

再検証は次年度以降の課題として残された。

## B. 現地調査の成果

フランスの現地調査では昨年はまだ検討段階にあった重病の子どもの看護のための付添親休暇(CPP)と付添親手当(APP)が制度化されたことが明らかになった。また、第2子について1994年から給付されるようになった養育親手当(APE)が出産後の女性の復職を抑制する傾向があることがはっきりしてきたため、不利な状況にあり、保育サービスを必要とする女性復職を支援するため、女性復職扶助手当(ARAF)が制度化された。さらに、EU指令に合わせるために深夜業や母性保護に関連する法律改正が行われつつあり、有害物質への暴露や深夜業が妊産婦の健康を脅かす可能性があるとして産業医が判断し、雇用主による配置転換が不可能なために休業させる場合には社会保障基金から賃金保障が支払われることになりそうであった。

他方、ベルギー、ルクセンブルグ、フランスの一部の研究機関での資料収集・ヒアリングの結果、社会政策としての家族政策の評価を科学的に行う試みがなされているだけでなく、それらの機関が共同で比較研究を実施しつつあることが明らかになった。

## C. 実証分析の成果

フランスにおいては出生動向や家族政策に関する世論調査が比較的頻繁に実施されてきており、それが家族政策策定にあたって参考にされているため、わが国についても1990年と1995年の「人口問題意識調査」の個票データを若干の比較も交えながら分析を行った。その結果、低出生力対策に対する態度、より具体的には子育て支援策と外国人労働者導入政策について「必要感」、「マスコミ影響」、「伝統主義」、「反政府傾向」の4つの仮説のいずれもが支持された。他方、フランスでは近年、家族政策が出生促進策というよりも貧困対策、社会的統合政策としての意味合いを強めていると国民も認識しているが、わが国でも出生促進策よりも子育て支援策としての家族政策の方が支持されるように見受けられる。また、出生動向と政策介入に対する国民の態度の規定要因については日仏で類似するものもあるが、異なるものも多いことも示唆された。

### (3) 次年度以降の研究計画

#### A. 文献研究

平成13年度においては平成11年度から実施しているフランス、ベルギー、ルクセンブルグ、カナダのケベック州の出生・家族の動向と家族政策の動向に関する研究はそのまま継続するが、平成12年度に開始しいた歴史的な研究や評価に関する研究も本格化したい。平成12年度に収集したベルギー、ルクセンブルグの出生・家族の動向と家族政策に関する基礎資料の内容を更新するとともに深化させるため、また平成11～12年度に収集したフランスに関する情報を更新するため、現地を訪問して情報収集を行う予定である。なお、カナダのケベック州については平成11年度の委託研究の補足・更新をするとともに下記の実証研究によって政策効果の検証を試みる。

#### B. 実証研究

平成11年度と12年度に購入したカナダGSS個票データを用いた出生・家族・就業等

の行動とその規定要因に関する分析を本格的に実施したい。分析の際にはケベック州とそれ以外の地域における出生・家族行動の格差を検討するとともに、統計局の年次報告書における分析にならって行ったケベック州における出産一時金の効果に関する分析をより統計局のものに近づけるとともに、拡張し、その効果の有無を再確認したい。また、8月下旬のソウルにおける国際統計協会（ISI）大会で平成 11 年度に当プロジェクトの一貫として実施した日仏比較研究に基づくパートナー形成に関する論文の改訂版を発表し、専門家の評価を仰ぎ、改善する。

# フランスにおける家族政策とその出生力に対する効果

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本稿ではまず、夫婦の行動に対する政策介入の必要性について若干触れられた後、フランスにおける家族政策の歴史的展開について検討され、さらに出生力に対する家族政策の影響について考察された。フランスには限らず、家族政策の目的としては出生促進のほか、女子の就業と子どもの教育に影響を与えることがあり、さらに2番目のものと関連するが失業対策もありうる。フランスの家族政策の戦後史において1946年から1955年にかけては主要な家族給付が制度化されたが、その後は1972年までは停滞した。1972年から1987年にかけては家族給付が女子の就業に対して中立的であるように改訂が加えられ、控えめな展開が行われた。1980年代末以降は家族の変化に対応して家族政策が改善され、両立支援施策にとどまらず、貧困対策や住宅施策を含めた総合的な家族支援政策となりつつある。また、家族政策の効果についての信頼性の高い推計を得るためには計量経済的モデルを用いる必要があるが、各種モデルにより出生促進効果は小さいにしても特に第3子について確実に存在することが示されたことから、出生促進効果が支出された予算総額よりもむしろ対象の絞り込みに依存する可能性が強く、まだまだ家族政策が効果をもつ余地がある。

## **The French Family Policy and its Effects on Fertility.**

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As a case in point, France stands out among the countries of Europe. Indeed, despite the level of fertility having remained one of the highest in Europe, population concerns are also greater and no one denies the necessity or legitimacy of State action. This is the result of long-standing tradition going back to the sixteenth century; the family proved to be a regulator at a time when the State's presence was not greatly felt. Later, it became the mainstay of the State's social policy, in which pro birth concerns were never absent. Since the war, family policy has been built up on the basis of this overall consensus of opinion. However, apart from Belgium and (to a certain extent only – Germany), few are the countries which worry about the present level of fertility in Europe. In the same way, the timeliness or effectiveness of policies aimed at influencing fertility is largely called into question. Such reservations are based on specific historical factors and traditional ways of thinking the impact of which is still strong but these differences of opinion rarely conceal any hostility to the very family policy principle: many countries have adopted positive measures in favour of families. On the other hand, most European countries deny that such action has any pro-birth or global objective and challenge the family policy concept as a whole as understood within the meaning of the creation of a general environment favourable to the family. All the same, it is quite possible that this particularity may become less distinctive in the long term. Indeed, a study of French population shows that a keen family policy was implemented only after a long period of decrease in fertility. It is true that, in the past, the other European countries did not go through a population standstill period; it has only been since the sixties that they have been faced with a decrease in fertility. Hence should this trend persist, it is quite possible that they would ultimately adopt a more favourable general attitude and take large-scale action concerning families.

The first part of this report deals with the right of the State intervention to change couple's behaviour. Then we describe the development of Family Policy in France. The third part is an attempt to measure its impact on fertility.

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## 1. WHY THE NEED FOR CHANGING COUPLES' BEHAVIOUR?

State action may be motivated by a demographic objective or arise from the will to influence women's labour and/or children's education.

### 1.1. A DEMOGRAPHIC OBJECTIVE

Giving family policies a population objective is often questioned. In this respect, the control of fertility raises the question in new terms. From the moment that effective births correspond to desired births, it must be acknowledged - to justify State action - that either couples are not in a position to see where their interest clearly lies or at least that couples using their free choice have not spontaneously managed to attain optimum population (Tapinos, 1985). In developed countries, the question of whether it is opportune to re-launch fertility schemes is much debated. In many developing countries, the objective, on the contrary, is to ensure the regulation of births. The underlying idea in any State action is that while the control of reproduction depends on private decisions, its consequences remain social. Hence, the State cannot afford to lose interest in it.

The notion of demographic objectives may cover two different concepts. In one case, the State wishes to guarantee the permanency of the national community and considers that it must act to ensure its survival. It considers it has a moral responsibility towards the nation, which consists in ensuring its continuity. In this case, the State intervenes solely when the population is no longer renewed and the number of inhabitants starts to decrease. This objective is that of stationary population. In the second case, State action is more ambitious, no longer aimed at merely maintaining the population level but also on influencing its pace of growth with a view to making it increase or decrease, depending on the circumstances. The notion of a population policy supposes that the State has a clear vision of the size of the population, the structure per age as also of the desirable level of fertility. However, many countries question the legitimate need for any standard in this field and even question the possibility of State action for purposes of influencing population balance. Hence all attempts aimed at ensuring that greater consideration is given to the family factor in Europe are based, for the most part, on principles of equity concerning which a consensus of opinion exists in other countries, even in the presence of an underlying demographic objective.

### JUSTIFYING STATE INTERVENTION

Contrary to their declared intentions, the State authorities cannot claim to be neutral in family matters. Regardless of its wish not to interfere in this field, the State has an influence on the living conditions and the setting up of the family and hence indirectly on population attitudes.

In theory, parents have complete freedom of choice about whether or not to have children, but research shows that their decision is influenced by the wider financial, social and cultural

environment, even though the precise impact of different factors is impossible to estimate (Ekert and Maugu  , 1992). In modern societies, children are no longer considered to be the means of ensuring financial security in old age, since the state makes provision for older people. Most members of the working population are wage earners, and therefore no longer depend on their children's contribution as family workers. In addition, since the postwar baby-boom, the cost of raising children has increased at a much faster rate than the overall cost of living for a number of reasons: housing, leisure and childminding have all become more expensive; more women are economically active; younger people spend longer in schooling, and the unit value of each child becomes greater as family size gets smaller. Between 1950–90, the cost of raising children in Europe is estimated to have increased by 80%: less 20% due to the financial support received each year, and with a 25% increase in the length of the period during which children are financially dependent on their parents, producing a 50% increase over the life cycle, 20% of which is due to female activity (Ekert-Jaff  , 1991, 1994). In these circumstances, couples may decide not to take on the burden of raising children and not to commit themselves for twenty years of their lives.

Factors such as these may justify state intervention, although it is unlikely that any action undertaken by the state to dissuade couples from postponing childbirth could ever be on a sufficiently large scale to have much of an impact. Given the budgetary constraints under which governments are operating, the effectiveness of any policy is clearly dependent on careful targeting, the intention being to remove obstacles that may prevent particular categories of parents from having more children. For example, by providing childcare for working mothers or by helping larger families meet their financial needs, it may be possible to influence behaviour, whereas universal provision of family allowances at a relatively low level will not achieve the same effect.

The policies intended to increase fertility generally focus around progressive allowances (1) depending on the rank of the child in the family, favouring large families, and (2) operating on a sliding scale depending on the age of the child, giving priority to families with young children (see below)

## **1.2 FAMILY POLICY AND WOMEN'S LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION**

In a context of high demand for women's employment in the labour market, with higher wages for women and the increase in female education, there has been a universal extension in women's labour

force participation. Thus, the improved standard of living obtained by a second income is regarded as a necessity by most couples. This growth in women's labour force participation raises the (opportunity) cost of children (Ekert-Jaffé, 1994), by increasing the cost of time: women cannot go ahead with their careers and take care of their children on their own at the same time; this is a key factor in the decline of fertility (Ekert-Jaffe, 1986; Blanchet and Ekert-Jaffé, 1994). Hence, a pro-natal policy must take into account the specific needs of working women. In France, action in this direction has been backed up by the results of several studies ( Ekert, 1984, Lelièvre, 1987, Lery, 1984) which clearly show that most childbearing is now achieved by women in the labour force before, after or even during their child rearing period.

The action of the State could take two forms, providing subsidised child care for mothers who want to go on working or granting a parental leave allowance to compensate for the wage loss by women who prefer to interrupt their career to bring up their children. State action would then be neutral to women's labour force participation, by giving the same amount, a lump sum, for every minded child. Such neutrality to women's labour force participation, " free choice " is a recurring theme in France, repeatedly put forward in ministerial speeches before the National Assembly. However, *considerations based on the quality of child rearing or on labour market regulation* could also lead the State to influence women's attitudes towards the labour market.

In France, the question of what kind of care is best for the child has given rise to much speculation. The post-war theory of emotional deprivation established the importance of loving for the newborn baby and the primacy of the mother-infant relationship. Maternal care is the norm in most of continental Europe, especially Germany , Austria and the Netherlands <sup>1</sup>. In France, this view prevailed in the fifties and in the seventies, and till the eighties, most parents preferred it. Nevertheless, child care out of home is a commonly admitted practice, and has a long bicentennial tradition behind it, even if present facilities cannot be compared with the earliest ones. Public involvement and regulation in this field has grown over the recent decades: it has helped increase the quantity and the quality of the care system. In the early seventies, some French studies endeavoured to prove that the children of unskilled workers developed better in day care centres than in their mothers' homes. Françoise Dolto, a very popular leading psychoanalyst, who promoted the idea that " the baby is a person ", pointed out the risks of excessive mother-infant fusion. In 1982 "child welcoming" replaced the term "child minding". Since then, collective welcoming and the other aspects of child socialising, particularly the father's role, have been enhanced.

Concerning children over two and three, a single free of charge pre-school system for care of children has prevailed, operating from 8.30 to 11.30 A.M. and from 1.30 to 4.30 P.M., every day except Wednesday. In addition, children can also eat at school, be looked after till 5.45 P.M every day - and on Wednesdays too, if parents pay a small contribution (e.g. 20 FF for a meal). Consequently, pre-school attendance at age three at a 95% rate has become almost standard

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<sup>1</sup> Thus, German and Austrian mothers, and, to a certain extent, Dutch women are encouraged to withdraw from the labour force, by their being given a substantial "maternal wage" and by the absence of child care benefits or aids.

practice. The same figure at age two is 35% and this trend is independent of the mother's participation in the labour force. A recent survey (Jarousse, and al., 1992) shows that the school attendance at age two has a positive influence on further school results at age eight and this is true for every social class.

The other motive for State intervention is labour market regulation.

In France, despite official statements, labour market considerations were the underlying factor giving rise to the parental leave allowance in the current unemployment context; the job left vacant by the mother was expected to be filled immediately, thereby reducing the unemployment rate burden.

To take the case of Sweden, it was, on the contrary, faced with considerable job shortage in the sixties, the Swedish authorities decided to encourage women's labour. The goal here was not to promote motherhood among working women but rather to let mothers join the labour force.

## 2. DEVELOPMENT OF FAMILY BENEFITS IN FRANCE

### 2.1 FROM 1946 TO 1955 : the setting up of the main benefits

To begin with, family policy started through the clearing houses set up by Catholic employers who, in a wage and price freezing context, wanted to protect fathers of large families from poverty by giving them extra pay or allowances to feed their children. Officially, the family policy which was set up by the statutory laws of 1932 and 1938 and by the Family Code of 1939 was continued and given strong moral connotations by the Vichy Government. It could have been caught up in the fall of Vichy in 1945. However, not only did the acts of the Vichy government in this field validated on the Liberation but family policy under the III Republic was heightened and given a fresh stimulus. This period was marked by a wide consensus of opinion concerning the family subsequent to a long period of decrease in fertility. In fact, this decrease was considered as being largely responsible for the French defeat in 1940. At the time, society was widely in favour of family policies and approved pro-birth objectives. On the Liberation, family benefits were given a new pro-birth trend conducive to keeping mothers at home. The 1946 Act resumed the system set up by Vichy with family allowances and a single income allowance increasing with the number of children<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, allowances given at birth were increasingly developed<sup>3</sup>. In addition, the Finance Act of 1946 set up the family quotient system the pro-birth inducement of which arose from a differentiation in the number of shares, between couples with children and those without<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Both expressed as a percentage of a monthly basic wage. The single wage allowance proved, in actual fact, to be distinctly higher than the family allowances for the first two children. The latter then took over to help larger families.

<sup>3</sup> In the form of a prenatal allowance and a maternity allowance

<sup>4</sup> Two during the course of the first three years following the marriage and one and a half after this period



The legislation developed during the fifties with the creation of the housing allowance (1949), the increase in the rate of family allowances<sup>5</sup> and the introduction of an increase in these allowances for children having reached the age of 10 years. It was generalised in 1955 with the extension of the single income allowance to all independent workers in the form of an allowance to the mother staying at home. However, if the legislation on benefits developed, the indexing clause which was to align this development to that of the reference wage<sup>6</sup> was not respected. It was suspended as from 1947 due to the high increase in the nominal wage brought about by inflation and was reviewed by fits and starts depending on the need to maintain the balance of the various funds. However, the benefits continued to increase in real value till 1955

## 2.2 THE STANDSTILL OF FAMILY BENEFITS FROM 1955 TO 1972

From 1955, in the middle of the baby boom years, the re-evaluation of benefits solely took into account prices and no longer the evolution of real income. In fact, the main allowances i.e. family allowances and single income allowance reached their highest level in 1955 as compared to that of 1949; the second then started to fall in value as a result of the freezing of its "basic wage". This re-evaluation basis which became specific to this allowance did not virtually develop any further. It was re-assessed one last time in 1962 and not modified again till the final suppression of the allowance in 1978. The Government thus allowed the single income allowance to die out gradually without this decrease being fully compensated for by an increase in family allowances. The latter, after a period of decline, which lasted till 1959, took an upward trend, which allowed them to once again reach and exceed their 1955 level. Thus, the value of family benefit as compared to income was, generally speaking, lower in 1970 than its 1955 level in real value despite the fact that wages had continued to increase during this period<sup>7</sup>.

This standstill reflects a double movement; on the one hand, a re-orientation of the social policy towards other sectors considered as holding more priority, and on the other hand, the beginning of the development of women's work. In one respect new social priorities were taking shape during the sixties following the survey done by the Laroque Commission which, in 1962, stressed the need to cope with increasing health expenses and the need to conduct a strong old age policy. Sickness benefits and old age benefits had not been generalised to the same extent as family benefits. As a

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<sup>5</sup> 10% in 1954

<sup>6</sup> Wages of metal workers in the Parisian region

<sup>7</sup> Almost double in real value

result, it had become the practice, to begin with, to repay part of the surplus of the family allowances funds to the other deficit-showing social protection branches. Subsequently, the rate of contribution to family allowances was reduced<sup>8</sup>, the decrease being carried over to contributions covering the other risks, particularly old age. In another respect, the increase in feminine activity at the end of the sixties brought about a mechanical decrease in the sums paid out as single income allowance, the legislation remaining unchanged. All professional categories taken into account, this decrease was particularly felt in families with one and two children (cf. figure 1), women's work still being very slightly developed in large families.

### **2.3 FROM 1972 to 1987: HESITATIONS IN FAMILY POLICY**

Family policy was given a fresh stimulus as from 1972. However, the re-launching measures were selective, showing a durable trend to subordinate the granting of benefits to certain conditions such as income or the child's rank or to reserve them for targeted brackets considered as more urgent. The slow progression of family allowances in real value and the standstill of the single income allowance in absolute value contrasted in the early 1970's with the introduction of various allowances reflecting a redeployment of the family policy effort towards certain sectors. Subsequently, however, the increase of benefits became more general and sprang both from the hesitant policy concerning the second and the third child as well as from a wider extension of the main allowances. The chief concern that prevailed, however, during the whole period was to make sure that the family benefits system remained neutral in relation to women's work.

#### **GRADUAL NEUTRALING IN RELATION TO WOMEN'S WORK**

The change in the status and meaning given to women's work was obvious during the early seventies. It no longer merely complied with economic necessities but was increasingly acknowledged as being a factor of autonomy. Along with this change came the calling into question of the single income allowance and the firm intention of gradually neutralising the family benefits system in relation to women's work: while the 1946 model had given priority to the mother of many children who stayed at home, the progressive withdrawal reflected the concern to take into account the increased

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<sup>8</sup> This contribution is based on the portion of the wages up to a limit roughly equal to twice the French mean wage; the contribution rate fell from 16.75% in 1951 to 10.5% in 1970.

participation of women in the economy of the nation and the subsiding of pro-birth concerns. The baby boom years seemed to have ensured population recovery.

This withdrawal was demarcated in different stages. The system set up after the war consisted in paying an allowance to all housewives at an increasing rate till the third child. First of all, the single income allowance was stopped when the presence of the other at home was considered unjustified or only slightly justified<sup>9</sup>. Subsequently the single income allowance and that paid to the mother at home were thoroughly modified in 1972 and subjected to income related conditions. On the other hand, the allowance was increased for underprivileged families with either four children or one or several children below three years of age. In 1974, a child minding allowance was introduced for working women. It was intended to be the equivalent of the single income allowance granted to mothers staying at home. Indeed, the lawmakers had decided to compensate women who worked and were thereby subjected to specific charges. Finally, in 1978, the single income allowance was done away with in favour of a new benefit, the family complement, which no longer depended of the non-activity of the mother. In view of the fact that the ceiling on this income- tested benefit was higher for dual earners families, it made it possible, on the contrary, to avoid discriminating against working women. With the introduction of the family complement (1978), the legislation on benefits became quasi neutral in relation to women who worked by establishing aid parity, the only form of discrimination against working women arising from the income related stipulation<sup>10</sup> (figure 1 a, b, c).

However, a comparison of benefits and contribution brings out the fact that working women were again at a disadvantage: benefits were financed through a 9% tax on wages, up to a ceiling which was roughly equal to the French mean wage ; this meant that a professional with a wife at home paid taxes up to this ceiling only, while working couples with the same total income paid taxes up to twice this ceiling. The resulting gap over the life cycle amounted to about two and a half years of the mean wage (Ekert, 1983). This disadvantage to working women was partly reduced by the implementation of a new parental allowance (to be discussed below) in 1985, increased maternity leave (16 weeks instead of 14 since 1980) for the third child, and, from 1987, by social tax relief for the upper class who could afford child care at home.

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<sup>9</sup> In 1959, it was done away with for only children having reached the age of 5 years; in 1967, for young couples without children (the 1946 Act had granted young couples without children the allowance for two years after the wedding).

<sup>10</sup> Which, however, was adjusted for double income families.

## INCOME RELATED BENEFITS

In the face of the increasing social protection expenses, the State authorities looked for ways to control the aids given. The concern for redeployment became a priority as from 1967 due to the economic crisis. In the field of family benefits, the idea of greater adjustment in favour of large families or growing families as also less well-off families prevailed. Family organisations showed great reservations to these modulations being of the opinion that they marked the abandon of a social right and a return to assistance. However, financial constraints being stronger, the effectiveness of such aids was compulsorily subordinate to greater selectivity, for example being income-related, since uniform distribution would merely have resulted in "spreading thinly".

The main measures in this direction were, first of all, the reform of the single income wage in 1972. As was mentioned earlier, the latter had been made income related thereby excluding excluded well-off families and increased in favour of the least privileged families. The introduction of an income ceiling proved, in fact, not to be very selective since only 10% of the former beneficiaries were eliminated. Most of the households were, in fact, below the limits (77% of higher executive families with two children continued to be paid the allowance). However, the same did not apply concerning the increase given to underprivileged families since it was received by only 30 to 35% of the single income beneficiaries. The various specific benefits created in the early seventies (cf. below) stressed this selectivity even more<sup>11</sup>.

The inter-category gaps were appreciably modified during that period in so far as a growing redistribution of benefits was noted. In the sixties, family allowances, allotted paid longer to well-off families (whose children remained dependent on them till the age of 20 years), were paid over and above the single income allowance, received more often to senior executives' wives who worked less than women in other social categories. Significant differences were observed between the categories: in 1960, senior executives in the private sector received family benefits which, on an average, were 5% higher than those paid to workers; this difference was cut down by half by 1972 following the upwards homogenising trend observed in women's work. Subsequently, this system was partially corrected in 1972 with the introduction of a truly selective increase in the single income allowance and, in 1978, with the creation of the family complement intended to help less privileged families (fig. 2). Since 1972, the benefits received by senior executives – from the public sector as well as the private sector – are lower than those respectively paid to workers and employees. However, the gap is greater in the private sector – an average difference of 20% – than in the public sector where the absence of striking differences in the wage scale and the slight level of selectivity in the upper limit for the family complement allocation tends to narrow the gaps between the categories.

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<sup>11</sup> However, the introduction of the family complement in 1978 strongly smoothed out the selectivity of the income-related aids in so far as the higher ceiling on income allowed 80% of families to meet the conditions applied to children and remain below the exclusion limit.

## SPECIFIC BENEFITS

The creation of specific benefits has a triple objective: reducing inequalities between families arising from the extra charges brought about by certain categories of children; help certain categories of families of coping with practical problems encountered at a specific moment of their lives; provide support to certain population particularly underprivileged population groups. New benefits were introduced in the seventies: orphan's allowance (1970), school re-opening allowance (1974), special education allowance (1975), single parent allowance (1977). They contained in them the seeds allowing for the growth of the family policy within an employment policy, a housing policy; they also led to the recent particular focus on fighting poverty

## THE THIRD CHILD POLICY

It was towards the end of the seventies that awareness was reached of the extent and durable nature of the reversal in the population trend observed in the middle of the previous decade. The third child policy, which had been announced very explicitly in 1980 and accompanied with the increase in postnatal allowances for all births the rank of which was equal to or over three<sup>12</sup>, did, in fact, take shape as from 1978 with the creation of the family complement. By selecting three children as one of the alternative criteria for granting it, the latter effectively focused on aid on the birth of the third child: the new benefit was durably allotted solely as from the third child whereas formerly, the single income allowance, not increased over the whole of the family life cycle, had already been allotted as from the second child. Moreover, the rate of family allowances rose more quickly for the third child than for the children born earlier<sup>13</sup>. Finally, the Finance Act of 1981 allotted an extra half-share from the third child.

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<sup>12</sup> In a proportion which, in fact, led to doubling the total amount of pre and post natal allowances previously paid (the so-called policy of the "million" for the third child).

<sup>13</sup> Passing from 37% to 41% between 1<sup>st</sup> January 1978 and 1<sup>st</sup> July 1979 for the third child/increase of one point only for the second child.

From July 1981, family policy underwent a change towards greater neutrality with regard to the diversity in family situations. This re-directing was reflected in the different readjustments carried out through a selective increase in the purchasing power of family benefits<sup>14</sup>. It was part of a large-scale reform the aim of which was to make family benefits uniform regardless of family life style and rank of child, the foregoing in the name of the right of children to equal treatment. Showing a neutral attitude to family situations seemed to be a top priority requirement. However, the slowing down of public expenses and the return to austerity as from 1982 brought to a halt this policy of neutrality which, in fact, had proved to be extremely expensive since the benefits which had been specifically raised were those affecting the greater number of families.

The population concern seemed to have returned to the forefront with the introduction of two new benefits in 1985. The young child's allowance was, first of all, presented as combining the pre and post natal allowances and the family complement paid for a child below three. Its volume was equivalent to the total amount of the benefits which it was substituted for, the change being the monthly payment<sup>15</sup>. However, till 1986, the young child's allowance was granted as often as there were simultaneously dependent children below three whereas the amount of the family complement was not dependent on their number. The parental education allowance introduced the possibility of paid leave for working mothers who had stopped working, totally or partially, following a birth which raised the number of their children to three or more. The objective was to limit the decrease in earnings families had to face on the birth of a third child due to the loss of the second income. The duration of payment, first fixed for two years, was subsequently extended till the child's third birthday. Hence it seemed to be a return to a policy centred on families of at least three children. . However, a stream of scholars continue to defend the principle of a rank-unified child benefit, including the first child

The development in the total benefits between 1978 and 1988 (Ekert-Jaffé 1984) reflects this reversal of policy in favour of families of three, then two and again three children. Families of two children again saw their benefits vary in accordance with the monthly basis till 1983 (slight decline in purchasing power in 1979, followed by a 1.5% increase) and rise again as from July 1981 to reach a relative increase of 24% in 1983. Their benefits then again stagnated like the monthly basis. For the

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<sup>14</sup> It was thus that in July 1981 the rate of family allowances was uniformly increased by 10% and in February 1982 the benefits were again raised in favour of families with two children only in respect of which the basic allowance rate hence went up from 25% to 32%, i.e. a 39% increase as compared to 1978. The foregoing was respectively only 8% for the third child and 14% for the following children.

larger families, the purchasing power lifted as from 1980 to reach a maximum in January 1983 for families with three children. It then fell by 2% per year till 1984. In 1985, the introduction of the young child's allowance raised the results by 1%.

## 2.4 FROM THE LATE EIGHTIES

With the growth in non marriage, generalised feminine professional activity and the dying out of large families, the traditional family model lost in strength. Family policy still remained a general concern but had to take into account the transformations in the family model . Indeed, working women were now a common feature: in 1994 over 90% of mothers with one child or two children carried on working. Couples became less solid while marriage declined and 40% of all marriages ended in divorce ; it was in 1988 that researchers and decision makers became aware of these changes (Leridon and al., 1988) ; 75% of couples were formed outside marriage going up to 90% in 1994, 40% of the first births being out of wedlock. In addition, the high rate of unemployment increased poverty which halted the formation of couples and had the same effect on births (Ekert-Jaffé & Solaz, 2001). Specific benefits granted to persons on their own or on the poverty line showed a sharp increase. The fact of the number of beneficiaries being higher had an impact on the financial balance of the family allowance funds.

In this context, the State developed a more supportive overall policy with a view to women combining motherhood with professional employment, fighting poverty and setting up a housing policy. To counterbalance this, in 1998, the State decreased the benefits received by wealthier families.

## FAMILY POLICY AND WOMEN'S LFP

The idea that most childbearing occurred in working – or ex working – women gained ground. Consequently, neutrality as regards the women's LFP became total with even a slight advantage given to working women in 1990 by the Rocard Socialist government. The contribution system was transformed, the ceiling was done away with and the benefits became fiscally-financed. The principle

of neutrality shifted to a particular concern for working women, with the implementation of a more supportive policy towards women combining motherhood with professional employment. A few of the main developments of the family policy concerned centred on parental leave, state-subsided child care programmes and child care allowances.

In 1985, the implementation of a parental leave allowance for the third child by the Socialist government gave rise to a great deal of discussion. The debate was focussed on several aspects of this measure. One of the points raised was to decide whether it was the right thing to assimilate it with some kind of "maternal wage". Heated discussion on the timeliness of reintroducing such discrimination between working and non working mothers also arose which, needless to say, ran counter to the trend towards neutrality. Finally, the question of the potential effectiveness of this new allowance came up. Assessing the non-neutrality of this measure with respect to LFP was really not simple, since this granting of this allowance was subject to past activity, i.e. of having worked at least 24 months over the 30 month-period preceding the birth. As a result, the measure concerned women working up to their third child and did not apply to all women interrupting their career after the first or the second child. This was corrected in 1987 by the Chirac government, the underlying condition becoming that of having worked two years over the ten-year period preceding the birth.

As a result of the above condition, the impact of this "third child paid parental leave" was not significant. In the mid-eighties, working women generally interrupted their career after the first birth, clerical workers after the second, and the few intermediate categories wherein third child births were recorded, after the third birth. Its amount, which was about 1500 FF per month, was, therefore, much too low to induce potential career women to interrupt their activity; the focus should rather have been on the second birth.

From the more general point of view of efficiency, the question has been to determine whether it was possible for this allowance, plus some other means tested ones (i.e. housing) to be a real substitute for a second income, and to provide women with the true choice of deciding whether to work or not. This has been shown to be true in the case of unskilled workers: parental leave has regularly been re-evaluated – 1000 FF per month in 1985, 1500FF in 1986, including the young child's benefits, in 1987 and 1999 the amount was close to 2500 FF and 3017FF, tax free like all family benefits. It was worth a little more than half the minimum wage, and could be supplemented further by the means



tested housing allowance the amount of which could reach 1400 FF. For a small wage, the remainder could amount to less than childminding costs.

Indeed, when the benefit was extended to the second child in 1994, the keenness shown by women to obtain this benefit exceeded all expectations, particularly among the less qualified women whose husbands held stable jobs: the rate of activity among these young or less qualified mothers with a second child below three fell by 40% (Bonnet & Labbé, 1999). The rate of activity among all mothers of two children with a child below three decreased by ten points whereas that of mothers with one or three children remained stable between 1994 to 1998. The number of persons receiving paid parental leave sprang from 175 000 in 1994 and to 536 000 in 1998, two-thirds being mothers of two children. Among them, around 50% withdrew from the labour market in order to receive this benefit (Afsa, 1998; Piketty, 1998).

In 1998, the APE cost 18 billions. It contributed to financing the minding of 25% of the number of children under three (Boyer, 1999). Beside, it is still too early to infer any result concerning its impact on fertility: the recent growth in French fertility reached every birth order, from 1994 on (Toulemon, forthcoming).

#### Public childcare

Regarding state and state-subsidised child care programs, the number of places available in public and private day care nurseries more than doubled from 1984 onwards, to reach a total of 1,992,200 by 1994. The latter covers 16% of the total amount of child-minding, dispensing high quality care, thereby gaining the highest degree of parental satisfaction. It is true that such public care is mainly to the advantage of the two ends of the social scale, the executives, who pay the total cost, and, to low-income families, the latter due to the concern for social action. However, it covers the most expensive form of child care, its total public cost equal to 15,1 billion exceeding the entire public expenses for other non maternal subsidised care, the foregoing as compared to 10 billion on individual care subsidies. Thus, the 1994 family plan was aimed rather towards the development of individual childminding, more flexible, more convenient for childcare outside working hours and less expensive- particularly for public funds. Subsidies doubled in four years. The purpose was three-fold, to help the family, enhance the qualification of child minders, and to discourage child-care moonlighters. Allowances for child care at home (AGED introduced in 1986) were directed

towards the wealthier families<sup>16</sup>, while the Allowance to families employing a registered child minder (AFEAMA introduced in 1991, and reviewed in 1992 and in 1995<sup>17</sup>) was to the advantage of middle class families. It should also be noted that, in the context of high unemployment, these measures had the further effect of creating low paid, precarious jobs in child care (Fagnani, 1998).

#### THE POLICY OF THE FAMILY BECOMES THAT OF THE HOUSEHOLD

In the late eighties and the nineties, the amounts spent on policies for fighting poverty, housing and employment policies became increasingly high as compared to those on the traditional pro natal family policy. The family policy gradually gave way to a policy of the household. Nevertheless, the fact remains that in France, families with an only child above 3 still do not receive any regular allowance; except if they derive the benefit of the school re-opening allowance ( means tested the amount of which has been re-evaluated at 1500FF since 1993), the “RMI”, income support for very low income households (from 1988 onwards), housing benefit-means tested for low incomes or child support for single mothers.

In fact, the importance given to the three latter fields is characteristic of the British social policy. It must be noted that in France, substantial family allowances keep families away from the poverty line. It was only towards the late eighties that the “nouveaux pauvres” who emerged from the depression started becoming the focus of attention from researchers and the media. Income support was then urgently set up in the form of the RMI in 1988 under the Rocard’s socialist government. Its beneficiaries were mostly persons on their own. The family allowance funds which already were in charge of action in the social field and which extended over the whole territory were naturally entrusted by the State with the payment of this benefit.

Besides, from 1982 onwards the income ceiling for housing benefit eligibility continuously went up. But this readjustment was partly detrimental to the re-evaluation of the amounts which had initially been paid essentially to families (Steck, 1997). Further, ALS eligibility (social housing allowance) was extended to the RMI income support beneficiaries in 1988, and from 1991 to 1993, it was progressively extended to every low income household whose earnings or revenue was below a given limit), with or without children. It is to be noted that the ALS particularly concerns old people and students, however wealthy their native family may be.

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<sup>16</sup>The AGED is equal to the social security contributions paid by the employee and the employer, up to a monthly maximum of 4130F for children under three, and 2065 for children from three to six, in 1997. In 1998, it was diminished for middle- high income families.

<sup>17</sup>In 1991, the AFEAMA was equal to the whole social security contributions due (i.e about 1000FF). From 1992, an additional financial contribution was given to the family of 500FF per month, for children under three, and 300F for children under six. In 1995, these amounts were reevaluated, they reach respectively 800 F and 400F in 1998.

As from 1996, the number of non-families having been granted benefits for job insecurity, disability or housing now exceeds that of the family allowance beneficiaries in the strict sense of the term. At the present time, over half the amount of the family allowance funds' budget is received by such non-families.

## **2.5 THE FUTURE OF FAMILY BENEFITS**

It is hard to forecast the future of family policy. Past experience has shown that even when governments have laid down a long term objective in this respect, e.g. the third child benefit or it being shifted to the first two children, the foregoing has frequently been called into question as a result of economic developments. If it is true that family policy thus seems to be particularly sensitive to variations in conjuncture, past study has also shown that the decisions reached were often detrimental to families. While family benefits have not essentially been modified, their non-reassessment or the withdrawal of borderline benefits has served as a variable factor for the adjustment of social expenses in order to contend with increased health and retirement expenses. Thus, while the increase in health expenses has relatively been brought under control today, all social expense projections show a noteworthy burden on retirement costs. In this context, it is probable that the decisions reached will continue to be barely favourable to families.

Moreover, the completion of the European internal market could also jeopardise the durability of French family policy. Indeed, France, which is among the most generous of countries, offers benefits that are twice as high as those in Great Britain (Blanchet & Ekert, 1994) and one-third as much as those in Germany. In addition, the free movement of persons, capital and, above all, services, does not adapt easily to the social protection systems. The risks of "social tourism" (the migration of persons towards the most generous countries) and the threats of company de-localisation towards countries with low compulsory charges are enhanced even more by the prospect of the entry of the countries of Eastern Europe. The recurring situation to be then addressed would be the harmonisation of policies the principles of which were, besides laid down in 1986 in article 118A of the Single Europe Act (Chassard, 1999). Further, at that stage it is very likely that family policy in France would have to fall in line (and take a downward trend) with that of its neighbours. A recent draft directive (March 2001) aimed at unifying maternity leave in Europe has already made such an opening.

However, the possibility of a harmonisation of social policies and a decline in French family policy is realistic in the long term only: a democratic country cannot afford to take abrupt turnarounds liable to put families at a disadvantage all of a sudden. The fact is that families have made a twenty-year

wager on the future by bringing children into the world and, hence, the community is bound by a sort of moral contract towards them. Hence the room for manoeuvring is slight since the children have already been born; no fundamental doubt is, therefore, possible, and any change in the advantages acquired in the field of family policy can only be modified gradually<sup>18</sup>.

### 3. FAMILY POLICY AND FERTILITY

In the presence of an acknowledged birth objective, the influence of family policy on fertility must be proved: it presumes that couples, in the choices they make, are aware of and take material arguments into account.

How the impact of policies on fertility can be measured is a critical element in the debate, and an animated debate has developed between pro and anti-natalists over the most appropriate measuring tool. Advocates of pro-natalism are quick to produce their own examples of policies which would result in the number of babies needed; and anti-natalists demonstrate that, despite the best efforts of governments and the many thousands of francs expended, the French are not having more children than the United Kingdom or the United States of America. In support of their case, they generally take a well-publicised family policy measure and track its effects on fertility by age and birth rank, or alternatively, they use total period fertility rates to provide a snapshot of trends. Because French family policy has been promoted as something of a model for other countries, it has been used by many researchers to exemplify the impact of policy on fertility (for example Kamerman, 1991).

#### 3.1 THE FIRST ATTEMPTS TO LINK FAMILY POLICY AND FERTILITY

In this respect, The French literature focuses on three major themes. Calot *et al.* (1976) argues that the baby-boom recorded in France, following the introduction of generous family policies, could also be observed in other countries that did not adopt similar policies, for example the United States,

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<sup>18</sup> Thus, when the single wage allowance was done away with in 1978, its payment was continued to families with two children who had received it earlier and who could not claim the family complement before the termination of their two children's education.