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# Producing Citizens, Reproducing the 'French Race': Immigration, Demography, and Pronatalism in Early Twentieth-Century France

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The 'immigrant question' of early twentieth-century France was formulated with reference to both the labour power and reproductive value of potential foreigners. Politicians, industrialists, social scientists, and racial theorists agreed that the 'demographic crisis' had created a shortage of citizens as well as workers, and thus immigrants who came to work in France must also be assimilable, and able to produce indisputably French offspring. The new emphasis on assimilability was a reflection of the widespread panic created by depopulation, as social critics with pronatalist convictions lamented the steady drop in French births, and the 'individualistic' nature of French men and women which had, in their view, encouraged Malthusian reproductive practices.<sup>1</sup> They argued that depopulation had social as well as economic consequences, evidenced by the lack of husbands for French women, young men for the army, and children for the future labour force. Despite the pronounced nationalism of the pronatalist movement, its

leaders therefore conceded that in order to mitigate the effects of the demographic crisis on the labour market and the French family, the importation of foreign workers was a necessary, though temporary, solution.<sup>2</sup>

In late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Europe, populationist discourse equating demographic strength with international prominence had become increasingly prevalent.<sup>3</sup> As competition among nations no longer centred on their productive capacity alone, the formerly private, female sphere of reproduction assumed a more prominent role in the political life of the nation.<sup>4</sup> With the reproductive potential of citizens transformed into an object of social inquiry, hygienists and other 'experts' focused their attention on the health and well-being of the general population, and of the nation's children and its mothers.<sup>5</sup> Degeneration theory also flourished in several European nations, pointing to the prominence of depopulation, high infant mortality rates, venereal disease, and alcoholism among their citizen bodies.<sup>6</sup> In France, where the rhetoric of demographic decline assumed a particularly strident pitch, a wide range of individuals joined in the national quest to improve the quality and quantity of the population. Immigrants would also be enmeshed in this discursive web linking fecundity, racial hygiene, and a traditional vision of the family.

No European nation experienced demographic decline more acutely than France, and the casualties of the First World War, added to an already low birthrate, exacerbated French anxieties. From 1911 to 1938, the French population increased by only two million inhabitants, despite the addition of 1.7 million people from Alsace and Lorraine.<sup>7</sup> On the eve of the Great War, the average French family was composed of two children, and, in 1926, only three families out of ten could claim three or more.<sup>8</sup> In fact, French demographic growth in this period was largely due to immigration. The 1931 census counted 808,000 Italians, 508,000 Poles, and 352,000 Spaniards, to name the most numerous groups.<sup>9</sup> In the interwar period, nearly three million foreigners resided in France, and three-fourths of all demographic growth could be attributed to immigration.<sup>10</sup>

This essay will explore how members of the pronatalist movement, in their efforts to combat the demographic crisis, debated the possibility of foreign immigration to France. Because depopulation provided a unique opportunity to remake the citizen body, pronatalist discourse on the immigrant question reveals how gender, race, and reproduction

structured national identity in early twentieth-century France. The movement's belief that reproduction was an obligation of citizenship determined its support for immigration from 'demographically prolific' nations such as Italy, Spain, and Poland.<sup>11</sup> Its members claimed that in less modern states, 'preindustrial' values promoted high birth-rates among selfless parents who, unlike their French counterparts, honoured their national obligation to procreate. Thus the culturally conservative rhetoric of pronatalism, which heralded patriarchal authority, maternal virtue, fecundity, and traditionalism, was employed to assess the assimilability of potential foreigners. That is, the very values pronatalists wished to revive among the French were projected onto foreign populations as well.

The debate on fecundity and assimilability, however, was carried out in a particular racial order. Although family immigration also occurred in this period, foreigners to France in the early twentieth century were overwhelmingly young and unmarried men. Male foreigners were, in many regards, particularly welcome: the catastrophic loss of French men in the Great War had created a shortage of husbands for French women while exacerbating the effects of depopulation.<sup>12</sup> The demographic crisis thereby forced hybridity upon the nation; intermarriage with 'racially' appropriate foreign men was encouraged, as it was necessary for the rebuilding of the national body.<sup>13</sup> Participants in the immigration debate conceived of the 'French race' as a dynamic construct with the ability to incorporate select elements into its fold. In consequence, the dominant racial metaphor of this period was one of judicious mixing, rather than an appeal to 'racial purity'. The sanctioning of prescribed forms of racial mixing, however, did not refute the logic of biological essentialism. Only 'compatible' blood was to be combined with that of the French, in order to sustain, or even regenerate, the race.

Moreover, the surplus population of Africa and Asia, and, specifically, the potential labour source of the French colonies, had to be dismissed as a possible remedy for depopulation in the metropole. Although Africans and Asians had immigrated to France before, during, and after the First World War, the pressing need to reconstitute French families in the interwar years reframed the immigrant question. As assimilability and the ability to reproduce French offspring became the most salient criteria by which foreigners were to be judged, the evaluation of simple labour power no longer sufficed. Pronatalists therefore cautioned against the importation of non-white

workers, arguing instead that the Italians, Poles, and Spaniards were the most viable candidates for naturalisation. This amounted to a repudiation of the universalist vision of the Enlightenment and the Revolution which, in its purest form, viewed all bodies, whether white or of colour, as essentially the same.<sup>14</sup> Instead, within the historically specific political economy of mass immigration and colonialism, the possibility of assimilation – and hence citizenship – was closed to those whose difference was deemed immutable.

By examining the relationship between fecundity and civilisation in demographic discourse, this essay underscores how the perceived consequences of modernity, expressed most starkly by the decline in fertility rates, were conceived in racialised and gendered terms. It does so by exploring how, in their discussion of foreign immigration, various members of the pronatalist movement invoked race, gender, and reproduction in order to construct the ideal citizen body. The essay focuses in particular on three significant contributors to the debate on immigration and repopulation: the *Alliance National pour l'Accroissement de la Population Française* (National Alliance for the Increase of the French Population), France's largest and most influential pronatalist movement, which by 1939 could claim 25,335 members; the *Conseil Supérieur de la Natalité* (CSN) (Superior Council on the Birthrate), a pronatalist advisory committee created in 1920 from within the Ministry of Hygiene, Social Assistance, and Prevention in order to 'research all measures likely to fight depopulation, to raise the birthrate ... and to protect and honour large families'; and journalist Ludovic Naudeau's popular account of French depopulation, first appearing in the newspaper *L'Illustration*.

In several important demographic studies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, depopulation was theorised in terms of the relationship between civilisation and birthrate.<sup>15</sup> For example, liberal economist Paul Leroy-Beaulieu of the Collège de France juxtaposed the depopulation of northern Europe and North America with escalating birthrates in the African and Asian world, and argued that as a nation modernised, achieving a higher standard of living and increased industrial production, its birthrate necessarily fell.<sup>16</sup> This was, of course, a dramatic refutation of Malthusian doctrine, which prophesied an exponential increase in human populations and thus a depletion of global resources. After approximately 1860, Malthusianism fell out of favour, and demographers focused instead on the trend toward fertility decline or, in the words of Leroy-Beaulieu, the 'true

law of population among civilised people'.<sup>17</sup> Hoping to attain a greater level of material comfort, even the 'humblest of citizens' began to postpone marriage, limit births, and opt for an 'individualistic' existence which, according to the pronatalist position, blatantly ignored the collective concerns of the nation.<sup>18</sup>

A society's birthrate could therefore be expressed as inversely proportional to its level of 'civilisation'. According to Leroy-Beaulieu, civilisation was an urbanised society with a democratic government and a developed middle class, in which education, affluence, and leisure had been extended to the majority of the population.<sup>19</sup> Despite the virtues of the civilised state, depopulation was the necessary outcome: 'In recent and present times, the diminution of fecundity among the civilized nations ... can be considered a general, if not universal fact.'<sup>20</sup> Demographers explained that while the state of civilisation facilitated global predominance and justified European expansion overseas, it was a double-edged sword, bringing degeneration and depopulation in its wake. Ironically, the march of progress ultimately compromised the power of 'civilised' nations, now confronted with the demographic superiority of less developed societies.

In Africa and Asia, where the colonial project was to transport civilisation to 'savage' and 'barbarous' lands, birthrates were high despite substantial mortality rates. Demographer and physician Jacques Bertillon succinctly explained: 'the most ignorant countries are also the most fecund ones'.<sup>21</sup> The anticlerical and socialist-leaning demographer Arsène Dumont echoed the conservative Bertillon's position, claiming 'Those who absorb no part of civilisation, like the poor in France and barbarians worldwide, conserve their high birthrates, while those who absorb much of civilisation ultimately die as a result'.<sup>22</sup> Demographers hypothesised that as African and Asian societies modernised, embracing industrialisation, hygienic practices, and democratic values, they too would begin to limit their births. But in the meantime, with African and Asian populations growing unchecked while birthrates in most European nations dwindled, the fertility of non-white people was perceived as a threat to white hegemony worldwide.<sup>23</sup>

Opponents of non-white immigration therefore insisted that it was the duty of the entire Occidental world to form a united front against immigrants of colour.<sup>24</sup> According to this view, Malthusianism among Europeans was nothing short of race suicide, a myopic practice that amounted to an abdication of the white mission to civilise the globe.

If strength was in numbers, as pronatalists argued, Europeans and North Americans must not remain passive while non-whites propagated at their expense. In the words of Auguste Isaac, the Catholic deputy named Minister of Commerce in 1919, father of eleven children and founder of the pro-family lobbying group *La Plus Grande Famille* (The Largest Family):

If the white race restrains [its births], who will guarantee us that the yellow race will follow its example? Who will assure us that the black race will sacrifice the fecundity which, to cite but one example, is a cause of anxiety for whites in the United States?<sup>25</sup>

Depopulation was thus characterised as a 'general phenomenon ... which one could note among all people of the white race', now menaced by the fecundity of the Asian and African world.<sup>26</sup> Around the turn of the century, high Asian birthrates in addition to several important examples of Asians asserting themselves against white nations – such as the Boxer Rebellion, the Russo-Japanese War, and the founding of the Congress Party – aided in the construction of the phantasmic 'Yellow Peril'.<sup>27</sup> The possibility of Chinese or Japanese expansion heightened Europe's wariness with regard to population increases outside of the western world. Prominent pronatalist Fernand Boverat explained: 'Among the coloured races, and the yellow race in particular, birthrates remain formidable. Japan will see its population rise by one million people per year. For a country like France, which has a great colonial empire ... this demographic disequilibrium is particularly serious.'<sup>28</sup>

Pronatalists, colonialists, and economists viewed the 'Yellow Peril' in terms of the possible economic threat a densely populated Japan or China would pose to the West.<sup>29</sup> Because they believed demographic strength correlated with the desire for territorial expansion, it was feared that the fecundity of East Asians would reverse the accustomed relationship between coloniser and colonised, endangering western markets and challenging European imperial hegemony.<sup>30</sup> Both Paul Haury, a history professor whose plan for teaching demography (and hence depopulation) in primary and secondary schools was sanctioned by the Minister of Public Instruction in 1929, and Leroy-Beaulieu argued that western surplus population was necessary for the construction of empire, as it afforded excess Europeans the possibility of settling in the colonies. As a consequence, demographic decline in the metropole, by reversing normative population dynamics, endangered

the colonial legacy and threatened to 'destroy the equilibrium of the human races'.<sup>31</sup>

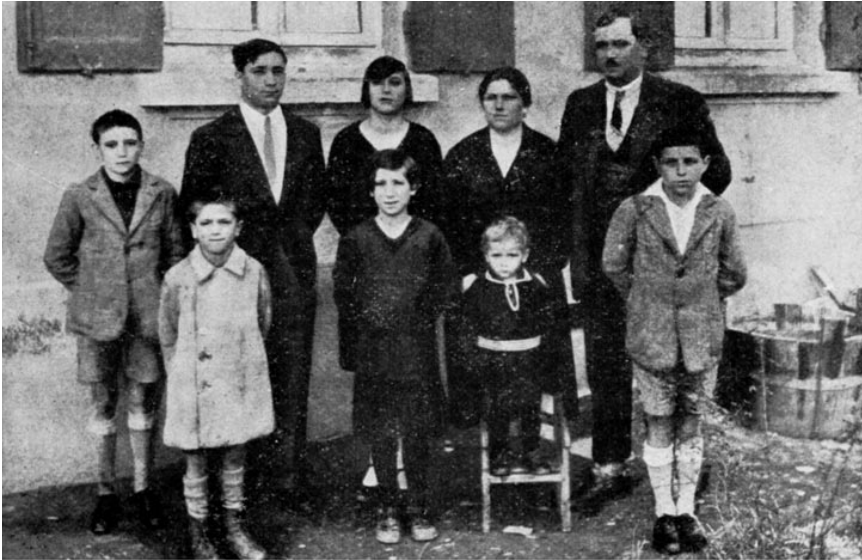
Thus in France, pronatalist concerns were not galvanised by German demographic strength alone. Instead, a vision of colonial imperialism and a 'Europe submerged' by non-whites intensified French anxiety.<sup>32</sup> Only white immigration could provide assimilable labour power while counteracting the demographic might of Africans and Asians. While it met French requirements for foreigners to serve as both workers and citizens, it also allowed members of a transnational white polity to secure themselves against the fertility of the non-western world. Foreign labour would therefore have to be recruited among European countries with surplus populations. The partially modernised and demographically prolific nations of southern and central Europe constituted an intermediate category between the depopulation of northern Europe, and the fecundity of Africa and Asia (see Figures 1 and 2).<sup>33</sup>

Because the economic development of nations like Italy, Spain, and Poland could not accommodate the size of their populations, many



Type de familles espagnoles (Côte Basque) misérables et prolifiques.

**Figure 1:** 'From the Basque Region: Destitute and Prolific Type of Spanish Family'. In Georges Mauco, *Les Etrangers en France: Etude géographique sur leur rôle dans l'activité économique* (Armand Colin, Paris, 1932).



Une belle famille italienne immigrée dans l'Isère. Types d'Italiens du Nord, robustes et travailleurs.

**Figure 2:** 'A Handsome Italian Family, Immigrated to the Isère Region: Northern Italian Type, Robust and Hardworking'.

In Georges Mauco, *Les Etrangers en France: Etude géographique sur leur rôle dans l'activité économique* (Armand Colin, Paris, 1932).

workers opted to immigrate to depopulated and industrialised states. Not only could the Italians, Spaniards, and Poles fill shortages in the fields and factories; they could also reproduce with native women without substantially changing the 'racial composition' of the French people. According to demographer Arsène Dumont, it was best to seek out immigrants like the Italians who had not yet 'broken their ties with their native land', as they retained high fertility rates and the values that promoted large families.<sup>34</sup> For jurist René Le Comte, Italian fecundity was a means to combat the 'Yellow Peril' by providing white, assimilable labour power to industrialised and depopulated nations:

The rapid growth of Italian emigration in the past twenty years is one of the most fortunate occurrences from the point of view of the future of the white races. As the yellow races have started to breach European hegemony, it is high time to reinforce the white element in both Americas, the North of Asia, Australia, South Africa, and the Mediterranean basin.<sup>35</sup>



But as Karen Offen's seminal article has shown, one cannot separate arguments regarding fertility decline from the greater debate on the role of women in French society.<sup>36</sup> Demographers agreed that the state of civilisation brought with it many consequences, and that nations like Italy, Spain, and Poland had retained the best of the pre-industrial world: prolific birthrates, a commitment to hard work, a strong sense of family and, a value praised by some but not all pronatalists, a more pious Catholicism. In turn, these traits were reinforced by traditional conceptions of masculinity and femininity which, by preserving the 'innate' distinction between the sexes, promoted fertility and a devotion to family life. In contrast, social critics like Leroy-Beaulieu noted that in modernised nations like France, the boundaries between women and men had been blurred, and the feminist movement, which sought to make women identical to men, was largely responsible for depopulation. He wrote: 'The masculinisation of women is, from all points of view, one of the grave dangers facing contemporary civilisation. It is a *facteur desséchant et stérilisant* (desiccating and sterilising factor).'<sup>37</sup>

By the turn of the century, the connection between depopulation and feminism had been firmly established, and as one further manifestation of the 'individualist virus', feminism was said to have encouraged French women to abandon their prescribed role as mothers and homemakers. Similarly, pronatalists called into question the virility of the nation and its male citizenry, conflating the frailty of a depopulated France with the effeminacy of French men. In this context Fernand Boverat, the most prominent figure of the pronatalist movement, warned that for nations as well as men, to be 'afflicted with a pernicious anaemia' rendered them vulnerable to outside attack.<sup>38</sup> Immigration was to reinvigorate the national body by introducing young and robust male elements from Europe into an anaemic population further debilitated by the casualties of the Great War. In the context of a biological understanding of degeneration and revivification, then, foreigners were frequently described as the 'blood transfusion' necessary to curtail or even reverse the effects of national decline. Albert Troullier of the Alliance argued that the nation should select its immigrants like a physician preparing for a transfusion, '[choosing] an individual without physiological flaws, with blood *compatible* to that of the person requiring the transfusion ... There exist actual blood types and one cannot, without great danger, mix the blood of different and *incompatible* groups'.<sup>39</sup>

Unmarried foreign men, however, were widely considered to be promiscuous, dissolute, and unstable.<sup>40</sup> Social commentators claimed that foreign bachelors were more prone to alcoholism, criminality, and venereal disease, and without wives to persuade them to settle in one place, they wandered France in search of work, or returned to their native land, thus mitigating their contribution to the national economy. The 'excess virility' of male immigrants was therefore to be tempered by marriage, with their sexuality channelled through the conjugal union in the interests of repopulating the French nation. For this reason, pronatalists encouraged both family immigration, and the marriage of male immigrant workers shortly after their arrival in France. Thus, once again, the pronatalist position on immigration mirrored its entreaty to the French nation as a whole, exalting marriage, fecundity, and procreative sex enacted within the confines of traditional gender roles.

Linking the problem of reproduction to the racial order of the early twentieth century, pronatalists conveyed white demographic panic while condemning the existing gender order. In reconstituting the citizen body, both the labour power and reproductive value of potential foreigners would be considered. On each count, the contribution of white Europeans was deemed far superior to that of Africans and Asians. Specifically, pronatalists held that an immigration of Latin and Slavic elements could supply qualified labour without recourse to Chinese and colonial workers. According to the Alliance's monthly journal:

After having been flooded during the war with Kabyle street sweepers, Annamese stokers, Negro dockers, and Chinese labourers, whom we had to import because it was the best we could get, we were forced to send the majority of these worthless immigrants back to their faraway homelands. They were more disposed to pillage and thievery than serious labour. The re-establishment of the peace has permitted us to replace these 'undesirables' with our usual immigrants, the Italians and the Spaniards.<sup>41</sup>

Pronatalists did not believe that immigration was the ideal means to combat depopulation: they feared that foreigners would form unassimilated pockets within the nation, and that, without careful mixing, the racial integrity of the French people would be compromised. They agreed that, in order to raise the native birthrate, their utmost priority was to encourage a change in French values; nevertheless, they conceded that immigration could, in the meantime,

serve to revivify French demographics. According to Alliance member Albert Troullier:

It is indispensable that, starting now, we replace all the dead and the sick by assimilation and naturalisation, while waiting for the normal creation of future households. Let it suffice to say that immigration cannot be the primary means of fighting the national danger of depopulation. It is only a temporary remedy, and a perilous one at that. Immigration should only allow us to wait for the re-establishment of French demographic power, without modifying the special characteristics of the race.<sup>42</sup>

The Alliance's presence in the depopulation debate was enduring, determined, and obstreperous. Founded in May 1896 by demographer Jacques Bertillon, Drs Charles Richet and Emile Javal, civil servant Auguste Honnorat, and Catholic statistician Emile Cheysson, the Alliance was initially comprised of secular and socially conservative patriots, most of them bourgeois businessmen, industrialists, doctors, and lawyers. However, its blend of anti-individualism, anti-feminism, and nationalism permitted ties with Catholics as well as those sympathetic to the populationist policies of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy.<sup>43</sup> The Alliance led a widespread propaganda campaign that included the publication of pronatalist brochures, periodicals, films, demographic statistics, and proposals for legislative action, and its lobbying efforts had a direct effect on postwar legislation such as the 1920 law repressing propaganda for contraceptives, the 1923 law aimed at increasing prosecutions for abortions, and the granting of family allowances for dependent children. Its members held that depopulation was largely the fault of the Third Republic's institutions and policies, as they promoted individual rights at the expense of collective duties. According to Susan Pederson, Alliance members viewed depopulation as the result of a 'liberal and individualistic political and economic order that disproportionately rewarded the childless'. Demographic decline, they claimed, could only be reversed if liberal institutions like the tax system, military, civil service, and perhaps even the wage system were reworked to favour prolific fathers.<sup>44</sup>

At annual congresses and in its journal, members of the Alliance frequently debated questions of assimilation and naturalisation. They held that the stability of the family was the key to social peace, but, paradoxically, found among foreigners some of the best examples of strong and unified households. For Fernand Boverat, father of four, veteran of the Great War, and president of the Alliance in the interwar

period, fulfilling the demand for labour power and repopulation went hand in hand: 'It is not a question of importing any workers to France, but good workers, and assimilable workers.'<sup>45</sup> The government, Boverat explained, must implement a tripartite plan which sought to increase native births while encouraging immigration and naturalisation.<sup>46</sup> First and foremost, depopulation had to be rectified internally, by French men and women, with the support of the state. In the meantime, however, immigration would serve as a stopgap measure replenishing the anaemic French population. While the Alliance claimed that unassimilated, non-naturalised foreigners were a potential danger to the 'French race', its members had little sympathy for the harshest French critics of immigration. Auguste Isaac explained:

Those who complain the most about the intrusion of foreigners are generally not those who make the most personal efforts or sacrifices to change the state of affairs. The same pens warning of social ills are often used to propagate the very ideas that foster them: the love of material well-being, the right to happiness, the glorification of pleasure, and distaste for the family.<sup>47</sup>

Naturalisation was, of course, the bona fide emblem of citizenship, and because the Alliance wished to see a clear increase in French population statistics, it demanded that assimilable foreigners be naturalised quickly, without complications or delays. It also called for the simplification of naturalisation procedures, and that its cost be substantially reduced. Because 'those families with the most mouths to feed will have the least disposable income', Boverat argued that extraneous taxes like the *droit de sceau* and the *droit de chancellerie* (taxes of the Seal and the Chancellery) be eliminated.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, he claimed that the 1,000-franc naturalisation fee was too high for 'Belgian, Swiss, Italian, and Polish workers, who comprise the majority of those suitable for naturalisation'.<sup>49</sup> Albert Troullier went further still, insisting that because immigrants from Belgium, Italy, Poland, and Spain were the most likely to assimilate, and in the shortest amount of time, the French state should facilitate their naturalisation.<sup>50</sup>

The Alliance also framed the problem of immigration and depopulation in terms of white demographic panic. In its official publications, references to the 'Yellow Peril' were abundant, depopulation was repeatedly described as the 'plague of the white race', and low European birthrates were explained through recourse to the rhetoric of degeneration. In numerous articles and speeches, president Fernand Boverat hierarchised foreigners according to their assimilability

and potential for citizenship. He explained that although Belgium and Switzerland had furnished assimilable workers in the nineteenth century, shrinking birthrates in those nations made it necessary to evaluate other sources. Boverat insisted that the only countries able to supply France with both labour power and assimilable immigrants were Italy, Spain, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Romania. As for the Greeks, 'Levantine', and Kabyles of North Africa, he continued, these populations were, 'with some exceptions ... second-rate immigrants that no country is actively seeking out, and which we have no interest in attracting to France'.<sup>51</sup> While this group was not classified among the assimilable, and in all likelihood was not recognised as fully white, its difference was less weighted than that of Asians and other Africans who, according to Boverat, should under no circumstances be permitted to enter France in large numbers.<sup>52</sup> He wrote: 'Despite the dangers of depopulation we must carefully avoid the mass immigration of men of colour, at the risk of witnessing the development of racial conflicts on French soil, the disastrous consequences of which we have already seen in the United States.'<sup>53</sup>

A demographic study of foreigners in the departments proposed by the *Commissions départementales de la Natalité* (Departmental Commissions on the Birthrate), a federation of local pronatalist associations reporting directly to the CSN, reaffirmed Boverat's position. It concluded that after the Italians, the Spaniards assimilated most rapidly, and as for the Poles, although the cohesiveness of their communities slowed their insertion into French society, they nevertheless had the potential to assimilate. On the other hand, because the Armenians, Levantines, and the Jews of central Europe were said to possess a 'mentality very different from that of the French population', assimilation was considerably more difficult, usually requiring the passage of several generations. Finally, the inquiry stated that the assimilation of North Africans was a 'nearly impossible' endeavour. Linking them with disease and degeneration in a tendentious social logic, researchers documented a high incidence of syphilis and tuberculosis among North African immigrants, in addition to a crime rate exceeding that of any other group. The study then reaffirmed that French vitality was dependent on its status as a white nation, concluding that the 'introduction or maintenance of North African workers on our metropolitan territory, and of all other workers who do not belong to the white race, or who have a mentality different from our own, appears detrimental to both the physical and moral health of our race'.<sup>54</sup>

Similarly, Social Catholic Louis Duval-Arnould, vice-president of the CSN and president of the pro-family league *La Plus Grande Famille* (The Largest Family), agreed that only European immigrants could provide France with both labour power and reproductive value. He explained that because foreign blood would eventually mix with that of the French, 'it would not suffice to import good workers' – immigrants who were also assimilable were needed. Small additions of Latin and Slavic blood, he claimed, would not substantially modify the 'essential characteristics' of the French people.<sup>55</sup> His stance on colonial immigration, however, was far more censorious. Duval-Arnould employed the racialised and gendered idiom that had been established during the First World War, when work scientists, heads of industry, and envoys of the Labour Ministry held that colonial (and particularly Indochinese) workers, because of their 'docility' and lack of physical strength, constituted a 'feminised' labour force whose industrial output was thereby compromised.<sup>56</sup> He wrote:

The recruitment of European workers is more valuable than that of colonials, which was attempted at the end of the war, and now seems to have been abandoned. The quality of [colonial] labour was revealed to be feminine, no doubt the result of profound differences of mores and climate. Here we have nothing to regret from the ethnic point of view.<sup>57</sup>

Fellow Social Catholic Monsignor Gaston Vanneufville also affirmed that importing colonial labour in the context of the demographic crisis had far-reaching consequences. He claimed that to advocate the employment of Asian and African immigrants was to view them as nothing more than 'human material', or to neglect the obvious fact that male foreigners, 'when bringing us their labour, also bring us their personalities'. He wrote: 'They are or will become heads of households [in France], and just as they were members of civil society in their native country, they will constitute an integral part of ours'. Vanneufville therefore called upon Social Catholics and other members of the pro-family lobby to consider both the public and private life of foreigners when gauging their assimilability, as a concern for labour power alone reduced the worker to little more than 'human material'. But for Vanneufville, to envision male workers as 'heads of household' meant reascribing them with difference: because the vast majority of Africans and Asians were 'pagans' with 'tastes', 'sentiments', and 'passions' contradicting those of French civilisation, their assimilation was impossible.<sup>58</sup>

For Social Catholics and other Catholic-identified members of the crusade against depopulation, the common Catholicism of Spanish, Italian, and Polish immigrants heightened their prospects for assimilation. However, members of the Alliance were overwhelmingly secular Republicans, and, as a consequence, they rarely employed religious discourse to justify particular exclusions. Although the French public sphere still bore the imprint of pre-Revolutionary Catholic culture, the vehemently anti-clerical Third Republic had transformed it into a secular and universalist space. Indeed, diehard Republicans feared that the piety of Poles and Italians would prevent them from properly assimilating, and noted with relief that these populations generally de-Christianised shortly after their arrival in France. It is striking, however, how easily those steeped in the universalist tradition invoked racialised language instead, claiming that Italians and Spaniards were not more assimilable because they were Catholic, but rather, because they were Latin and white.

While the Alliance conducted a parliamentary and legislative assault on behalf of the pronatalist cause, one of its most successful popularisers was author Ludovic Naudeau. As an international correspondent for the Paris newspaper *Le Temps*, Naudeau had earned his journalistic reputation with his eyewitness accounts of the Russo-Japanese war and the Bolshevik revolution, having been detained in Japanese and later Bolshevik prison camps for his efforts. Returning to Paris after the First World War, he was employed by the popular weekly review *L'Illustration*, publishing accounts of his travels to various European countries as well as books on modern Japan and Russia, both of which were awarded prizes by the French Academy. In addition to his acclaimed exposés of the rise of fascism and Nazism, Naudeau turned his flair for travel writing infused with political analysis upon his native France. After a two-year journey through twenty French departments to document the gravity of depopulation, in 1929 and 1930, his findings were printed as a serial in *L'Illustration*. This dense, meticulous, and highly subjective work is indicative of the shift in the 1930s toward an increased public awareness of the populationist platform: its publication generated passionate responses from readers, including a barrage of letters to the author, debates in provincial newspapers, and the undertaking of several local monographs further investigating the depopulation problem.<sup>59</sup> In 1931, Naudeau's study was reprinted as a bestselling book entitled *La France se regarde: le problème de la natalité*.<sup>60</sup>

Naudeau also held that despite the potential dangers of immigration, it was the necessary first step in combating depopulation. Following the demographic arguments of Bertillon, Leroy-Beaulieu, and Dumont closely, he concurred that French depopulation was a reflection of the relationship between fertility and civilisation.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, he agreed that the pernicious 'individualism' of the French had produced a population more interested in pursuing pleasure than fulfilling its collective duties to the nation. French women, in particular, were guilty of this charge, as Naudeau claimed that the female gender was most easily seduced by the desire for luxury and material comfort.<sup>62</sup> Even before the First World War, it was widely accepted by Republicans, Catholics, and socialists alike that French women, in their quest for economic independence and sexual freedom, had abandoned the obligations of social citizenship, namely motherhood and care of the domestic sphere.<sup>63</sup> The charge that 'female individualism' engendered depopulation and other social ills had become, by the interwar years, a ubiquitous critique of the perceived gender order.<sup>64</sup>

Naudeau began his study with the uncompromising stance that France had always been, and must remain, a white nation. Despite the magnitude of French demographic decline, he explained, the 'integrity of the white race' was a value he planned to uphold. Employing contemporary metaphors that invoked the unity of metropolitan France and its colonial empire, Naudeau expressed disdain for those who envisioned a 'greater France', composed of 'one-hundred million Frenchmen'. In his view, colonial immigration would blur the boundaries between the ruler and the ruled, compromising the safety of French possessions, and promoting hazardous forms of racial mixing. He wrote: 'I affirm that we will not sustain our place in the world if we do not remain what we have always been: a white nation. Our colonial empire is guaranteed by the strength of the metropole'.<sup>65</sup>

Naudeau therefore called for the immigration of the transition populations of Europe. At the end of his long tour of the French departments, he concluded, without hesitation, that no immigrants were better candidates for assimilation than the Italians. He described them as diligent, fertile, and simple people who flourished in the countryside, and maintained a strong commitment to family life. Because the Italians had not yet fallen victim to the potential ills of modernity, Naudeau portrayed their immigrant communities as idyllic havens brimming with the most wholesome of pre-industrial values. In contrast, the French family, which had once possessed such



admirable traits, was currently falling into a state of degeneration. Thus, when relaying his visit to the Lot-et-Garonne, Naudeau praised the Italians as passionately as he excoriated the French. He began his cautionary tale by explaining that throughout this department, there were numerous cases of impoverished Italian families arriving with no money, but many children. While sons were hired out as agricultural labourers, and daughters sent to work as maids in neighbouring villages, the family, as a unit, cultivated their land. Because family members were 'numerous, hardworking, frugal, and humble in their desires', the land was paid for in the course of a few years. Meanwhile, the former proprietor of the land, an 'old, solitary, hunched up Malthusian', has retired to the city to 'sadly vegetate' while paying an enormous rent. Naudeau concluded:

The simple power of fecundity and labour produced the buying power sufficient for [the Frenchman] to be evicted and effaced. Having all his life sought out too many material pleasures, too many egotistical satisfactions, this Frenchman, at the end of his life, is nothing but a lugubrious island, a *déraciné* [uprooted individual], and ... a vanquished man.<sup>66</sup>

Naudeau's trenchant observations illustrate how strongly he believed civilisation was a double-edged sword which, while ushering in progress, had also undermined paternal authority, work discipline, and a sense of civic duty. Because the French placed material comfort and a higher standard of living before the good of the national community, the birthrate was rapidly declining, the countryside had been left fallow, and society was becoming dangerously atomised. Although Naudeau echoed the familiar conviction that the state of 'primitive life' conformed best to high fertility rates, he too called for a reconciliation of fecundity and civilisation. Because all societies would eventually undergo the shift to modernity, the state must correct the social ills this transition had engendered: 'When, through the inevitable workings of civilisation, [the state of primitive life] is dispelled, it is necessary to substitute powerful social and sanitary organisations, as we must not leave uprooted proletarians to fend for themselves. In short, civilisation must remedy the ills that it causes.'<sup>67</sup> Thus like other pronatalists, Naudeau called for government-sponsored social reform to counteract the dangers of too much civilisation.

Because the Italians lived 'close to nature' and subordinated all other desires in order to acquire property for cultivation, they reminded Naudeau of a France that had disappeared several decades ago. He

repeatedly called for the French to imitate their diligence and sobriety, and the simplicity of their lives. Moreover, he invoked the probity of Italian women in an effort to further vilify *la femme moderne*, whose selfish and pleasure-seeking nature was evidenced by her refusal to produce children for the nation. So monstrous were French women who abandoned their maternal role that Naudeau was forced to look abroad for examples of feminine virtue. Faced with the high fertility rates of Italian families, he demanded: 'Is it not because [Italian women], known for the simplicity of their attire ... and paying little mind to fashion, content themselves with being mothers, as did our French women, one hundred years ago?'<sup>68</sup>

Naudeau saw in the Italians those rooted, conservative, family-oriented values the French once possessed. However, he understood all too well that if the French had something to learn from the Italians, this greatly complicated the assimilation process. If the pronatalist crusade was primarily about changing the mores and values of the degenerate French, it follows that little was to be gained in making the Italians resemble the French too closely. His greatest fear was one that was echoed in a number of pronatalist circles: what if the Italians, as they assimilated, developed the same Malthusian practices so dear to the French? How could social critics argue for the need to turn immigrants into French men and women if, at the same time, they were insisting that French mores had to change? Could the fecundity of less 'civilised' people be harnessed without their constituting dangerous, unassimilated pockets of foreigners in the midst of French territory? It was possible, Naudeau hypothesised, that first-generation Italians would remain prolific because they brought with them from Italy a strong work ethic, a commitment to family life, a disdain for luxuries, and a disposition that allowed them to be content with little. However, the need to assimilate the Italians, while simultaneously benefiting from their particular national character, led him to fear the worst. He asked: 'will they remain fecund once they have assimilated our mores? Will the second and third generation be even more prolific, or will they conform to the milieu that surrounds them? If we are to assimilate them, is that not because we want to make them resemble us?'<sup>69</sup>

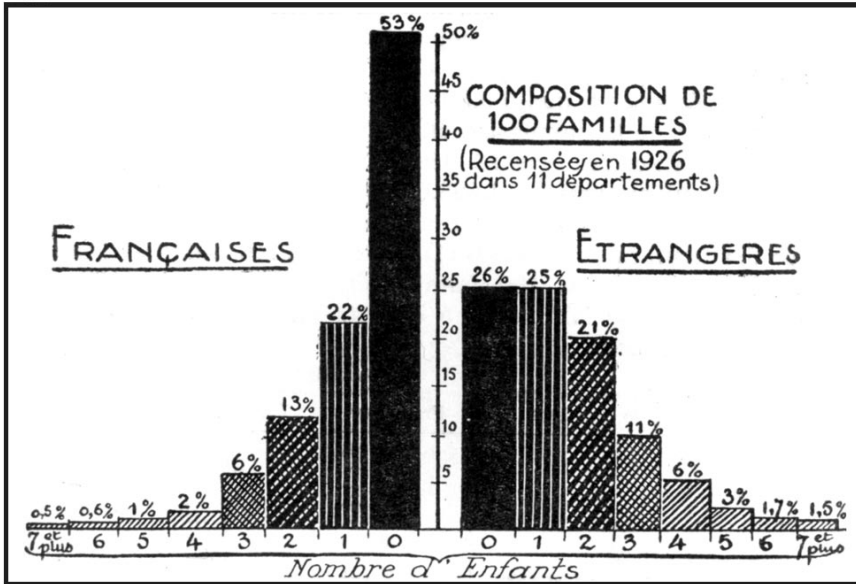
Several demographic investigations evaluating the fertility of marriages with one or two spouses of foreign origin confirmed Naudeau's worst fears. According to the CSN, while the birthrates of immigrant households were superior to those of the French, they were also considerably higher in marriages between foreigners than in those

with one French partner. Moreover, Boverat claimed that a number of statistical studies demonstrated the ease with which foreign women adopted pernicious French habits. His colleague M. Beth corroborated this point, maintaining that in certain Polish households, after six years of marriage and the birth of only one child, the wife had already undergone six consecutive abortions.<sup>70</sup> These findings were also confirmed by a study of foreigners in the departments proposed by the *Commissions départementales de la Natalité*. It found that fertility rates for mixed marriages were substantially lower than those for immigrant couples, especially when the wife was French. Franco-Italian households had hardly more children than French ones, and, beginning with the second generation, the birthrates of foreigners were almost as feeble as those of their French neighbours.<sup>71</sup> Auguste Isaac had reported the same pattern nearly a decade earlier: 'By the second generation, foreign elements from prolific countries frequently assume the habit of "voluntary sterility" which prevails here [in France].'<sup>72</sup>

More evidence was provided by demographer Georges Mauco's monumental study of immigration to France, the authoritative work on foreign labour in this period, combining fieldwork, statistical analysis, and geography. Mauco found that the number of children in foreign households was substantially higher than those of the French (see Figures 3 and 4). For example, while the average French family had only 1.9 children per household, Spanish immigrants topped the list with 2.6, followed by the Poles with 2.5, and the Italians with 2.3. Nevertheless, he claimed that because neo-Malthusian ideas and contraceptive practices spread rapidly among immigrants, their high fertility rates would begin to drop as the length of their stay in France increased. He affirmed that while the newly-arrived retained the high birthrates of their native lands, they rapidly yielded to French influence, consciously limiting births and striving instead for small families. Then, in a language common to the most sensationalist of pronatalist texts, Mauco claimed that among some immigrant groups, women had abortions in a 'casual manner that verged on recklessness', while the Poles and the Spaniards, the 'most uncultivated and simple' of all, even resorted to infanticide.<sup>73</sup>

The notion that mixed households were less fertile than those composed of two foreign spouses was, however, a completely logical outcome of Republican assimilationist theory, according to which immigrants could be rendered culturally similar to the French by the power of the soil, the French language and school system, and

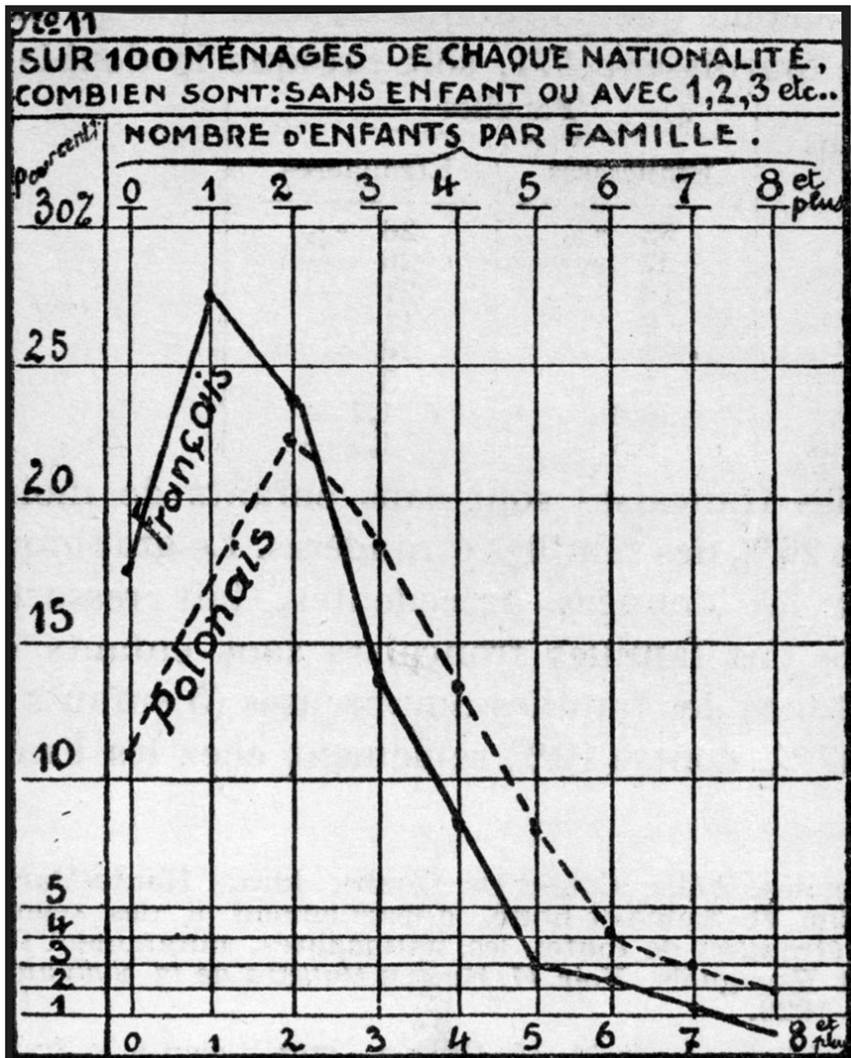
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**Figure 3:** 'Number of Children in French and Foreign Households, According to the 1926 Census'. In Georges Mauco, *Les Etrangers en France: Etude géographique sur leur rôle dans l'activité économique* (Armand Colin, Paris, 1932).

its women. That is, in the era of depopulation and mass immigration, it was commonly held that French women were responsible for assimilating foreign husbands and half-foreign children. This was an extension of the gendered duties of social citizenship that had been set in place during the Revolutionary era, according to which French women, as 'guardians of tradition', were to execute their civic role from the confines of domestic space.<sup>74</sup> All participants in the immigration debate conceded that the best way to assimilate foreigners was through marriage to a French woman. For example, Mauco claimed that intermarriage was more effective than naturalisation in integrating foreigners into the national body.<sup>75</sup> And Ludovic Naudeau, despite his distaste for the individualism of French women, recognised their assimilative power. He wrote:

The woman is the great protector of the native language, mores, traditions, and even of national prejudices. It is the woman who transmits them to future



**Figure 4:** 'For One Hundred French and One Hundred Polish Households, the Number of Children Per Family'. In Georges Mauco, *Les Etrangers en France: Etude géographique sur leur rôle dans l'activité économique* (Armand Colin, Paris, 1932).

generations. And it is the woman who, in a few years, assimilates to her race the heterogeneous elements. A child born in France of a French woman will feel French, nothing but French, and besides, according to law, he will be French.<sup>76</sup>

In consequence, pronatalists were forced to acknowledge the incompatibility of their dual image of French women as both corrupters and saviours of the nation. According to such a logic, if native-born women had the power to assimilate foreign men, they could also corrupt them with Malthusian practices. And if the soil, capitalist work discipline, and secondary education were to render the second generation indistinguishable from the native population, it was unlikely that immigrant families could serve as role models for their French neighbours.

For this reason, pronatalists insisted that immigration could serve as nothing more than a 'temporary palliative' to the demographic crisis.<sup>77</sup> If the French nation were to survive, the state had to extend its protection to the family, rather than the individual, while revising its definition of citizenship to encourage reproduction. This was to culminate in the government sponsorship of pronatalist reforms by decree-law in 1938 and 1939, and was enshrined in the 1939 *Code de la Famille* (Family Code), drafted by the newly formed *Haut Comité de la Population* (High Committee on Population), whose members included Boverat; demographer, politician, and Alliance member Adolphe Landry; and Georges Pernot, president of the *Fédération des Associations de Familles Nombreuses de France* (Federation of Associations of Large Families of France). Included was the extension of the existing family allowance system which, although funded by private initiatives like the *caisses de compensation* (welfare funds) established by industrialists, had been regulated by the state since 1932; a birth premium paid for a first child born within the first two years of marriage; the mandatory teaching of demography in schools; and an amplification of repressive measures designed to combat abortion. The family allowance system mandated equal assistance to households regardless of their social class, favouring those with three or more children. That is, rather than redistributing income to poorer families, the allowances privileged 'fecund' French citizens over those who chose to remain childless.<sup>78</sup>

Thus pronatalism, immigration, and assimilation were three inseparable components of the early twentieth century's demographic calculus, with the integration of appropriate foreigners as one part of a broader project seeking to remake the French family. Meanwhile, because countless French men and women had ignored their civic obligation to procreate, 'assimilable' foreigners could gain access to the nation by displaying the qualities pronatalists believed to have once

been intrinsically French: a love for the countryside, a commitment to family, and a collectivist vision of civic life. The CSN's stance on foreign fathers of large families provides an important example. The CSN met regularly to discuss problems related to depopulation, prenatal and infant care, and the protection of children and mothers. Its thirty members – generally leaders of the Alliance and pro-family groups, along with its vice-president, the indefatigable Boverat – were charged with drafting bills, decrees, and circulars on issues pertaining to the French family.<sup>79</sup> Because the government had assigned the CSN the task of researching methods to combat depopulation, the immigrant question was also debated at its meetings. Its positions were surprisingly generous toward 'assimilable' and prolific foreigners, calling for their naturalisation and the granting of various privileges that citizenship alone can bestow. Pronatalists had long advocated that, in exchange for their patriotism, large French families be rewarded with family suffrage, monetary allocations, a reduction in military service, and the like. The extent to which they were willing to extend these privileges to foreign families that fulfilled their reproductive obligation to the state greatly complicates our understanding of the movement's nationalism.

The CSN called for the naturalisation of members of the 'assimilable races': primarily Latins and, to a lesser degree, Slavs. Italians and Spaniards were considered elements of first choice, although the CSN also supported the recruitment of Portuguese and Swiss workers in smaller numbers.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, it advised that immigrant populations be selected according to their birthrates, as the civic duty of reproduction was one of several 'services' immigrants could offer the French nation. Boverat wrote: 'Of course, [a foreigner's] professional skills must, in most cases, be taken into consideration. But in our opinion, the ability to found on our soil a line of descendants able to become French must prevail over all other considerations.'<sup>81</sup>

At the onset of the Depression, the CSN took the unexpected stance of defending the right of select immigrants to continue working in France, dismissing the widespread call to halt all immigration and send foreigners back to their native countries as a 'simplistic solution'. Although French workers should be shielded from unemployment as much as possible, the CSN held that it was a 'vital necessity' to retain immigrants who had given birth to 'assimilable children' on French soil, in addition to those who were capable of doing so in the future. Moreover, the nation must continue to attract assimilable foreigners, as the dangers of depopulation far outweighed those stemming from

an economic depression: 'A nation does not die from an unemployment crisis, even one that lasts twelve or eighteen months. However, if a nation resigns itself to a feeble birthrate, it is fatally condemned to disappear.'<sup>82</sup>

If immigrants were to be expelled from France, the CSN claimed that those who were unmarried, married but childless, or over the age of 40 should be the first to leave. In contrast, every effort was to be made to retain immigrants who had brought large families with them to France, or who had given birth to several children since their arrival. Foreign fathers of large families were to be shielded from unemployment to avoid their repatriation, along with their children, whom the CSN viewed as future citizens, and thus crucial elements in its strategy for repopulation. Specifically, Boverat called for accommodating the 'young people of the prolific races': the Italians, Spaniards, and Poles. He maintained that men from these nations, whether married to French women or those of their own nationality, had the greatest potential for assimilation. Boverat even argued that, instead of repatriating immigrants to alleviate unemployment, the circumstances of the Depression should be exploited to French advantage. He wrote:

Let us make use of the unemployment problem in other countries to attract to France foreigners who are easily assimilable, and who already have young children ... In order to make room for them, do not hesitate to get rid of those without children. Right now we have an unusual opportunity to select our immigrants. In a few years, this moment will have passed, as the majority of European countries will be too conscious of the value of human capital to allow us to take their young children from them.<sup>83</sup>

The CSN also urged individual industrialists and employers to refrain from firing foreign fathers of large families, and called upon the government, through the Ministries of Labour and Agriculture, to take an active interest in the problem. Because reproduction was construed as a civic duty worthy of compensation from the state, the CSN asked that work inspectors representing the Ministry of Labour compel employers to retain both French fathers, and foreign fathers with children living in France. The CSN concluded its list of demands with the plea that foreign men heading large families be treated 'as Frenchmen' for as long as their applications for naturalisation were still pending, and, more generally, that the Ministries of Labour and Agriculture refrain from adopting any measures with regard to foreigners that might have an adverse effect on the French birthrate.<sup>84</sup>



In their effort to reinvent the French family and redefine the practice of citizenship, pronatalists invoked the categories of gender, race, and reproduction to define the stakes of the immigrant question. The language in which they discussed degeneration and national renewal was to be echoed in the political and social hygienic discourse of the Vichy state, whose impulse to regulate reproduction, marriage, and domestic life had its roots in the populationist politics of the Third Republic.<sup>85</sup> Under Pétain, prominent pronatalists like Boverat, Haury, Duval-Arnould, and Mauco would continue their efforts to revive the traditional family, along with its high birthrates, cultural conservatism, and gender dimorphism. With the Occupation serving as further evidence of the wounded virility of French men, the selfishness of French women, and the perils of depopulation, the Vichy state was to both amplify and institutionalise the natalist-familialism of the interwar years.

Pronatalist ideology was a vital part of the political culture of the French Third Republic, and for this reason, any study of immigration to France must reckon with its position on foreigners, citizenship, and nationhood. Ultimately, the impulse to hierarchise immigrants according to their productive and reproductive value was a rejection of the Revolutionary doctrine of universal humanism which, in its capacious understanding of community, heralded the abstract sameness of all beings. Similarly, pronatalist discourse on immigration severely undermined the Republican and assimilationist model of nationhood, according to which any foreigner willing to assume the French cultural patrimony would be granted access to the citizen body. Instead, the abstract egalitarianism of the 'French citizen' was repeatedly confronted with the intractable problem of difference, an unsurprising consequence of the grounding of citizenship rights in patriarchy, bourgeois individualism, and hierarchical racial difference. In this manner, the nation's hopes and anxieties were deflected onto those who had come from beyond its borders, as the Italians, Poles, and Spaniards were to assist in restoring the racial and gender order.

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## Notes

Illustrations: Every effort has been made by the author to trace a copyright holder for the illustrations, but none has been found.

1. Secondary literature on the demographic crisis includes Angus McLaren, *Sexuality and Social Order: The Debate over the Fertility of Women and Workers in France, 1770–1920* (Holmes and Meier, New York, 1983), pp. 1–27, 169–83; Robert A. Nye, *Crime*,

- Madness, and Politics in Modern France: The Medical Concept of National Decline* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1985), especially pp. 121–70; Robert A. Nye, *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1993), pp. 72–97; Karen Offen, 'Depopulation, Nationalism, and Feminism in Fin-de-siècle France', *American Historical Review*, 89 (1984), pp. 648–76; Susan Pederson, *Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State, Britain and France, 1914–1945* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994), especially pp. 25–78; Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917–1927* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1994), especially pp. 89–151; and Joseph J. Spengler, *France Faces Depopulation* (1942; repr. Duke University Press, Durham, NC, 1979).
2. In contradistinction to the claims of Mary Louise Roberts and Andrés Horacio Reggiani. See Roberts, *Civilization without Sexes*, p. 103; and Reggiani, 'Procreating France: The Politics of Demography, 1919–1945', *French Historical Studies*, 19 (1996), p. 752. Françoise Thébaud notes that the *Alliance Nationale pour l'Accroissement de la Population Française* assumed an 'ambiguous' stance with regard to foreigners, but does not explore its policy on immigration. See 'Le Mouvement nataliste dans la France de l'entre-deux-guerres: l'Alliance Nationale pour l'Accroissement de la Population Française', *Revue de l'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 32 (1985), pp. 276–301.
  3. Joshua H. Cole, *The Power of Large Numbers: Population, Politics, and Gender in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 2000); Carl Ipsen, *Dictating Demography: The Power of Population in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997); William H. Schneider, *Quality and Quantity: The Quest for Biological Regeneration in Twentieth-Century France* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990); Richard A. Soloway, *Demography and Degeneration: Eugenics and the Declining Birthrate in Twentieth-Century Britain* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1990).
  4. Elisabeth Domansky, 'Militarization and Reproduction in World War One Germany', in *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany, 1870–1930*, ed. Geoff Eley (University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1996), pp. 427–63.
  5. Anna Davin, 'Imperialism and Motherhood', in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1997), pp. 87–151; Jacques Donzelot, *The Policing of Families* (Pantheon, New York, 1979); Sylvia Schafer, *Children in Moral Danger and the Problem of Government in Third Republic France* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1997).
  6. Robert Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c.1848–c.1918* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989).
  7. Thébaud, 'Le Mouvement nataliste en France', p. 276.
  8. Jean-Marie Mayeur and Madeleine Rebérioux, *The Third Republic from its Origins to the Great War, 1871–1914* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1984), p. 330.
  9. Marianne Amar and Pierre Milza, *L'Immigration en France au XXe siècle* (Armand Colin, Paris, 1990), p. 271.
  10. Gérard Noiriel, *Population, immigration, et identité nationale en France, 19e–20e siècle* (Hachette, Paris, 1992), p. 53.
  11. On the 'civic duty of reproduction', see Pederson, *Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State*.
  12. For implications of the 'man shortage', see Elisa Camiscioli, 'Intermarriage, Independent Nationality, and the Individual Rights of French Women: The Law of 10 August 1927', *French Culture, Politics, and Society*, 17 (1999), pp. 52–74; Siân Reynolds, *France Between the Wars: Gender and Politics* (Routledge, London, 1996), pp. 25–6.
  13. Camiscioli, 'Intermarriage, Independent Nationality, and the Individual Rights of French Women'.
  14. Maxim Silverman, *Deconstructing the Nation: Immigration, Racism, and Citizenship in Modern France* (Routledge, London, 1996), pp. 19–27.

15. On 'civilisation theory' and its proponents, see Spengler, *France Faces Depopulation*, pp. 162–8.
16. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, *La Question de la population* (Félix Alcan, Paris, 1913).
17. Leroy-Beaulieu, *La Question de la population*, p. 237. On the shift away from Malthusianism, see Yves Charbit, *Du Malthusianisme au populationnisme: Les Economistes français et la population, 1840–1870* (Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1981).
18. Mario Gianturco, 'Le Problème international de la population', *Revue politique et parlementaire*, 426 (1930), pp. 225–6.
19. Leroy-Beaulieu, *La Question de la population*, p. 184. While providing a negative appraisal of democracy, Arsène Dumont also linked its emergence with the state of civilisation. See *Dépopulation et civilisation: Etude démographique* (Lecrosnier et Babé, Paris, 1890), pp. 145–55.
20. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, 'La Question de la population et la civilisation', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15 October 1897, p. 871; Dumont, *Dépopulation et civilisation*, pp. 106, 130, 238–51.
21. Dr Jacques Bertillon, *La Dépopulation de la France: Ses conséquences, ses causes: Mesures à prendre pour la combattre* (Alcan, Paris, 1911), pp. 130, 128–37; Dumont, *Dépopulation et civilisation*, pp. 80–88; René Martial, *Traité de l'immigration et de la greffe interraciale* (Imprimerie Fédérale, Cuesmes-lez-Mons, Belgium, 1931), pp. 176–82; Frédéric Sippenstein, *La Grève des naissances en Europe et ses problèmes* (Librairie Sociale et Economique, Paris, 1939), pp. 101–28.
22. Dumont, *Dépopulation et civilisation*, p. 241.
23. Passing mention is made of this point in Philip E. Ogden and Marie-Monique Huss, 'Demography and Pronatalism in France in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', *Journal of Historical Demography*, 8 (1982), p. 293.
24. Jean Pluyette, *La Doctrine des races et la sélection de l'immigration en France* (Pierre Bossuet, Paris, 1930), p. 140; Martial, *Traité de l'immigration*, pp. 240–41.
25. Auguste Isaac, 'Discours', Congrès National de la Natalité, *Compte rendu*, 1922, p. 19.
26. Tournaire, *La Plaie française* (Librairie-Bibliothèque Auguste Comte, 1922), p. 231.
27. John Laffey, 'Racism and Imperialism: French Views of the "Yellow Peril", 1894–1914', *Third Republic*, 1 (1976), pp. 1–52; Benoît Massin, 'Lutte des classes, lutte des races', in *Des Sciences contre l'homme*, ed. Claude Blanckaert (2 vols, Editions Autrement, Paris, 1993), vol. 1, *Classer, hiérarchiser, exclure*, p. 137.
28. Fernand Boverat, 'La Dénatalité, ses causes et les mesures à prendre pour l'enrayer', *Le Musée social*, 1 (1936), p. 4. See also Tournaire, *La Plaie française*, p. 247.
29. Laffey, 'Racism and Imperialism'.
30. On the possibility of Asian imperialism, see Leroy-Beaulieu, *Question de la population*, pp. 153–70, 487; René Maunier, *The Sociology of Colonies: Introduction to the Study of Race Contact*, trans. E. O. Lorimer (2 vols, 1936; repr. Routledge, London, 1949), vol. 1, pp. 35–6, 387; Tournaire, *La Plaie française*, p. 246; Louis Varlez, 'Les Problèmes de migration à la Conférence de la Havane de 1918', *Revue internationale du travail*, 19 (1919), p. 11.
31. Leroy-Beaulieu, *Question de la population*, p. 487; Paul Hauray, *La Vie ou la mort de la France* (Vuibert, Paris, 1923), p. 12.
32. Hervé Le Bras, 'The Demographic Argument in France', in *Population and Social Policy in France*, ed. Maire Cross and Sheila Perry (Pinter, London, 1997), pp. 26–7.
33. Leroy-Beaulieu, *Question de la population*, p. 287.
34. Dumont, 'Démographie des étrangers habitant en France', *Bulletin de la Société d'anthropologie de France*, 1894, p. 425.
35. René le Conte, *Etude sur l'émigration italienne* (A. Michalon, Paris, 1908), pp. 388–99. In the United States, where the racial stock of Italian immigrants was less valued, the Dillingham Commission's Report on Immigration warned of the 'immense capacity of the Italian race to populate other parts of the earth', such as Argentina and Brazil, where Italians now outnumbered the Spanish and Portuguese. See Matthew Frye Jacobson,

- Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1998), p. 80.
36. Offen, 'Depopulation, Nationalism, and Feminism'.
  37. Leroy-Beaulieu, *Question de la Population*, pp. 270–3.
  38. Fernand Boverat, 'La Dénatalité, ses dangers et les mesures à prendre pour l'enrayer', *Le Musée social*, January 1936, pp. 4–5.
  39. Albert Troullier, 'Immigration-Démographie', *L'Economie nouvelle*, June 1928, p. 314. Emphasis in the original.
  40. See, for example, Alix Duquesnoy, 'Les Mineurs polonais dans le bassin houiller du Nord', *Correspondance de l'Ecole Normale Sociale*, June–July–August 1939, in Archives Nationales 6AS 36, Fonds Max Lazard; Paul Guériot, 'Une Politique de l'immigration', *Revue politique et parlementaire*, June 1924, p. 433; Georges Mauco, *Les Etrangers en France: Etude géographique sur leur rôle dans l'activité économique* (Armand Colin, Paris, 1932), p. 524.
  41. 'Immigration et naturalisation', *Revue de l'Alliance Nationale pour l'Accroissement de la Population Française* (hereafter *Revue*), 134 (1923), p. 279.
  42. Troullier, 'Immigration-Démographie', p. 299. See also 'Rapport de Charles Lambert, député du Rhône, sur la naturalisation des étrangers', Congrès National de la Natalité, *Compte rendu*, 1927, p. 73.
  43. On the Alliance, see Cheryl A. Koos, 'Gender, Anti-individualism, and Nationalism: The Alliance Nationale and the Pronatalist Backlash against the *Femme Moderne*, 1933–1940', *French Historical Studies*, 19 (1996), pp. 699–723; Thébaud, 'Le Mouvement nataliste en France'.
  44. Pederson, *Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State*, p. 61.
  45. Boverat, 'Il faut à la France une politique d'immigration', *Revue*, 129 (1923), p. 119. On Boverat, see Robert Talmay, *Histoire du mouvement familiale en France, 1896–1939* (2 vols, Union Nationale des Caisses d'Allocations Familiales, Paris, 1962), vol. 2, pp. 222–3.
  46. Boverat, 'Une Politique de naturalisation', *Revue*, 138 (1924), p. 49.
  47. Isaac, 'Discours', Congrès National de la Natalité, *Compte rendu*, 1926, p. 13.
  48. Boverat, 'Comment faciliter la naturalisation de bons éléments français', Congrès National de la Natalité, *Compte rendu* (1925), p. 53.
  49. Boverat, 'Rapport sur la naturalisation', Congrès National de la Natalité, *Compte rendu*, 1922, p. 58.
  50. Troullier, '42 millions d'Italiens', *Revue*, 165 (1926), p. 102. See also Isaac, 'Discours', Congrès National de la Natalité, *Compte rendu*, 1925, p. 20; Isaac, 'Discours', Congrès National de la Natalité, *Compte rendu*, 1926, p. 13.
  51. Boverat, 'Il faut à la France une politique d'immigration', p. 119.
  52. There is a long French tradition of 'whitening' the Kabyles, hence distinguishing Berber-speaking North Africans from Arabs. See Patricia M. E. Lorcin, *Imperial Identities: Stereotyping, Prejudice and Race in Colonial Algeria* (I. B. Tauris Publishers, London, 1995).
  53. Boverat, 'Il faut à la France une politique d'immigration', pp. 119–20.
  54. Boverat, 'Rapport générale sur l'immigration et l'émigration étrangères dans le département: Ses effets sur la nuptialité et la natalité', Conseil Supérieur de la Natalité (hereafter CSN), *Rapports et vœux*, 1936, p. 43.
  55. Louis Duval-Arnould, 'Les Problèmes de l'immigration étrangère en France', Semaines Sociales de France, *Compte rendu*, 1926, p. 626.
  56. See Elisa Camiscoli, 'Rebuilding the French Race: Immigration, Reproduction, and National Identity in France, 1900–1939' (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 2000), ch. 2.
  57. Duval-Arnould, 'Les Problèmes de l'immigration', p. 627.
  58. Mgr. Vanneufville, 'La main-d'œuvre étrangère et les migrations ouvrières', Semaines Sociales de la France, *Compte rendu*, 1920, p. 345.
  59. Talmay, *Histoire du mouvement familiale*, vol. 2, p. 220.
  60. Ludovic Naudeau, *La France se regarde: Le Problème de la natalité* (Hachette, Paris, 1931).

61. Naudeau, *La France se regarde*, pp. 11, 116. For his appreciation of Bertillon, Leroy-Beaulieu, and Dumont, see pp. 442–3, 448–50.
62. Here especially, Naudeau follows Dumont. See Cole, *The Power of Large Numbers*, p. 207.
63. Cole, *The Power of Large Numbers*, p. 197.
64. See Roberts, *Civilization without Sexes*.
65. Naudeau, *La France se regarde*, p. 8.
66. Naudeau, *La France se regarde*, p. 68; see also pp. 39, 66.
67. Naudeau, *La France se regarde*, p. 116.
68. Naudeau, *La France se regarde*, p. 66; see also p. 186.
69. Naudeau, *La France se regarde*, pp. 54, 154–5, 333–4.
70. 'Rapport sur l'immigration et l'émigration étrangères', CSN, *Rapports et vœux*, 6 (1936), p. 10.
71. Boverat, 'Rapport générale sur l'immigration', p. 42.
72. Isaac, 'Discours', Congrès National de la Natalité, *Compte rendu*, 1926, p. 13.
73. Mauco, *Les Etrangers en France*, pp. 184, 186.
74. Camiscioli, 'Intermarriage, Independent Nationality, and the Individual Rights of French-women', pp. 61–2. On Republican motherhood, see Joan Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1987).
75. Mauco, *Les Etrangers en France*, p. 532.
76. Naudeau, 'Les Dangers et les ressources de l'immigration', *L'Illustration*, 1 (1924), p. 392.
77. Boverat, 'Rapport générale sur l'immigration', p. 42.
78. Pederson, *Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State*.
79. Talmy, *Histoire du mouvement familial*, vol. 1, pp. 211–17.
80. 'Rapport sur l'immigration et l'émigration étrangères', p. 12.
81. Boverat, 'Le Chômage et les immigrés', rapport présenté à la section permanente du CSN, 19 January 1931, Supplément au fascicule no. 1, 1931, p. 3.
82. Boverat, 'Le Chômage et les immigrés', pp. 1–2. See also Boverat, 'Le Chômage et les immigrés: Ne refoulons pas les chefs de famille', *Revue*, 223 (1931), pp. 402–5.
83. Boverat, 'Le Chômage et les immigrés', pp. 3–4.
84. Boverat, 'Le Chômage et les immigrés', pp. 4–5.
85. Miranda Pollard, *Reign of Virtue: Mobilizing Gender in Vichy France* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1998), pp. 33, 40.