 54 years respectively), and France occupied the eight place in Europe, with a net disadvantage for men.

But after having for long occupied a mediocre ranking in terms of the struggle against death, France now finds itself well placed among the advanced countries. Although the leading position has been taken by Japan since the 1970s (a model of individual and collective providence), the second place is held, almost equally, by the large countries of Western Europe (France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom). The convergence of the health performances contrasts with the differences in fertility. Thus, towards the year 2005, Spain and Italy presented total stabilised fertility rates to the order of 1.1 to 1.2 children per woman, Germany around 1.3, the United Kingdom, in slight regression, around 1.6-1.7, and lastly France around 1.8-1.9. These relative differences in fertility are

important, and maybe due to differences in collective psychology, early childhood institutions, territorial and national policies (explicit or not), and fertility support. Progress concerning the struggle against death form a consensus, and may be related to the general socio-economic level of development and to technical means (vaccines, medicaments, equipment, etc.), which are more easily transferable from one country to another. This development is the result of volountarist actions carried out by public authorities. In the first place, there was the effort to eliminate tuberculosis, which was strengthened by the extraordinary (construction and renovation.) of the housing policy in the 1950s.

Although alcoholism, the traditional scourge of France, has reduced under the IVth Republic, phase of modernising society and of urbanisation, the success has only been relative. Admittedly, deaths from this cause have fallen since the 1940s due to prevention, but excess mortality allied to alcoholic poisoning among men remains one of the French specificities wthin the E.U. and even the OECD. Alcohol consumption has certainly diminished among the young generations, but the struggle against alcoholism remains insufficient in relation to that prevailing in the Northern countries.

#### 5.1.2 A prevention model: road accidents; regression for cancer.

Up to the first oil shock, road accidents did not cease to increase, and placed France in the lowest international rank. Annual deaths rose from 3 354 in

1950 to 16 617 in 1972. The oil crisis had a major psychological effect on the way the automobile was viewed and the damage caused to congestion, environment and road insecurity; the government adopted stern measures, which became a top priority in 2002. The result is impressive: death on the road is declining regularly; in 2005 it should kill three times less than in 1972: about 5000 victims; the corresponding rate per 1000 inhabitants is even more marked, with a decrease of almost 80%, and greater for the index of traffic or the number killed per million passengers/km.

The same cannot be said for death from cancer, which continue to worsen (about 150 000 deaths per year, or 28% of the total mortality). It is highly resistant, doubtless linked in part to the ageing of the population, the delay of prevention and the emergence of new forms of the disease, due to environment and behavioural factors. It is in France that the frequency of deaths from cancer is highest (importance of lung cancer both for women and men (among younger generations, girls smoke early and more than boys)).

#### 5.1.3. Resistance in alcohol, drug abuse and nicotine intoxication behaviour

The 1991 law marked a first opening in the struggle against nicotine addiction. France is enrolled in line with the Anglo-Saxon countries, which were the first to undertake a firm and effective fight against the ravages of tobacco; the prohibition of smoking in public places is extending, but in spite of a drastic rise

in the price of cigarettes, the habits resist and the effects are small; the consumption of drugs and “poppies” is widespread, but its global impact on public health is not yet well assessed through epidemiological research. But alcoholism is declining with the transformation of the class structure (it was traditionally –and still is- more frequent among farms and factories’ workers than among white collars)

#### 5.1.4. Records of infant mortality

Through the spectrum of factors involved, infant mortality is one of the most robust indicators of socio-economic development. It is no surprise that Japan heads the world classification, followed quite closely by advanced Western countries of Europe and new industrialised countries of Asia, namely the Chinese islands or peninsula. France launched active programs, such maternal and infant protection (immediate post-war period), prevention of prenatal and perinatal mortality (1970s), systematic application of vaccination cover, struggle against sudden toddler deaths. In 1930-1932, the infant mortality rate was 77 per thousand live births; now it is falling below 4 per 1000; France has become one of the front-runners among the countries with the best health record.

#### 5.1.5. Disappearance of infectious and parasitic diseases

*The* most striking feature of XXth century is the collapse of infectious and parasitic disease, and that henceforth it is the progress in chronic diseases

(principally cardio-vascular diseases and cancer) that dominates pathology. But there is a contrast between declining mortality from cardio-vascular causes and the mounting death toll due to cancer.

#### 5.1.6. Progress factors and instauration of Social Security (1945)

*A constellation* of factors is at work in mortality decline: discovery of sulfonamide and antibiotics, progress in hygiene, disinfection and asepsis, advances in surgery and medicament, birth of laboratories, modernisation of hospital, improvement in public health awareness, etc.

But the most fundamental factor in the French recovery took place without doubt in 1945 with the introduction of Social Security, which very soon enabled the generalisation of access to medical cover.

#### 5.2 Pro-natalist package

Obstacles to fertility are manifold; let us simplify by a three dimensional categorisation: money, space, and time. The common ideal number of children in modern societies, particularly in France, is 2, but if we compute the average realised fertility, excepting the U.S. (neo-conservative revolution, impact of traditional values and immigration contribution), in European populations it is only 1.3. The difference between the dream and the reality or the average number of child(ren) missing per woman is 0.8, or more than one third of the

replacement/ideal fertility (2.1 children per woman). This gap is a concept equivalent of the symmetrical one used by policymakers in Less Developed Countries, where the effective fertility is higher than the desired one. To the so-called “latent demand for family planning” corresponds a “latent demand for family support”.

All countries have a population policy, whether explicit or implicit; in places where young families face low financial support, opposition to pregnancy by bosses, housing shortage, unemployment or insufficient pay, high cost of education, difficulty to reconcile job and family, lack of social consideration, etc., newly wedded or united couples are objectively penalised by childrearing and become averse to the risk of having children. Reciprocally, if the socio-economic context is more open to the needs of future generations, the choice of family building is facilitated, because the burden is less heavy, namely for mothers (who carry the greatest weight of it). In France, for example, the **TFR is close to 1.9**; the corresponding international differences show a first **margin of manoeuvre for fertility recovery**; it measures the **potential effect of a consistent family policy**; this means that the **a priori impact** of policy measures is relatively strong: **0.7 to 0.9 child per woman. This incidence is crucial** for the future: **a small deficit is manageable** and can be partially compensated for by reasonable controlled immigration streams; depopulation can be avoided in the short run and limited in the long range; **a huge birth deficit engages a quasi-irreversible**



**spiral of depopulation** and a rapidly growing shortage of labor, that means consequently an **unmanageable immigration need**.

This implementation of a “family-friendly” policy requires a progressive maturation of the public opinion and a growing involvement of decision-makers in all spheres. Most of them have no elementary notion of population issues and ignore that they have a responsibility and capacity to help individual to get a real free choice in their number of children; if a large (more than two children ) family size implies a proletarianisation, the choice is virtual; many of them do not that a population recession is basically a rise of the elderly (ageing), but, more importantly, a stronger decline of youth, thus generating intergenerational conflict of interests; the growing majority of potential or factual retirees wants to eat the cake, while the young segment has a smaller political vote and less access to public resources; hence a risk a further disincentive to fertility. Welfare systems are endangered by the falling ratio workers/pensioners; demand is diminished by the decline of young needy households; the value of capital can experience a drop due to an imbalance between supply (overcapacity) and demand (implosion of the number of clients).

France was the first country with a long-lasting sub-fertility regime; the launching of a population policy was slow, it required about three decades, from WWI (1914-1918) to WWII (1940-1945). As we shall see, a wide package of measures were created, first in the State sector, then among wage-earners and

finally, to the traditionally dynamic, but forgotten, sector of independent workers: family allowances, fiscal rebates, access to pre- and post-primary public education system, low cost housing programs, paid maternity/parental leave, creation of childrearing facilities,...

### 5.2.1 Important Dates

The first conspicuous measure aimed at encouraging fertility was one that favoured the families of public servants, SFT (Supplément Familial de Traitement – Family Supplementary Income) adopted during World War I. Up to that time, there had only been selective and local measures linked to the private initiative of company directors, but these varied considerably from one branch or province to another.

#### 1. 1920: repressive law against contraception and abortion

At the close of the war and in spite of the reduction in population, State intervention only expressed itself by adopting repressive legislation.

The intention was to remedy the haemorrhage of the war years, when almost 1.5 million were killed, all about 20 years old (Huber, 1931; Vallin, 1973), and the number of men mobilised rose to 8 million, thus causing a serious shortage of births and having the cumulative effect of provoking an increased ageing of the population. But the law of 31 July 1920, which suppressed incitement to abortion and forbade anti-natalist propaganda and

the distribution of contraceptives, was without appreciable effect on the birth curve. This, following a short recovery in 1920 and 1921 linked to the average of 2.3 per woman, instead of 2.5 as in 1910-1913). Abortion had already been assimilated to a crime since 1791 and forbidden by the *Penal Code* since 1808. The 1920 law did no more than reiterate and confirm these penal provisions. It was to be reinforced in 1923 by the so-called *Barthou Law* of 23 March, which sent cases of abortion before a court of summary jurisdiction, in order to avoid the habitual indulgence of assize court juries. What had previously been a crime became an offence; but the number of adjudged cases doubled.

The failure of the 1920 law (whose objective had been to check the decline in fertility) could be understood in the following way: 1) the confidence of the population had not been restored, and remained in a state of shock; 2) French people have a secular know-how concerning the limitation of births, such as coitus interruptus, clandestine abortion, adoption of separate beds by couples, and condoms. (Bergues *et al.*, 1960; Himes, 1963).

## 2. 1932: extension of family allowances to wage earners in the private sector

In 1932, there was an important breakthrough in the initiative for social compensation for dependants. It was in that year that the State took

over from the private initiative by making membership of family allowance funds for wage earners in industry and commerce compulsory for enterprises. Family allowances came about, as we have seen, mainly through an initiative by Christian employers. Observing the living conditions of their workers, they noted that those who were single lived comfortably, those who were married without children were uncomfortable, those with one child had some difficulty in living, and those with two children had to appeal for help (often in kind) from their parents who had remained in the country. As for families with three or more children, these sank into poverty, since the same wages had to provide for a growing number of mouths. From this arose the idea of paying a supplementary wage to compensate for the cumulative decline in living standards (Ceccaldi, 1957).

But such a measure incurred the risk of distorting competition. Employers paying family allowances then found themselves penalised by higher labour costs. Thus, the 1932 law made the compulsive power of the State available to progressive employers by enabling the contribution to dependants' compensation to be extended to all employers. It should be noted, however, that universal coverage was only attained after the war, with the extension of the system to farmers and independent workers. On the other hand, from then on family allowances could no longer be viewed as employer generosity, but as an absolute right for the wage earner and a legal

addition to the salary. Frequently perceived, until then, as a paternalist measure, and also denounced as a method of preventing wage rises, they saw their image transformed and soon to figure (retrospectively) under the headings of social progress and legitimate claims of the working class. In 1936, family allowance benefits were extended to agricultural wage earners. At the end of 1938, more than 90% of the families from the business, industrial and liberal professions envisaged by the law were effectively receiving family allowances. As for those in the public sector, they continued to benefit from a special indemnity regime for dependents that was more favourable than the general regime of family allowances.

Large families, who most frequently lived in poverty or even destitution, were those, however, who ensured the major responsibility for the reproduction of the society (Vincent, 1946).

The above-mentioned proposals, intended to improve the lot of families with children, were insufficient to prevent the fall in fertility during the Great Depression; at most they were able to limit its extent. The scales of family allowances at that time still varied very considerably from one fund to another, but the amount paid out remained small and without a common measure of the needs arising from the dependants. At the end of the 1930s, deaths again exceeded births, and in 1938 the deficit reached 35,000...

3. 1938-1945: the turning point (statutory order of 12 November 1938, adoption of the Code de la Famille – Family Law), improvement in the family allowance scales, inception of the social security plan)

It was in 1938 precisely, on the eve of the new invasion, that everybody felt that positive (incitement) measures of considerable extent should be taken to counter depopulation. The statutory order of 12 November 1938 included, within a succession of statutory orders, some provisions relative to the compensation for dependent children. Prepared by Alfred Sauvy, then a member of Paul Reynaud's (Minister of Finance) Cabinet, it was this order that gave the benefits paid up to then the true nature of family allowances and conferred upon them a daring demographic character. The benefits could no longer be identified as a supplementary wage allied to the trade carried on and the uncertainties of wage negotiations. They became independent of the salary and of the enterprise. Their amount, on the other hand, varied according to the ranking among the siblings (it was progressive in order to take account of the additive nature of the upkeep costs of children). Paid monthly, their rate was fixed according to the average salary of the legislative department. It was established at 5% of this salary for the 1<sup>st</sup> child, 10% for the second and 15% for each of the following dependent children, with a guarantee of annual revision (updating), according to the change in wages noted in the interval.

At the same time as it achieved an important uniformity of the rates, the 1938 reform immediately caused a substantial increase, in the order of 50%, in the amount of benefits paid out. It envisaged, moreover an increase to compensate for the loss of salary suffered by the mother in giving up a professional activity in order to devote herself to her family (this was the future Single Salary Allowance, adopted in 1941). This increase corresponded to 2% of the total payroll, and increased the overall cost of this reform by 3 or 4% of it. In two years, between the beginning of 1937 and the beginning of 1939, family allowances increased two or three times more than they had done over the preceding twenty years.

By the end of 1938, the broad outlines of the CDF, which marked another major innovation, had already been drawn. This statutory law was the work of the HCP (Haut comité de la population – High Committee of the Population, where Adolpe Landry was based), created some months earlier. It was adopted by a Chamber stemming from the Popular Front. The text of the law sought to discourage voluntary infertility – frequent in the France of 1890-1939 – and to encourage more particularly those families whose composition would enable an increase in population i.e. families with at least three children (Sauvy, 1954). In practice, however, the rate of family allowances was scarcely restructured except for very large families (for families with three children, the rate remained unchanged at 30% of the

reference salary). For the family with two dependant children, the rate was revised downwards (10% instead of 15%), and the allowance for one child was abolished. It was replaced by a high birth premium designed to encourage newly weds to have their first child quickly. In 1941, under the Vichy government, the allowance for the mother in the home was increased by the single salary allowance, which quickly occupied a dominant position in the system for mitigating the cost of dependants – since 1943, indeed, the payment of this allowance has accounted for more than one half of the total allowances paid out. It is appropriate to resituate the context of the period, at a time when most of the mothers did not have salaried employment, and devoted themselves to raising their children. The payment of the single salary allowance came about after marriage.

### 5.2.2 Priority of the child and peak of family policy

The war crystallized demographic awareness at the same time as it gave rise to a new, less individualistic and calculating state of mind. After the poverty, trials, privations and food rationing, the merits of solidarity were recognized by all as being evident. The family was in fashion, and increasingly personified the symbol of happiness – the privileged place for personal development. Against a background of destruction and ruins, history was being refashioned. It was the atmosphere of reconstruction, the pioneer spirit.



With the 1945-1946 decrees, family allowances became part of the general system of Social Security managed by Pierre Laroque, himself a former member of the Adolphe Landry cabinet. The principle of compensation for dependants was established.

*Family allowance is justified for the same reason as retirement; it represents in short a salary advance that society grants to the apprentice, who will in turn repay it” wrote Alfred Sauvy (1954).*

Sickness and Maternity Insurance was also set up, and development of family policy continued with an improvement in the contributions and alignment of rates in the provinces with those of the capital.

*But the contribution rates deducted from the salary (subject to a ceiling) for the benefit of the family branch increased from 5% in 1938 to 12-13% in 1947-1948, and was soon to culminate in the 1950s at around 16-17%. The 1947 Charte des prestations familiales (Law on Family Benefits), which envisaged an indexation of productivity increases, was not applied. The amount of the family allowances was to follow the simple progress of the consumer price index, but the frequent delays in so doing were to account for the enormous gap that arose in the course of the decades between the volume of benefits contributed to young parents by the family branch and the amount of retirement and sickness insurance expenditures.)*

### 5.2.3 Implications: demographic efficiency

The real recovery in fertility did not date (as is frequently written) from the year 1942, it was then only the matter of a minor change (+10 %), linked partly to the movement of returning prisoners. It really took place at the end of the conflict (+30%), after the return of the soldiers and the sudden increase in the rate of family benefits. This baby-boom was not limited to France, but affected all the countries of the Western allies. It was not experienced, however, in Germany, Italy or Spain, or in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe that had fallen under the Soviet yoke. This *baby boom*, however, had certain features that were peculiar to France.

- 1) The recovery there of the post war years was more sudden and powerful than in the homologous countries. We thus experienced an inversion of the relative position of France in the international fertility hierarchy between the pre- and post-war periods. From 1945 to 2002, the average rate of growth of the French population was higher than that of Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. Let us have a look on English and French data: on the eve of WWI (period 1901-1914), before the beginning of any pronatalist policy in France, the TFR was higher in England than in France (3.17 instead of 2.60 children as an average for each woman); by contrast, the French fertility was stronger in the 1950s: 2.71 instead of 2.35; in other words, a small rebound occurred in France, while the decline continued in

England (- 26%) between the two periods.

2) The demographic characteristics of the baby-boom corresponded to the raising of the family allowance rate. Actually, it was with the emphasis on the second child that the expenditure effort was by far the most marked (sixfold). With two dependent children a family received almost the equivalent of a second wage (in the aftermath of the war, three quarters of the mothers with two children remained in the home and received a single salary allowance). This change in the rate created a very strong incentive to abandon the family model so widespread in the pre-war France, that of the single child. It was in agreement, moreover, with the wishes of the legislator. There was thus a concordance between the variations in the legislation scale (differential incitements) and the increase in fertility following the pre- and post-war birth rates – couples without children or with a single child became rarer, to the advantage of limited or average families (2 especially, and a few 3), who were the main beneficiaries of the single salary allowance).

It is also appropriate to bear in mind that, at that time, the payment of monetary benefits was a complete innovation in a country that was coming out of a barter economy.

3) The revival assumed greater importance than elsewhere since it generated

28 cohorts (1946-1973) with numbers a third higher than those of the previous cohorts (usually, the western European baby-boom was shorter- only about two decades- and less pronounced, around 10%) . . It was the weighting factor of these cohorts, moreover, that was to cushion the fall in the number of births from the 1980s onwards, and it was this momentum that made it evident that the country would be immunised against a further fall in natality.

To summarise: inter temporal as well as social or international data support the evidence of a strong impact of the French population policy.

However, under the influence of Georges Pompidou, family policy – in its financial dimension - became of secondary importance. At the time when productivity took off (this was the heart of the “*Trente Glorieuses*” [glorious thirties] according to the Jean Fourastié formula, 1979), financial transfers for the benefit of young parents scarcely followed prices (disindexing had in fact started before 1950, in violation of the CDF). Above all, there came about a distortion in family policy. Its essential purpose had been to correct horizontal inequalities of income i.e. between families whose only difference was the number of children, whereas there was a gradual increase in benefits conditional upon resources that henceforth transformed horizontal transfers into vertical transfers, thus adopting the form of a redistribution from rich to poor. The application of the same reasoning to sickness insurance or state pension schemes was to arouse fierce

opposition, but properly speaking there was no existing family lobby, and even less for children. Owing to the increasing numbers of exclusion thresholds, family policy declined in importance (it is easy to lower inflation adjusted ceilings) and especially in universality. It became opaque, incomprehensible, and remote from the initial concern about demographic equilibrium. Family policy therefore became an aid policy for specific groups – the attribution rates vary from one case to another and the number of benefit categories in 2002, according to the authors, reached 26 or 28, instead of only 6 in 1946.

This decline in family policy is illustrated by the evolution of contribution rates (deducted from earnings) intended for family allowances. First of all there was an increase, especially during the wartime, expressed by a rise of more than double (5% in 1938, 12% in 1947), followed by a new increase (16.75% from 1951-1958). The following period has been one of decline, since the rate has now returned to 8%, its level during the war.

### 5.3. Balance of family policy: Strong and weak points

#### *Strong points*

The fertility policy has a unique advantage (that it only shares with Belgium): the existence of pre-elementary schooling that is both public and early – from the age of two years, almost half of the children are already attending

nursery school. At the following ages (3, 4 and 5 years), all children are enrolled. The generalisation and non-payment for nursery schooling are the envy of neighbouring countries, where parents have to undertake the care of their children up to the age of 5, 6 or even 7 years. From the age of 2-3 years, the network of nursery schools is well thought out and available to the greatest number of children. It fulfils the needs of both parents and children, and is a powerful socializing instrument.

It only remains to close the gap between the end of maternity leave and entry into the nursery school, which involves the need for the development of solutions, such as recourse to maternal assistants, parent leave or day-care centres.

Another original French feature is the system of direct taxation, which is, in fact, a moderator of progression adjusted according to the number of dependent children. The system was set up at the time of the Liberation, following centuries of debate. It is based on an idea of fiscal justice. Instead of applying the taxation rate to the income itself, it is applied to the income share per consumer, in other words to the living standard of the household. This idea of family support, which is nowadays sometimes incorrectly interpreted and considered to originate from the rightists, dates back in fact to the period of Enlightenment in the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century. It fulfils a republican and revolutionary ideal inscribed in the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*. Whenever taxation is evoked in this fundamental text, there is mention of the need to take the contributive ability of

the person paying i.e. the number of dependants is taken into account.

*Weak points*

Since the accumulation of benefits conditional upon resources (late 1960s), an increasing number of beneficiaries have been excluded from benefits under family policy, thus marginalizing it. The family policy was clearly of high priority in 1946 (concern was for national reconstruction based on the revival of fertility) with more than 40% of the national social budget (instead of hardly 10% at present). Even more symptomatic is its wretched aspect, which has appeared and grown over recent decades. It is the Family Allowance Funds that manage the allowances for adult handicapped persons, and above all carry out the payment of the RMI (Revenu minimum d'insertion– income support: unemployment pay). Children are thus relegated to the same ranking as the poor, infirm and unemployed. Here, there is clearly a diversion of aim. Just as the policy of sickness insurance aims to ensure a financial transfer between the healthy and the sick, and the retirement policy to pay replacement incomes from the present active population to the former active members, the function of the family policy is to ensure compensation between small families and those without children and those of greater size. But this principle has often been ignored to the benefit of a more visible and political consideration, such as the struggle against poverty, which itself entails employing fiscal means.

The under-indexing of family allowances also goes a long way to explaining the fall in the share of benefits within the GNP. It has enabled the appearance of the famous CNAF (Caisse nationale des allocations familiales – National Agency for Family Benefits) surpluses, which, regardless of the principle of separating various branches of social protection from the budget, have regularly been employed to make good (without repayment) the deficits from other sectors. Families with dependent children have found themselves impoverished through this, and all the more seriously as the number of their children is greater.

Although other countries also have child support mechanisms in mind, it does nevertheless appear that in France the strong points appreciably outweigh the weak. The family policy, however, still presents many shortcomings. The most serious concern early childhood and post-adolescence (children around 18-20 years-of-age enter a period of maximum cost, whereas the family allowances cease all payment)

#### 5.4 Trends in the public/private costs of Children

**In rural** settings or among small business families (handicraft, trade, cabaret, etc.), children could contribute to the production of the family unit: they were assets. With the modernisation, the family function; were limited to reproduction; it was the beginning of miniaturisation, nuclearisation and closure.



Various costs of childrearing expanded: space-housing, money, time, energy, schooling, mobility, informatisation, etc. These emerging costs were essentially beard by the sole parents.

Mothers had to spend a larger and larger share of their time budget to their children now prisoners in their flats without safe open places at their door and having strong school requirements; this maternal time is given to the detriment of professional or leisure activities, thus causing tensions and stress.

The labor market for young women is unfavourable: the rate of unemployment hovers above 20% and most of jobs are based on short-term, precarious and low-wage contracts, interrupted by stressing, but subsidised job search phases. The golden age of the post-war reconstruction is far behind. In spite of better psychological comfort inside unions, the global picture is still very far from “gender equity”; mothers continue to carry a quadruple responsibility: job, partner, household and kid(s).The time spent by fathers on housework or care for children remains persistently and comparatively marginal; above all, its very nature is typified, striking to specific tasks (garbage evacuation, bringing food, BRICOLAGE, car reparation, and so on); only happy few wives have a partner who accepts to share dirty and demanding tasks. The “pacha” pattern is less widespread than in machist cultures, but it is frequent in lower and middle social strata (the rich can afford housemaids).

The stress is maximal for mothers working in the competitive (private) sector; the fear of job instability and the will to build career perspectives to ensure personal and family long-range future is becoming more and more difficult to satisfy; children stay at home longer and longer; their dependency extends until elder ages, like 25; young couples need two wages to envisage the formation of a new household. Many career women who have invested more in education than their lifetime partners are stressed and live with the permanent syndrome of potential “guilty pregnancy”; they want to show “fidelity” both to their enterprise and to their family; they are internally torn. They perform pretty well on the job, are appreciated by their boss and colleagues; they hesitate to make a break in their activity and to disturb the enterprise organisation. So many of them fear to announce the “bad new” of a possible pregnancy on the workplace to the employer, even if there is no objective risk (the law is fair and protective, but the concrete daily rival ness and competition on the job can relegate absentees); however trendy managers know that feminised enterprises tend to perform better in a global environment: they are better equipped to anticipate demand, to face diversity, they can also be more flexible, intuitive and trained to organise efficiently (a mother at home is like a manager). Reconciling work and family is the core of population policies in advanced societies (Council of Europe, 1999; O.E.C.D., 2005). A strong effort is made to surmount the “ceiling effect” and to empower women on the job; for the first time, the leaders of the entrepreneurs’

unions elected in 2005 was a woman.

In France, the main structural challenge of the family policy is the allocation of time in order to limit opportunity costs for young parents (the first dimension, the financial one, is rather satisfactory and was the priority of the first decades of social policy); but, as shown above, the State faces a huge public debt problem (the amount has been multiplied by 10 over the 1980-2005 period), and the Social Security budget is haunted by a sea snake: mismanagement (corruption by lobbies), irreversible and exploding deficit, over consumption for idle and vocal people, absence of leadership, financial responsibility and guidance (massive wastage of public money without sanction by the market or consumers, absence of prospective research: the Commission of the Social Security Accounts publishes myopic, unusable data, and primitive prospects for the ...next 6 months).

The government tries to tackle the problem since the 1980s; after the classical maternity leave, the parental leave (1984) was implemented, then many measures followed, such as the Allowance for the Young Dependent Child ("Allocation au Jeune Enfant": AJE), the Allowance for child nursing at home ("Allocation pour frais de Garde à Domicile: AGED); all are invented to alleviate the time constraint and cost of child-rearing parents before the pre-elementary school. The coverage is limited by limiting criteria like the birth order, family and income status; this aspect of the policy is notoriously deficient: the shortage of affordable creches and childminding facilities is still large; unformed, local and

private solutions have to be stimulated through innovation and financial incentives; there is a wide reservoir for job creation in this sector. The government is aware of the remaining inadequacies and encourages childcare at home, through fiscal incentives (which benefit both to job-searchers and young parents).

A new challenge appeared with the rise of housing costs since 2001-2002; the share of rents and mortgage in total young households' budgets reach unbearable ceilings; there is a debate to know if it is a bubble (hence provisional), linked to short-term factors (speculation, collapse of financial shares by 2000, higher demand due to the immigration of E.U. citizens coming from densely populated countries-and thus much higher home prices- like the U.K., Benelux, Germany) or driven by more structural factors. Banks do their best to lower their interest rates and extend mortgage validity, but it is a partial solution; many young parents cannot pay their bills and are "check-forbidden" by the Central Bank (Banque de France); safety-mechanisms have to be imagined to preserve them from humiliation and destitution: after all, they deserve it ; they have merit: they are risk-takers and they prepare for the future of the society by investing in human capital; money transferred to them is *investment* and not pure consumption, with low return, as usual. The political problem is that the people who are concerned are marginal, isolated, without protection by the power nomenclature (top administrators like Ministers or cabinet members, leaders of trade unions or medias), which too selfish, too rich to listen and have a social understanding (the

popular proverb says that they “belong to one other planet”). The latest sub-urban rebellions (November 2005) show that the most deprived poor are “fed-up”, and ready for “incivility”.

#### 5.4.1. Overview and problems ahead

Many countries with a much-below replacement fertility, let us say with a TFR of 1.3 child(ren) or less per average woman, can learn from the French experience or success in lifting birth rates. The stabilisation of France’s birth rate can be attributed to the steady government effort in allocating social resources to help needy families by providing incentives ( financial allowances, maternity leave, parental leave, day-care assistance, tax rebates, state or municipal subsidies for children.

Mothers and single parents families get special transfers. All children between 3-5 years old across France are offered free pre-school education by the government. Women are entitled to a paid maternity leave of 16 weeks for their first or second child, and of 26 weeks for each additional birth. After giving birth to their third child, they are granted a supplementary leave of 84% of their regular salary. Their works rights are also fully protected if they return to the workplace after their maternity leave.

*In spite of adverse economic circumstances enumerated in this paper, boosting birth rates is possible; in France, the average annual size of baby-*

boomers *birth cohorts* (1946-1973) was 850 000; the present size of the “fertility crisis” cohorts born under the below-replacement regime (1975-2005) is about 750 000, the *fall is limited to – 12%*, but one must not forget the protective presence of the “youth umbrella” (people at childbearing ages belong to the large post-war generations). In *Japan*, by contrast, the *number of births per year declined by more than 40%* between 1950-1955 and 2000-2005 (above 2 million and less than 1.2 million, respectively); in *South Korea*, the picture is even more extreme (a bit more than one million during the two-decades period 1955-1975; only 500 000 today, that is a *cut by more than half in only one third of a century*). This is the **key political issue of applied demographics: the number of births shapes the age structure, the future labor force and “horizontal” size of the market** (the vertical one is income).

Once again, **France averted a fertility collapse**; even if the family policy is far **from being perfect, it is much wider and deeper than in other advanced societies**; barriers to pregnancy are lower and it is possible to make the choice to have a replacement family ( 2 children at least), without the risk of unsustainable time stress and material impoverishment. Job discrimination against women is comparatively small, notably if we take into account the “machist” societies, like the Mediterranean or East Asian ones.

**Unfortunately, it is impossible to assess the effectiveness of each individual policy measure: fertility is related to an endless list of factors, like:**

the characteristics of the potential parents, the socio-economic, institutional and environmental context, the place of women's status in the public debate, etc. Simulation models are not able to disentangle the impact of each determinant and to identify country-specific cultural features.

**Only an indirect and crude macro-approach can be used, on the basis of international evidence. France seems to become an exception among post-transitional fertility regimes; its TFR is still not so far from the replacement line; if we put aside the presence of an old and up-dated family policy, it is impossible to find arguments** explaining such a case; a **“perfect” policy, erasing the main obstacles** to childbearing could eventually bring the fertility back to the ideal norm of a **TFR of 2.1**. In many post-industrial countries, the family policy is virtually non existent, and the TFR is stabilised at only 1.1-1.2. **The gap is enormous (roughly half of the children are missing)**; using a more modest standard, like the **French reference** shows that the fertility drop can be contained and increased, step by step, by **at least 0.5 points for the TFR**. All is a matter of political will.

#### 5.4.2. The coming agenda

The cost of child-care before the entry in the pre-elementary school is the main focus of future family policies, particularly if the parents are absent from home all day long.

Young children (below the age of 3) in half of the cases are with the non-working parent. For one tenth of them, the father or mother has a part-time job or special labor schedules, thus allowing parental care. The problem is to find a suitable arrangement for the rest (40%); among them 7% are cared by a grandparent or family member; let us summarise by a simple conclusion: for one third of babies, the care is not cost-free. The most expensive “crude”/ apparent (not taking family allowances or tax deduction) cost is for home care provided by a professional (“assistant maternelle”): 750 Euros per month in 2002, and is rare (1% of total) ; other childminding options like “agreed” nannies outside child home (17%) , with a monthly average cost of 321 Euros, and creches (10%), with a monthly average cost 227 Euros are also relatively expensive for young couples having low wages, high rents and sometimes two babies. The cost is income-related, and inflated by the shortage of creches. In big cities, the situation is critical (absence of relatives, higher housing costs, longer absence from home, larger deficit in places,...) and many young parents use “black”/undeclared solutions (as non-agreed nannies).

#### 5.5 Immigration policy IV.6.1 1945: the desire to integrate immigration into the population policy

In the aftermath of the war, the current desire of the planners was to include



immigration among the objectives for relaunching the population of the country. It was the time when Alfred Sauvy (1946) evaluated the immigration needs of France, but the avowed aims were never to be followed, for employers adopted various channels, legal or otherwise, and sometimes even went to recruit workers abroad in their villages of origin. In addition, the robustness of the *baby boom* lessened the preoccupation with population – creating, however, deficiencies of labour force in certain sectors.

With the first oil shock (1973), the government altered its position and aligned itself with most of the European OECD members in closing the frontiers to the inflow of new workers, encouraging return, and integrating the numbers of the foreign population legally installed within the territory. It was the so-called policy of zero immigration. We now know that this policy failed everywhere (in Germany, Switzerland, France, etc.). By its very nature, foreign immigration is a life project that does not concern just a single individual, and that the granting of a bonus is therefore without effect as an incentive to return. We shall later refer to zero illegal immigration. There again, this is to disregard a powerful reality that imposes itself upon all rulers: international disequilibria, political shocks, massive poverty in the countries of the South, the role of families already in place upon arrival, activities of smuggling rings, corruption around the frontiers (illicit payments, falsification of documents etc.)...everything that combines to sustain migratory pressures.

In addition, from the internal point of view and despite the persistence of a high rate of unemployment, there were indeed important sectorial needs for labour force (domestic services, construction, hospitals, and personal assistance etc.). In France, as elsewhere, unemployment was no longer experienced as an indignity or social shame, and an increasing number of jobs were considered to be degrading by reason of what had to be endured (excessive working hours, low salary, dirty work).

*This distortion, in fact, between rhetoric (cessation of immigration) and reality (sustaining entry flows) is at the origin of misunderstandings, and to a large extent doubtlessly of pressure from the extreme right.).*

#### 5.5.1 Freedom of movement (XIXth century)

France is traditionally an immigration country. According to the 1851 census, there were already 379,000 foreigners i.e. more than 1% of its total population. This is the threshold statistic of 1% that for European countries corresponds to the end of secular emigration and beginning of the contemporary era of immigration. Thus France had a good century of advance over its European partners as regards immigration: Among its neighbours in Western Europe, this threshold was only crossed between the 1960s and 1980s. This fact is just a reflection of the century of advance in the secular decline of fertility, and the lack of fertility was not long in finding its expression in the sectorial shortages of the

labour force.

Immigration into France was completely free until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The settlement of strangers has subsequently been progressively controlled, and their employment was limited in 1932, following the economic crisis (see later).

From the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, foreign immigration increased in importance. In the 1886 census there were more than 1 million foreigners i.e. 3% of the population. The gross contribution of this immigration to population movement, even if limited solely to the migratory balance in the total population increase, was decisive. Thus, during the whole 1851-1896 period, the arrival of foreigners contributed to 35% of the total growth in the French population, and the direct contribution was even greater in a period of demographic stagnation (such as between 1881 and 1911) when foreign immigration then accounted for half the population growth.

*The number of foreign nationals acquiring French citizenship served to mask the slowing down or even decline in the national population. The law of 26 June 1889 eased the acquisition of French nationality to the extent that, in spite of the inflow of immigrants, the number of foreigners remained stationary almost until 1911, thus largely compensating for the decline in French population).*

### 5.5.2. Inter-war period: from the peak of immigration to rejection

After the blood bath of World War I, France lacked a young labour force and immigration increased to the extent of placing her in the front rank of immigration countries. It is also true that the USA had, by their restrictive laws in 1921 and 1924, dried up the flow to their country. In ten years, despite the many naturalisations following the 1927 law on nationality, the number of foreign nationals in France increased by more than 1.2 million (in addition to Poles and Belgians, this wave included colonial workers), thus reaching the figure of 2.7 millions in the 1931 census, i.e. 6.6% of the French population. If the population born outside France is considered (which excludes naturalised neo-French), the situation is even clearer. The number thus increased from 866,000 in 1891 to 2,942,000 in 1931 – an increase of more than 2 million.

The following is well-known. The Great Depression and unemployment led to the fear of xenophobic tensions, and the government decided to limit the employment of foreigners and encourage their return, and this affected arrivals. The law of 10 August 1931 aimed at protecting the national labour force by a decree that fixed the proportion of foreign nationals having the right to employment in enterprises. The war also stopped immigration and motivated return to such an extent that in 1946 the number of foreigners did not exceed 1.7 million, and was therefore below its 1946 peak.

All in all, the inter-war epoch was most marked as a time of high immigration (1918-1931) allied to the replacement of those killed in combat. Between 1920 and 1939 the influx of foreigners accounted greatly for the growth in French population – a most important migratory contribution was added to natural growth

### 5.5.3. Post-war: from opening to restriction

In the aftermath of World War II, the national leaders felt the necessity for massive foreign immigration in response to both demographic needs and reconstruction requirements. The legally regulated ordinance of 2 November 1945 laid down the conditions for entry and residence of foreigners in France. The award of a residence permit was subject to obtaining a work permit, and bilateral agreements were signed with the countries of origin. Family regrouping was seen as a demographic aim, and encouraged. The new *Code de la nationalité* (Nationality Law), promulgated by the Ordinance of 19 October 1945, was relaxed for the youngest generations. The child became French if either of the parents was French or if it was born in France of foreign parents, and lastly the foreign bride of a Frenchman also became French (the reverse case was to be adopted in 1973).

Labour immigration became more frequent after 1955 and quickly found itself swollen by the return of repatriates from the former colonies (1.3 million as

a whole, 710,000 in 1962 alone).

Three waves of permanent workers followed during 1955-1973 period: Italians, Spanish and Portuguese. Their entry took place under the control of the ONI (Office national d'immigration – National Immigration Office), since renamed OMI (Office des Migrations Internationales – International Immigration Office). As for Algerian immigration (the oldest), this came about according to an evaluation by the Ministry of the Interior (Direction des renseignements généraux – Central Department for General Information).

Similarly to the Great Depression of the 1930s, the oil shock was to close down the entry of workers and encourage their return. But the anticipated effects did not come about. There was a rise in family regroupings (from North Africa for the most part) and a development of requests for asylum and clandestine entries (and the precariousness with which they are associated).

#### 5.5.4 A statistical balance: France within the main currents of world immigration, 1950-2000

In the absence of adequate statistics, especially on the population born abroad, one can assume as a first approximation that the difference between the total increase in population and the natural balance will measure the flow in migration that is applied to a sole national population. In accordance with this rule, the migratory balance of the main Western countries over the whole period of

1950-2000 can be evaluated. As total population is very different from one case to another (285 million in the USA, 7 million in Switzerland, for example), we have divided the volume of net immigration obtained by the corresponding population of each country in the middle of the period (1975).

The result provides an absorption indicator of the foreign population. Here are the indices obtained for the seven main Western immigration countries, per 1000 inhabitants:

**Table 3. Absorption indicator of foreign population**

| Country       | Indicator |
|---------------|-----------|
| Australia     | 319       |
| Canada        | 249       |
| Switzerland   | 170       |
| United States | 138       |
| Germany       | 119       |
| Sweden        | 94        |
| France        | 89        |

The gross data are thus relativised. Despite having a migratory balance of 30 million people, the USA is situated far behind Australia and Canada. As for France, it is in last position – which is something to calm certain passionate arguments in France.

### 5.5.5 Political mistakes

In France as well in other E.U. countries, one third of the opinion is openly and structurally” racist”: people describe themselves as such to inquirers; one other third proclaims they are “rather racist”; the last third does not care. In a period of economic stagnation and massive unemployment, tensions between immigrants and nationals exacerbate; among youth minorities, the rate of unemployment reaches 40%, and discontent is maximal. Urban violence explodes; buses, cars, schools are burnt; police force are threatened to be shot; in ghettos, delinquency, drug, car and arms traffic are part of an alternative, parallel economy. The government is in disarray: the politics of denial which began in 1973 was disastrous; it was first said that new immigration intake would be stopped to integrate the former legal migration, and that return would be encourage through special premiums; in fact, these objectives did not work at all; the migration chain continued to operate and sectorial needs of manpower were intensified by the search of cheap labor to face globalisation and excessive taxation.

The electorate was not blind: everybody could see that the official discourse and data tried to hide the truth (ongoing important immigration); in 2002, the Nationalist and xenophobic right wing Party got the second rank for the Presidential election. At the time, the successive governments had only slightly modified their speeches, saying that the objective was not “zero immigration”, but “zero illegal migration”, thus creating a double hostility: first, among residents



perceiving new entrants as invaders; second among immigrants who considered that they were undesirable and thus shifted back to their roots , via tribalism or communitarism.

National leaders ignore the painful process of assimilation in turbulent times; local authorities, who work at the grass-root level, know the reality

In fact, the main aspect is to build a sustainable future for both South and North, and not leave immigration flows to anarchy or diplomatic considerations. Immigration is basically an economic phenomenon, which has to be prepared by economic actors: employers, trade unions, local residents; many sectors cannot survive without migrants. Immigration has to be diversified in its geographical streams to avoid ethnic coagulation. It has to be active, anticipative, and not passive.

The use of universalist quotas, exemplified by overseas Anglo-saxon countries and by Quebec, is the way to prepare for the future. The U.S. is the “first universalist nation”; this is clearly a model for France, who still pretends to have a borderless traditional philosophy. Recruitment (selection) could be organised in each sub-continent by regional offices settled in the main capital cities, after an open political debate in the medias, both in France and in sending countries; the public opinion cannot be ignored, it is very sensitive to the question of heritage, national interest and identity. The idea of E.U. “common immigration policy” is

utopia; however police cooperation is necessary to control the external borders and preserve security.

The recurrent key issue is the divide between the ruling, ageing, over privileged and frequently corrupted officials who have their own private drivers, cooks, secretaries, access to paid first-class transportation facilities, free housing in protected areas, on one side, and “the people”, who can only contemplate luxury on the TV, on in fashion boutiques, this whatever their own merit, on the other side: the rulers live like in castles without contact with the “social basis”. The political consensus of honest decision- makers is that meritocracy has failed in the latest 2 or 3 decades: “the social lift” is blocked, while the upper bourgeoisie could take advantage of the huge profits provided by the first privatisations of State-owned companies and by unlimited wages and shares self-granted to top managers (“golden parachutes” at retirement, for example). Disillusion is huge, especially among the hard-working entrepreneurs and the most dynamic migrant minorities; there is a steady **emigration of the best brains**, selected from the **top scientist or managerial universities**. In fact, the French elite still has a communist-like cult of the State; the opinion favours “socialism” to the detriment of “free enterprise”, forgetting that “liberty” precedes “equality” in the Constitution.

## **Chapter 6. Conclusion. The feminist paradox**

The main determinant of the secular fertility decline is the improvement of women's status due to global modernisation. Most of women born since the 1970s have a very small number of children as compared to their mothers and grand mothers, who were endangered by death risks all life long and by reproductive risks(delivery, spontaneous or induced abortion); adaptation to survival imperative required spending of their life time in pregnancies, breastfeeding, nourishing their children, grand-children and family members. But the cost of children was diluted(older sisters and relatives were around to take care of labor-intensive and tiring work required by younger babies)

The urbanisation and tertiarisation of the economy have increased the money cost (loss of wage, direct expenses linked to absence from home and to the consumption society) and the cost of space (people live in flats with a limited number of expensive square meters ; there are not any more open spaces at the door); items like housing, food, energy, transport, telecommunication, leisure, electronic tools and gadgets, new technologies and equipment absorb the income, and push women to get money; the time resource demanded by education is increasingly concentrated on mothers.

In France, for example, new mothers have benefited from quasi-universal and university schooling, access to paid activities, limited reproductive life span (breastfeeding practices come back to fashion, but the existence of safe artificial milk has limited the duration of intensive mobilisation of the mother's body from 2-3 years to a couple of months). Motherhood is more stressing; it is a personal choice and responsibility, lived in a much lonelier environment than in the past, and with the constant reference to the professional alternative in the mind: new aspirations such as self-accomplishment have emerged. Many institutions indeed facilitate the fertility free choice (to have or not to have babies); the cost of a "statistically normal" family (2-children) is affordable. The social context is feminist; in spite of the rigidity of the labor market legislation (excessive minimal wage, Malthusian control of legal weekly or yearly work duration, prohibitive taxation of labor, difficulty to hire and fire, conservatism and anti-liberalism of trade-unionists); women are welcome in many new job-creating sectors (banking, consulting, insurance, high-tech as well to direct services to dependents) .

On the contrary, in machist societies, women are less respected and more overburdened by union and family; in Italy, for example, fathers spend only 22 minutes per day to their children, that is two times less than their French counterparts and three times less than the Scandinavian ones. They are partially empowered; although better achievers at school, they live in a patriarchal and sexist setting, with permanent discrimination at home and outside; subordination

which was abolished during childhood, teenage and university years resurfaces with marriage (domination of the husband, extended family control) ,and reinforces with the birth of every child. Youth expectations and dreams are annihilated by the inertia and weight of the tradition. “Women are the future of men”, says the biologist; with the new reproductive technologies, women control their body and the unique real power: life or death of families and societies. Fertility is not a fatality; it is a matter of feminism: the road to survival is open only to feminist societies (Chesnais, 1996).

The growing accent put on the parental leave is no miracle solution, but part of the answer; creating a so-called “family-friendly” society must be more than words. It requires an integrated, consistent, complex and expensive package program and, above all, political braveness. The future adult population will be composed by a majority of retirees: in France, their number is likely to jump from 13 million in 2005 to 20 million by 2030; the elderly leisure class which is so well protected by the Welfare system (present high and early pensions) will have to renounce to myopic and selfish immediate interest in order to accept transfers to potential future citizens, in terms of disposable time, money, capital in favour of young and vulnerable adults struck by the economic recession (job precocity, decreasing purchasing power. Neighbourhood and informal solidarity (through the massive network of NGOs and legal associations) could help poor families or lone mothers; political (feminist) lobbies should emerge in the political sphere as it is

the case in Sweden: the gender equity could become a matter of priority in electoral platforms.

All the social fabric has to be reconsidered to be adapted to the challenge of women' rights as future-designers. Let us take an elementary issue: female pensions; women who have educated many children (future workers and taxpayers) have a ridiculous pension as compared to childless career women (whose job existence was provided by demand, or in other words by the market created by mothers) ; Adenauer imagined that people would “always breed enough children” and ignored the need to reward childrearing mothers; one third of a century after, another great Christian-Democrat Chancellor, Kohl, missed the opportunity to take into account the demographic contribution in the computation of pensions. Economic, medias, and policy leaders have to explain that the public interest and the maintenance of the welfare system are conditioned by the replacement of generations; pensioners have been the main beneficiaries of social security “largesse”; young adults have been sacrificed and will not be able to contribute further: fertility and incomes have been depressed; a vicious circle is there, with a high risk of financial failure (Peterson, 1999).

The elderly hope to have grand-children for their own happiness; the society must try to avoid a drastic fall in the number of births (like in most modern(ising) societies; children are a present and future potential market and, as such, job-providers; if there is a growing youth deficit, demand drops and unemployment

remains high or worsens, thus putting pressure on the welfare system. In fact, there is no conflict of interest between the “old” and the “youth”; there is a single common public interest.

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## APPENDIX

Table 1 : France, demographic indicators. Past (1950-2005), and future (2005-2050)

| Year  | Population<br>(million)<br>present<br>territory | Average life<br>expectancy at<br>birth (both<br>sexes) | Infant mortality<br>rate (p. 1000<br>live births) | Total period<br>fertility<br>rate<br>(per 1 woman) |
|-------|---|--|---|--|
| 1750  | 25.0  | 25   | 300   | 5.35   |
| 1800  | 29.0  | 32   | 210   | 4.70   |
| 1850  | 37.0  | 42   | 165   | 3.50   |
| 1900  | 41.0  | 47   | 150   | 2.95   |
| 1950  | 41.0  | 66.3   | 52  | 2.93   |
| 2000  | 59.1  | 79.0   | 4.4   | 1.82   |
| 2005  | 60.9  | 80.0   | 3.8   | 1.86   |
| 2020* | 67.0  | 82.0   | 2.5   | 1.90   |
| 2050* | 72.0-75.0                                       | 84.0   | 2.0   | 1.90   |

\* Likely scenarios, with an annual net immigration of 150 000

Sources : - DUPAQUIER, Jacques (ed.) : Histoire de la population française, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1988, 4 vol.  
- Our estimates for the latest data and population prospects.

Table 2: Net migration as a % of total population growth, France, 1801-2005

| Period   | Share in pop. growth (%) | Period                  | Share in pop. growth (%) | Period                                | Share in pop. growth (%) |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1801-21  | 5.5                      | 1891-1901               | 57.5                     | 1954-62                               | 39.4                     |
| 1821-41  | 15.0                     | 1901-1911               | 33.3                     | 1962-68                               | 35.1                     |
| 1841-61  | 5.0                      | 1911-21 <sup>b</sup>    | 22.1                     | 1968-75                               | 30.5                     |
| 1861-72 <sup>a</sup>   | - 100.0                  | 1921-31                 | 74.4                     | 1975-82                               | 14.4                     |
| 1872-81  | 26.9                     | 1931-46 <sup>c</sup>    | - 82.4                   | 1982-90                               | 19.8                     |
| 1881-91  | 19.8                     | 1946-54                 | 13.4                     | 1990-2005                             | 35.0 <sup>d</sup>        |
| a Franco-Prussian war  |                          | b First World War (WWI) |                          | c Great Economic depression and WW II |                          |
| d Our estimate, taking account of net illegal immigration flows  |                          |                         |                          |                                       |                          |
| <u>Source</u> : CHESNAIS Jean-Claude "The demographic transition ...", Oxford University Press, 1992, and own estimates for 1982-2005. |                          |                         |                          |                                       |                          |

Table 3: Number of households and average household size

| Year                  | Number of households (present territory) million | Average number of persons per household |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| 1850                  | 8.4  | 4.40                                    |
| 1900                  | 11.4   | 3.60                                    |
| 1950                  | 13.0   | 3.06                                    |
| 2000                  | 24.1   | 2.62                                    |
| 2005                  | 24.5   | 2.50                                    |
| <u>Source</u> : INSEE |  |   |

Table 4 : Percentage of extra-marital births (p. 100 live births)

| Year | %   | Year | %    |
|------|-----|------|------|
| 1800 | 4.8 | 1970 | 6.7  |
| 1850 | 7.3 | 1980 | 11.3 |
| 1900 | 8.7 | 1990 | 30.0 |
| 1930 | 8.0 | 2000 | 42.6 |
| 1940 | 6.0 | 2005 | 47.0 |

Source : INSEE

Table 5 : Proportion of “single” (not ever-married) women at the age of 50, by birth cohort

| Birth cohorts | %    | Birth cohorts | %      |
|---------------|------|---------------|--------|
| 1836-1840     | 13.6 | 1911-1915     | 8.5    |
| 1856-1860     | 11.3 | 1931-1935     | 7.5    |
| 1876-1880     | 10.5 | 1951-1955     | 12.0   |
| 1896-1900     | 11.9 | 1971-1975     | (35.0) |

Source : INED

**Table 6 :** Distribution of marriages by family size, per 1000

| Marriage cohort | Number of children |     |     |     |     |     | Total |
|-----------------|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
|                 | 0                  | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5 + |       |
| 1950            | 181                | 196 | 212 | 171 | 102 | 138 | 1 000 |
| 1960            | 111                | 220 | 299 | 199 | 92  | 71  | 1 000 |
| 1970            | 109                | 272 | 391 | 170 | 40  | 18  | 1 000 |
| 1980            | 160                | 223 | 363 | 192 | 44  | 16  | 1 000 |

Source : BLAYO Chantal et BERGOUIGNAN Christophe, 2005 : Fécondité et pression Sociale dans les cinquante dernières années in : CUDEP (Conférence Universitaire de Démographie et d'Etude des Populations) : la population de la France. Evolutions démographiques depuis 1946, pp. 273-332.

**Table 7 :** The inversion of the age pyramid . Age-Specific Transitional Multiplier (ASTM): the initial number (1775) is put at a relative ratio of 1; and Median age, France, 1776-2050

| Year | 0-14 years | 65 years + | 80 years + | Median age (years) |
|------|------------|------------|------------|--------------------|
| 1775 | 1          | 1          | 1          | 29.0               |
| 1872 | 1.2        | 2.4        | 2.6        | 31.5               |
| 1962 | 1.5        | 4.9        | 9.3        | 35.0               |
| 2010 | 1.3        | 9.0        | 29.0       | 39.0               |
| 2050 | 0.9        | 15.6       | 60.9       | 42.0               |

Source : CHESNAIS Jean-Claude : The demographic modernization of humanity, 1715-2015 (forthcoming).

**Table 8 :** Population of the “very very” old (aged 80 and above), in thousands and corresponding age-specific multiplier, France, 1776-2080

| Year | Number |         | Multiplier |         |
|------|--------|---------|------------|---------|
|      | Males  | Females | Males      | Females |
| 1776 | 45     | 50      | 1.0        | 1.0     |
| 1866 | 115    | 150     | 2.6        | 3.0     |
| 1960 | 299    | 615     | 6.6        | 12.3    |
| 2010 | 1 033  | 2 143   | 23.0       | 42.9    |
| 2050 | 2 361  | 4 258   | 52.5       | 85.2    |
| 2080 | 5 400  | 9 100   | 120.0      | 182.0   |

Source : CHESNAIS Jean-Claude : The demographic modernization of humanity, 1715-2015,

**Table 9 :** Number of women by employment status (thousands), 1954-2004, France

| Year | Employed  |           | Unemployed | Total  |
|------|-----------|-----------|------------|--------|
|      | Full-time | Part-time |            |        |
| 1954 | 6 506     |           | 38         | 6 544  |
| 1962 | 6 489     |           | 73         | 6 562  |
| 1973 | 6 776     | 1 011     | 190        | 7 977  |
| 1987 | 6 908     | 2 074     | 1 395      | 10 377 |
| 2004 | 7 800     | 3 350     | 1 400      | 12 675 |

Source : INSEE : Population Censuses and Labour Force Surveys

Table 10 : Social Security expenditures as a % of the GDP , by function, 1950-2005, France

| Year | Family | Pensions | Health | Unemployment | Total |
|------|--------|----------|--------|--------------|-------|
| 1950 | 4.4    | 7.0      |        | 0.0          | 11.4  |
| 1960 | 4.6    | 4.9      | 4.9    | 0.2          | 14.7  |
| 1970 | 3.9    | 7.4      | 6.6    | 0.4          | 18.7  |
| 1980 | 3.5    | 10.2     | 8.4    | 1.7          | 23.9  |
| 1990 | 3.0    | 11.7     | 9.6    | 1.9          | 26.0  |
| 2000 | 3.0    | 13.1     | 10.2   | 2.1          | 29.8  |
| 2005 | 2.7    | 12.8     | 10.7   | 2.4          | 30.2  |

Source : Ministry of Finance, Comptes de la Nation (National Accounts Statistics)