

# POPULATION & SOCIETIES

No. 443  
MARCH 2008

**Population & Societies celebrates its 40th anniversary**  
All issues are available on line at [www.ined.fr/en](http://www.ined.fr/en) (in English from issue 360)

## The population of France in 2007

Gilles Pison\*

The French demographic situation is one of both continuity and change. Examining developments in 2007, Gilles Pison draws our attention to three key trends: the remarkable increase in life expectancy since 2003, year of the deadly summer heat wave, the growing popularity of heterosexual civil partnerships (PACS), and the rising proportion of babies born outside marriage, who now account for more than half of all births.

The population of France on 1 January 2008 was 63.8 million, of which 61.9 million in metropolitan France (mainland and Corsica) and 1.9 million in the overseas départements and regions [1]. In metropolitan France, the population grew by 337,000 in 2007 (+0.5%), at a rate that has remained steady over the last six years (Table page 3). In 2007, four-fifths of this increase was due to a surplus of births over deaths and one-fifth to net migration, i.e. the difference between migration inflows and outflows, which was estimated by INSEE at 70,000, slightly down on 2006 (91,000).

### ◆ Almost as many births in 2007 as in 2006

In 2007, the total fertility rate in metropolitan France stood at 1.96 children per woman, very close to its 2006 level (1.98). This slight drop, combined with a decrease in the number of women of reproductive age, explains why births fell slightly, from 797,000 in 2006 to 783,000 in 2007.

The trend of delayed childbearing observed over the last three decades is continuing, and the women who gave birth in 2007 were aged 29.9 on average (1). Mean age at childbirth has increased steadily since

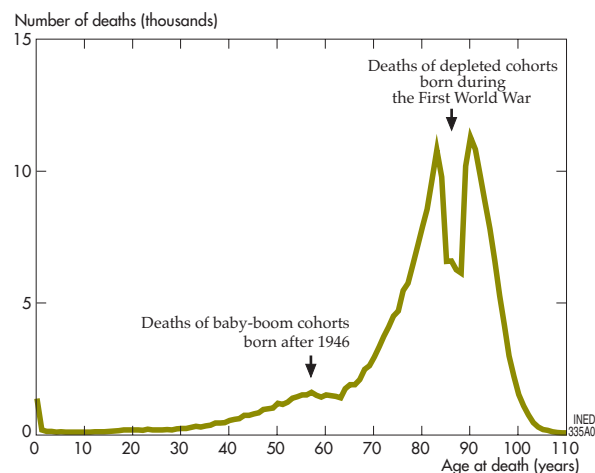
\* Institut national d'études démographiques

(1) The average age at first birth is close to 28.

1977, when it stood at 26.5 years. Though female fertility is still increasing after age 30, a trend that began in the late 1970s, it fell slightly before age 30 between 2006 and 2007.

Cohort fertility trends show that the women born in 1957, who turned 50 in 2007 and who have now completed their reproductive lives, had 2.14 children on

Figure 1 – Female deaths by age in France, 2004



(G. Pison Population & Sociétés, n° 443, Ined, March 2008)

Source: INSEE, register of deaths.

average. Women born in 1967, who turned 40 in 2007, have already had 1.97 children, and the total should reach 2.03 by the time they are 50. For the younger cohorts who still have childbearing years ahead of them, it is hazardous to predict their completed fertility, though it could well reach 2.0 children.

### ◆ Life expectancy continues to increase

A total of 516,000 deaths were recorded in metropolitan France in 2007, a figure practically identical to that of 2006. This figure is remarkably low for two reasons. First, the depleted cohorts born during the First World War are reaching the very old ages at which most deaths now occur. These cohorts are practically half the size of those born both before and after the War, so the number of deaths is correspondingly smaller (Figure 1). As the larger cohorts reach advanced age in the coming years, the number of deaths will increase. The second factor is the increase in length of life, measured by life expectancy at birth, which rose to 77.6 years for men and 84.5 years for women in 2007, from 77.2 and 84.2 years respectively in 2006. For men and women combined, it gained four months between 2006 and 2007, and now exceeds 81 years.

The 2003 summer heatwave produced a very visible dip in the curve of observed life expectancy since 1994, followed by a sharp upward leap in 2004 (Figure 2). Thanks to the change in attitudes towards old people since the heatwave, the life expectancy curve has returned to the gradient observed before 2003, though at a higher level [2]. Progress even seems to have accelerated since then, for women especially. They often live alone at these ages, and have benefited from the increased attention paid to isolated older people. With a female life expectancy of 84.2 years in 2006 and of 84.5 years in 2007, France tops the European rankings, alongside Switzerland, Spain and Italy.

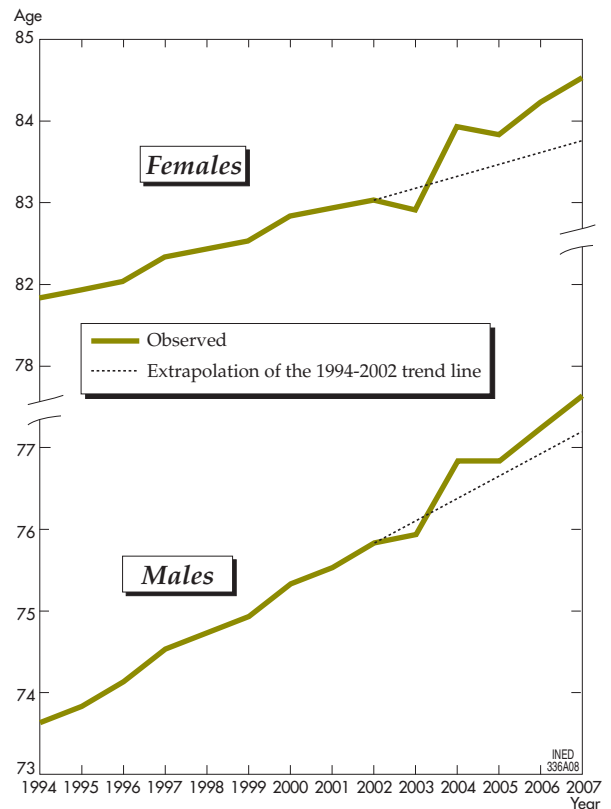
### ◆ Four civil partnerships for ten marriages

Since the civil partnership (*pacte civil de solidarité*, PACS) was introduced in France in 1999, the annual number of new partnerships has risen steadily (Figure 3), increasing more than five-fold between 2001 and 2007 from 19,632 to 102,012. With almost four civil partnerships for ten marriages in 2007, the ratio of one to two will soon be reached. Though same-sex PACS partnerships have risen by almost 50 %, the increase in heterosexual partnerships is larger by far. From 15,426 in 2001, the number of heterosexual PACS rose to 97,000 (2) in 2007, a six-fold increase in just six years. Over the same period, the annual number of marriages fell by almost 30,000, from 288,000 in 2001 to 260,000 in 2007 (Table). Is the heterosexual PACS gradually taking the place of marriage?

The two types of union have become much more similar in recent years. The tax rules applicable to married couples and civil partners were harmonized in

2005, with civil partners paying income tax jointly from the first year of union, like married couples, rather than after three years, as was previously the case. The mean age of heterosexual partners registering a PACS is also very similar to that of couples who marry: 30.4 years versus 29.7 years respectively for women in 2005 and

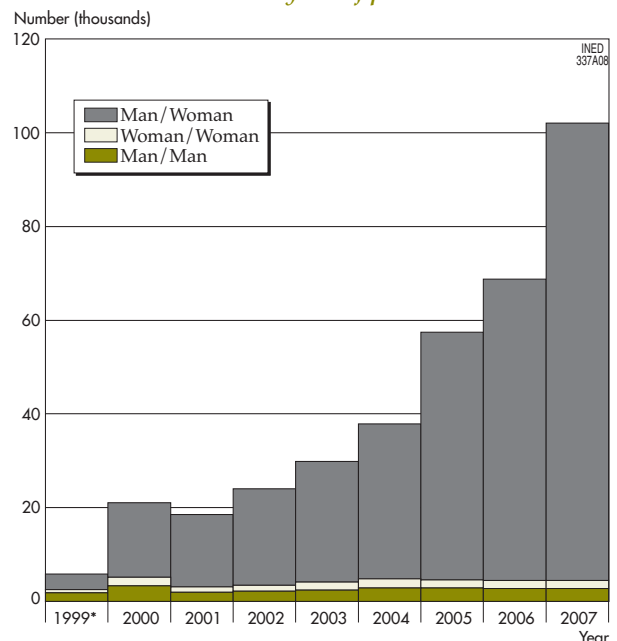
Figure 2 – Life expectancy at birth in France since 1994



(G. Pison Population & Sociétés, n° 443, Ined, March 2008)

Source: INSEE.

Figure 3 – Annual number of PACS partnerships registered since 1999 by sex of partners



\* The PACS was introduced in November 1999.

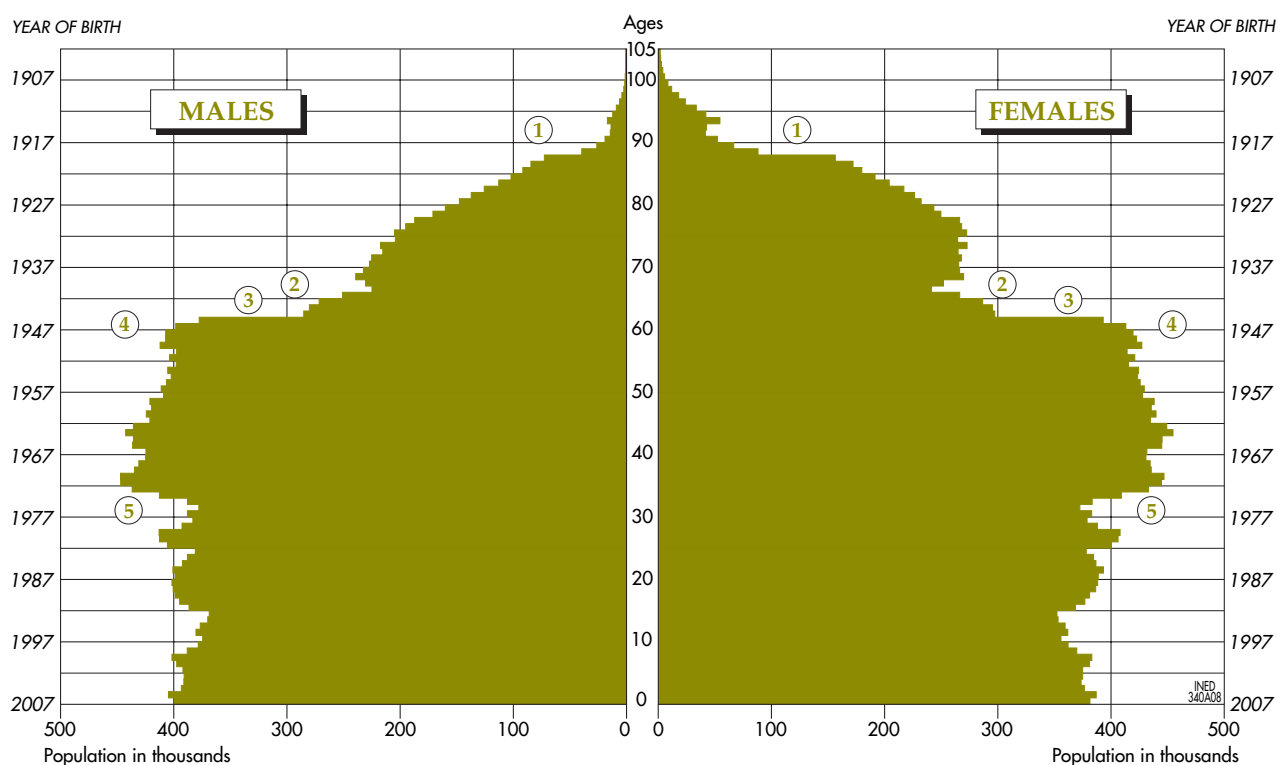
(G. Pison Population & Sociétés, n° 443, Ined, March 2008)

Source: Ministry of Justice and [3].

(2) Provisional estimate.

# POPULATION OF FRANCE

PROVISIONAL ESTIMATE ON 1 JANUARY 2008



- ① Birth deficit due to World War I (depleted cohorts)      ③ Birth deficit due to World War II
- ② Depleted cohorts reach reproductive age      ④ Baby boom
- ⑤ End of baby boom

Source: INSEE.  
(G. Pison Population & Sociétés, n° 443, Ined, March 2008)

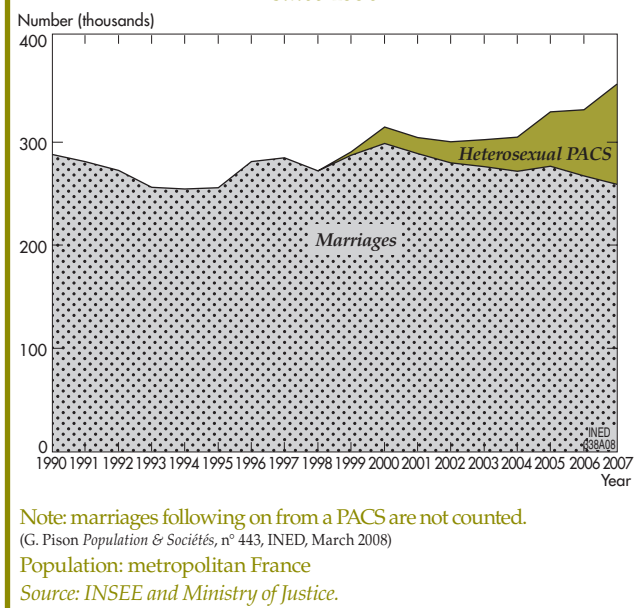
Table – Population indicators from 1950 to 2007, metropolitan France

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007(p)
Births (m)	858	816	848	800	762	738	745	775	771	762	761	768	774	797	783
Deaths (m)	530	517	540	547	526	534	538	531	531	535	552	509	528	516	516
Natural increase (m)	328	299	308	253	236	204	207	244	240	226	209	258	247	280	267
Net migration (m)	35	140	180	44	80	45	60	70	85	95	100	105	95	91	70
Total growth (m)	363	439	488	297	316	249	267	314	325	321	309	363	342	371	337
Adjustment (1) (m)	-	-	-	-	-	-53	86	86	86	86	86	-	-	-	-
Birth rate (t)	20.5	17.9	16.7	14.9	13.4	12.6	12.7	13.1	13.0	12.7	12.6	12.7	12.7	13.0	12.7
Death rate (t)	12.7	11.3	10.6	10.2	9.3	9.1	9.2	9.0	8.9	8.9	9.2	8.4	8.6	8.4	8.4
Infant mortality rate (r)	51.9	27.4	18.2	10.0	7.3	4.6	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.1	4.0	3.9	3.6	3.6	3.6
Total fertility rate (e)	2.93	2.73	2.47	1.94	1.78	1.76	1.79	1.87	1.88	1.86	1.87	1.90	1.92	1.98	1.96
Life expectancy:															
male (a)	63.4	67.0	68.4	70.2	72.7	74.8	75.0	75.3	75.5	75.8	75.9	76.8	76.8	77.2	77.6
female (a)	69.2	73.6	75.9	78.4	80.9	82.4	82.5	82.8	82.9	83.0	82.9	83.9	83.8	84.2	84.5
Marriages (m)	331	320	394	334	287	271	286	298	288	279	276	272	276	267	260
Marriage rate (t)	7.9	7.0	7.8	6.2	5.1	4.6	4.9	5.0	4.8	4.7	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.2
<b>Population (2) (m)</b>	<b>42,010</b>	<b>45,904</b>	<b>51,016</b>	<b>54,029</b>	<b>56,893</b>	<b>58,497</b>	<b>58,850</b>	<b>59,249</b>	<b>59,660</b>	<b>60,067</b>	<b>60,462</b>	<b>60,825</b>	<b>61,167</b>	<b>61,538</b>	<b>61,876</b>
Under 20 (2) (m)	12,556	14,665	16,748	16,419	15,632	15,018	15,044	15,054	15,060	15,069	15,124	15,151	15,175	15,204	15,219
65 and above (2) (m)	4,727	5,288	6,174	7,541	8,036	9,285	9,422	9,543	9,667	9,779	9,871	9,991	10,059	10,111	10,212
Under 20 (2) %	29.9	31.9	32.8	30.4	27.5	25.7	25.6	25.4	25.2	25.1	25.0	24.9	24.8	24.7	24.6
65 and above (2) %	11.3	11.5	12.1	14.0	14.1	15.9	16.0	16.1	16.2	16.3	16.3	16.4	16.4	16.4	16.5

(a) in years – (e) children per women – (m) in thousands – (p) provisional – (r) per 1,000 live births – (t) per 1,000 population  
(1) The population estimates for the period 1990-2003 were adjusted to establish consistency between the censuses of 1990 and 1999 and the census surveys of 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 (see Anne Pla, 2008 [1]) – (2) at year-end.

Source: INSEE, Division des enquêtes et études démographiques (<http://www.insee.fr>).

Figure 4 – Annual number of heterosexual unions since 1990



32.4 years versus 31.9 years for men. Frequency of separation is also similar: almost one in five heterosexual civil partnerships is dissolved within six years (18.9%), compared with almost one marriage in seven (13.5%) [3].

Trends in new heterosexual unions, both PACS and marriage, can be observed by aggregating the annual numbers of PACS partnerships and marriages (3) (Figure 4). The total number of unions has been growing steadily since the mid 1990s, with the downtrend in marriages more than offset by the increasingly popular PACS.

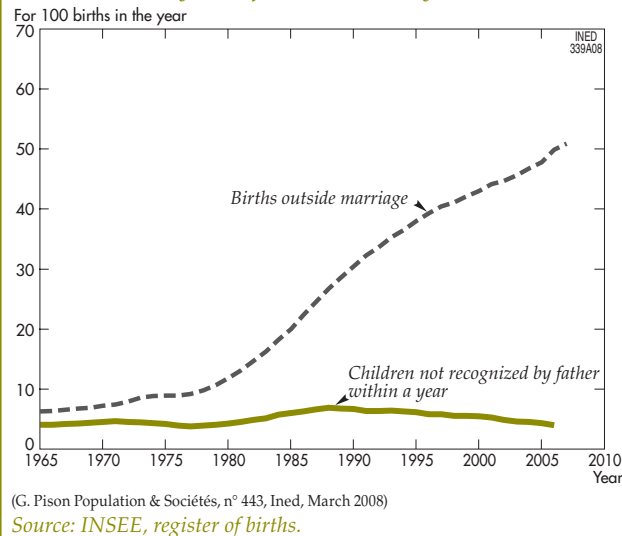
### ◆ One child in two is born to unmarried parents

Among the 797,000 children born in metropolitan France in 2006, 395,000, i.e. 49.5%, were born to parents who were not married at the time of birth. In 1970, the proportion was just 6% (Figure 5). These births, at that time rare and generally frowned upon, were officially classified as “illegitimate”. But social norms have changed and children born out of wedlock are now as numerous as those born to married parents.

In July 2006, the rights of children born within or outside marriage became identical under French law, and the type of birth is no longer recorded in the birth register. Today, the parents of most children born outside marriage are in a stable union. While for married couples, the child’s filiation is established automatically when the birth is registered, for unmarried couples, the child must be recognized (either jointly or separately) by both parents. In the early 1970s, only one child in five born outside marriage was recognized by the father at birth, and in 1980, one in two [4, 5]. By 2005, the proportion had risen to five in six. With the growing

(3) Some marriages follow on from a PACS between the same two partners. They have been deducted to ensure that the same union is not counted twice.

Figure 5 – Proportion of births outside marriage and of children not recognized by their father within a year



number of births outside marriage, paternal recognition has become a routine procedure, and is very rapid. Altogether, fewer than 4% of all children are not recognized in the year of their birth, and this is the lowest proportion for 30 years (Figure 5). The past distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children has shifted: it is now between children not recognized by their father and those recognized by both parents, regardless of whether they are married at the time of birth [5].

### REFERENCES

- [1] Anne PLA - “Bilan démographique 2007: Des naissances toujours très nombreuses”, *Insee-Première*, 1170, January 2008, and INSEE website: [www.insee.fr](http://www.insee.fr).
- [2] Laurent TOULEMON and Magali BARBIERI - “The mortality impact of the August 2003 heat wave in France: Investigating the ‘harvesting’ effect and other long-term consequences”, *Population Studies*, 62 (1), 2008, pp. 1-15.
- [3] Valérie CARRASCO - “Le pacte civil de solidarité : une forme d’union qui se banalise”, *Infostat-Justice*, 97, October 2007.
- [4] Francisco MUNOZ-PÉREZ and France PRIoux - “Naître hors mariage”, *Population & sociétés*, 342, January 1999.
- [5] Catherine BEAUMEL, Roselyne KERJOSSE and Laurent TOULEMON - “Des mariages, des couples et des enfants”, *Insee-Première*, 624, January 1999.

### ABSTRACT

The population of metropolitan France (mainland and Corsica), which stood at 61.9 million on 1 January 2008, grew by 0.5% in 2007. The surplus of births over deaths accounts for four-fifths of this increase, and net migration, i.e. the difference between migrant arrivals and departures, for the remaining one-fifth. Fertility stood at 1.96 children per woman on average in 2007 and remains among the highest in Europe, while life expectancy exceeds 81 years for both sexes combined. Four civil partnerships were registered for ten marriages, and one child in two was born to unmarried parents