



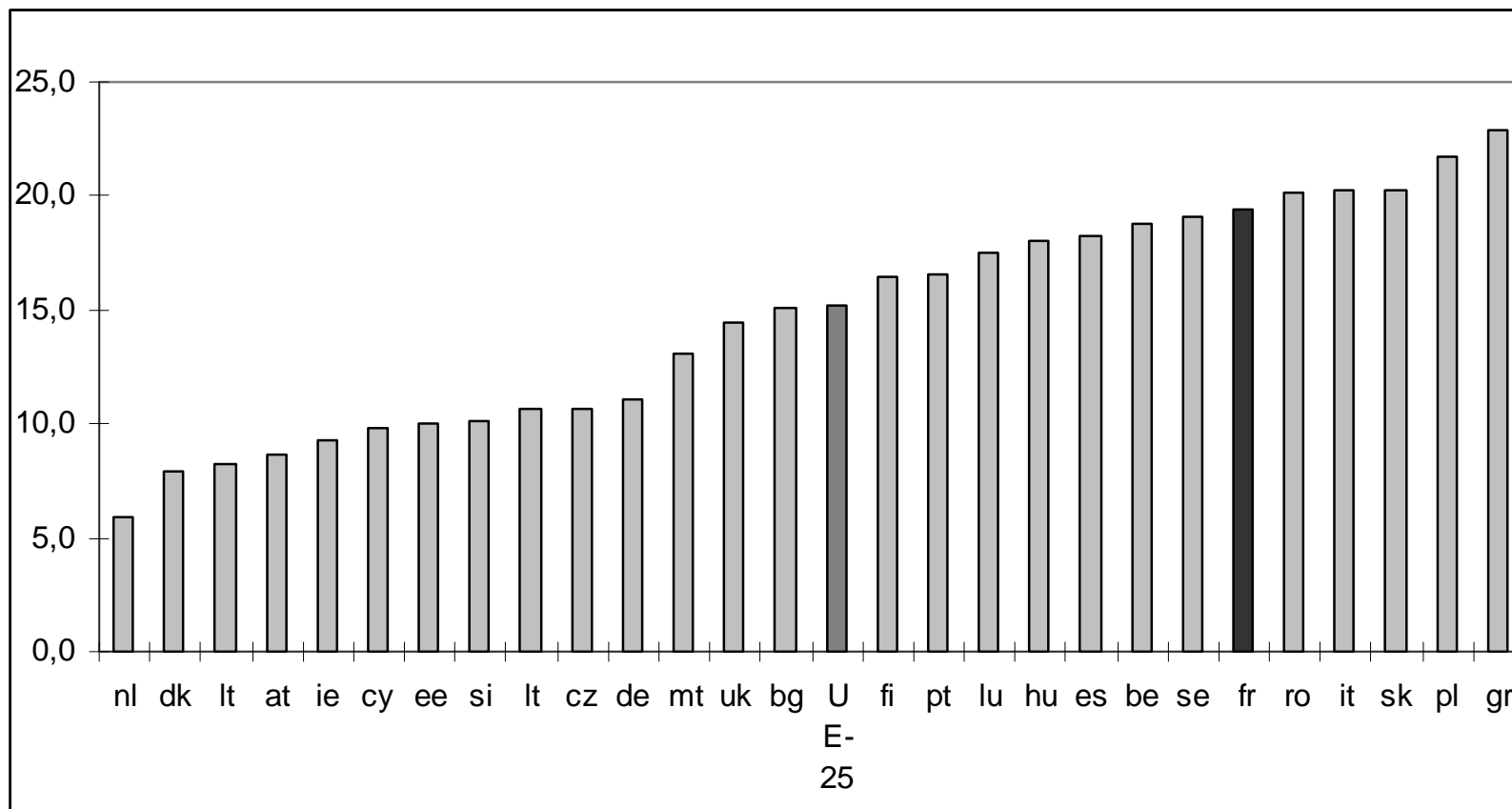
# Does economic uncertainty affect plans, timing and level of fertility?

Evidence from France

Ariane Pailhé and Anne Solaz

INED

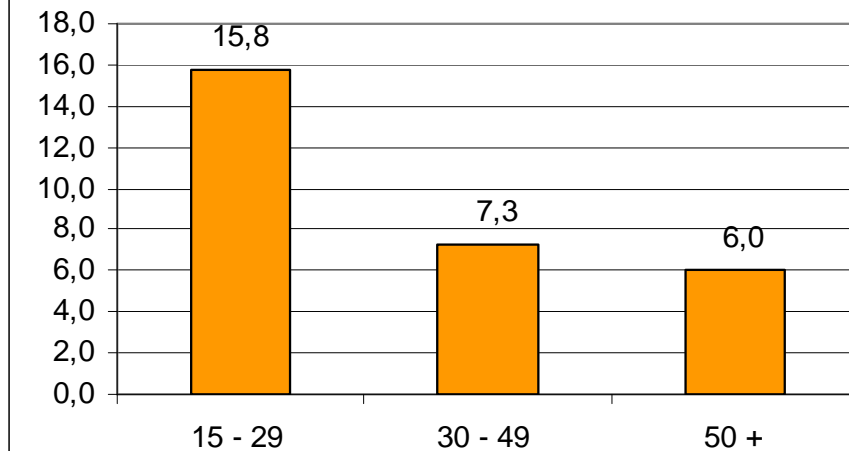
# High youth unemployment



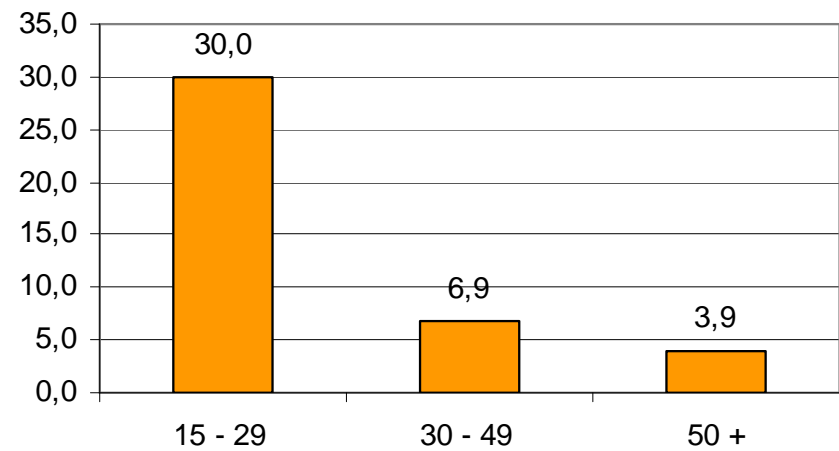
Source: Eurostat, 2007

# High youth unemployment, more insecure jobs

Unemployment rate by age in France (2006), %

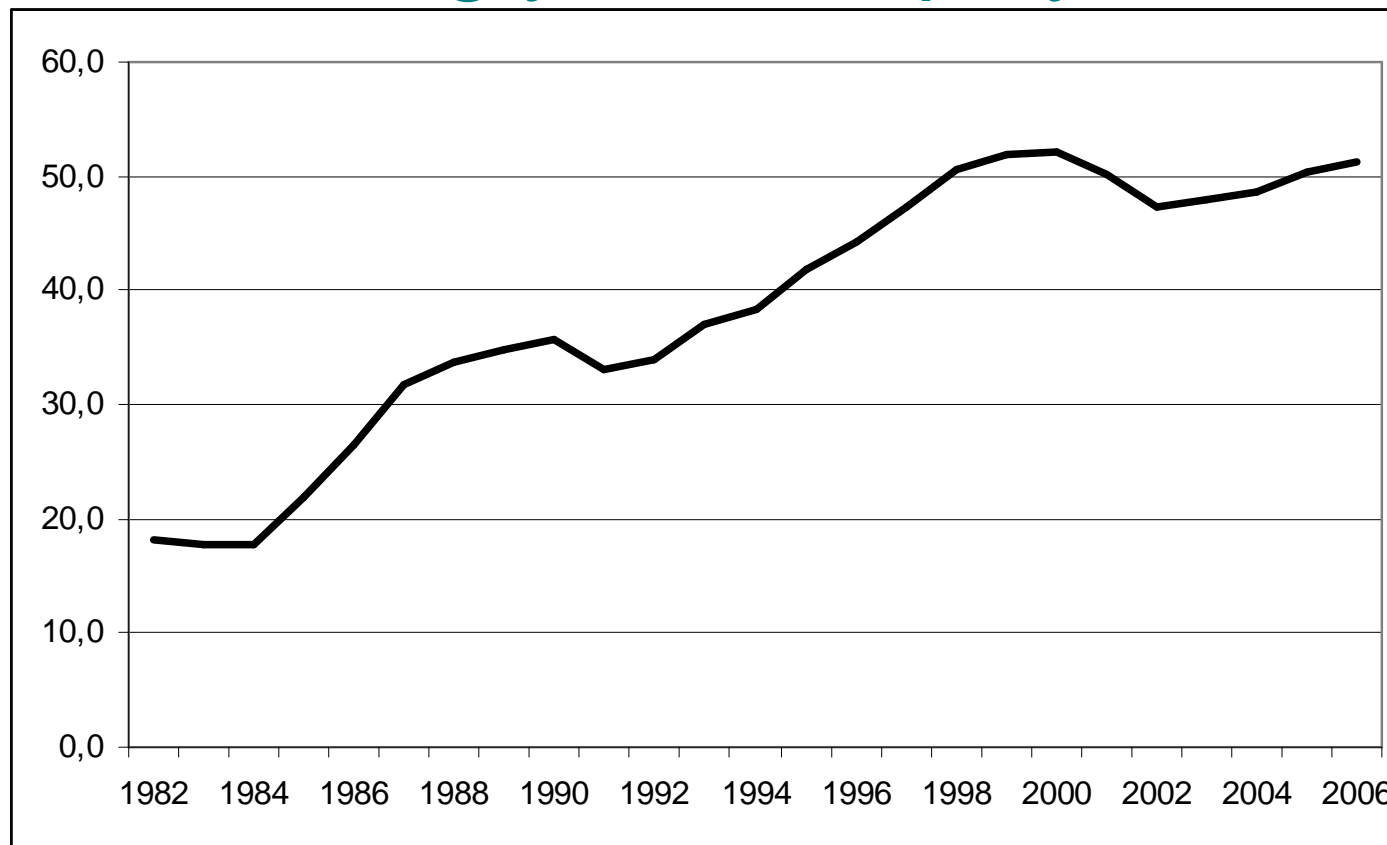


Non permanent job by age in France (2006), %



Source: LFS, 2006

# Share of non-standard work contract among youth employed, %



Source: Insee, Labour force surveys, 1982-2006



# A particular position of France

Combines :

- high youth unemployment and
- high fertility (Europe's second-highest birth rate: 2.0 in 2007)

Does the relation between unemployment and fertility weaker than elsewhere?



## 3 questions

- Does insecure employment affect fertility intentions in France?
- Is fertility merely delayed or is completed fertility also affected?
- Does economic uncertainty have similar effects for men and women?



# Having a secure job a pre-condition to family formation

Pre-conditions for transition to parenthood (Hobcraft and Kiernan 1995):

1. Being in partnership
2. Having completed full-time education and training
3. Having a home of one's own
4. Being in employment with adequate income
5. A sense of security

Job uncertainty: one of the main explanations for the postponement of family formation (Blossfeld et al., 2005)



# But, unemployment may also plays positively on fertility

- Unemployment lowers the opportunity cost of children
  - Unemployed people may center live on the private sphere and then invest in children (Friedman et al., 1994)
- + Social support from the State may reduces uncertainty
- Large range of social support from the state in France:
    - 51% of people aged 18 to 29 receive some form of social support (housing allowances, student grants, family benefits, etc.).
    - But unemployment benefit available from 4 months of work and social assistance available only from 25





# Data

- The French “**Families and Employers**” survey (INED, 2004-2005).
- About 9500 individuals aged from 20 to 49
- 2 persons per household were interviewed
- Retrospective work and family history
- Fertility plans
- Many information on job characteristics



# I Fertility intentions

Questions asked to people in partnership (coresident or not), aged 20-40, not pregnant: 1526 men, 1820 women

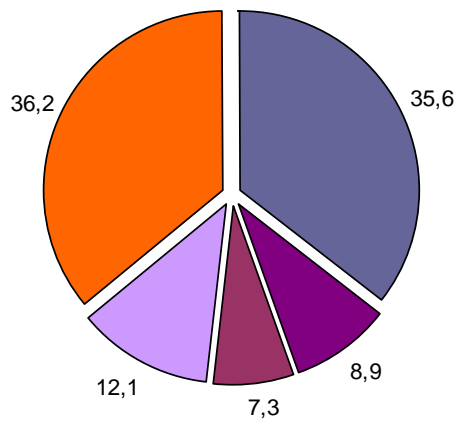
Would you like to have or to adopt *another* (if at least a child) child, now or later?

- ✓ *I am pregnant or my partner is pregnant*
- ✓ Yes → In how many years? → Is this timing connected to your professional situation? to your partner's professional situation?
- ✓ No
- ✓ *May-be or dnk* → Is your hesitation connected to your professional situation? to your partner's professional situation?

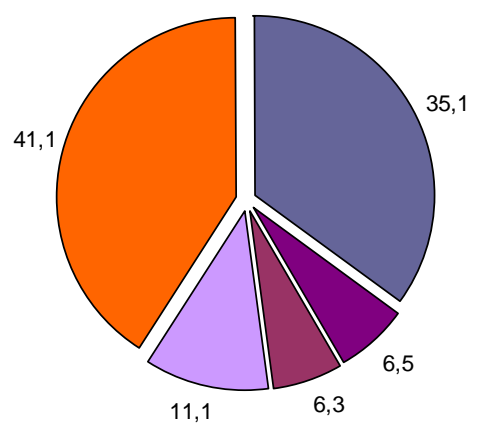


# Fertility plans

Men



Women



- want a child within next 3 years
- want a child, don't know when
- want a child, later
- maybe
- never

Men and women under 40

# Intention to have a child during the next 3 years (Logistic, OR)

|                       | Men      | Women     |
|-----------------------|----------|-----------|
| <b>R's job status</b> |          |           |
| stable job            | 1.000    | 1.000     |
| non stable job        | 1.365    | 0.653 **  |
| unemployed            | 0.597 *  | 0.794     |
| student               | 1.016    | 0.226 *** |
| OLF                   |          | 1.018     |
| <b>P's job status</b> |          |           |
| stable job            | 1.000    | 1.000     |
| non stable job        | 0.967    | 1.298     |
| unemployed            | 0.874    | 0.922     |
| student               | 0.441 ** | 1.373     |
| OLF                   | 0.739    |           |
| N                     | 1526     | 1820      |
| Pseudo R2             | 0.227    | 0.250     |



Reproductive decision-making  
in a macro-micro perspective

Other covariates: # of children, religiosity, level of education, # of siblings, age & age2, immigrant status, household income.



# Intention to have a child during the next 3 years (OR) for mothers and childless

|                       | Childless women | With children |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>R's job status</b> |                 |               |
| stable job            | 1,000           | 1,000         |
| non stable job        | 0,492 **        | 0,838         |
| unemployed            | 0,678           | 0,793         |
| student               | 0,170 ***       | 1,175         |
| OLF                   | 1,204           | 1,113         |
| <b>P's job status</b> |                 |               |
| stable job            | 1,000           | 1,000         |
| non stable job        | 1,642           | 1,021         |
| unemployed            | 0,896           | 0,693         |
| student               | 1,026           |               |
| OLF                   |                 |               |
| <b>N</b>              | 397             | 1423          |
| <b>Pseudo R2</b>      | 0,1274          | 0,233         |

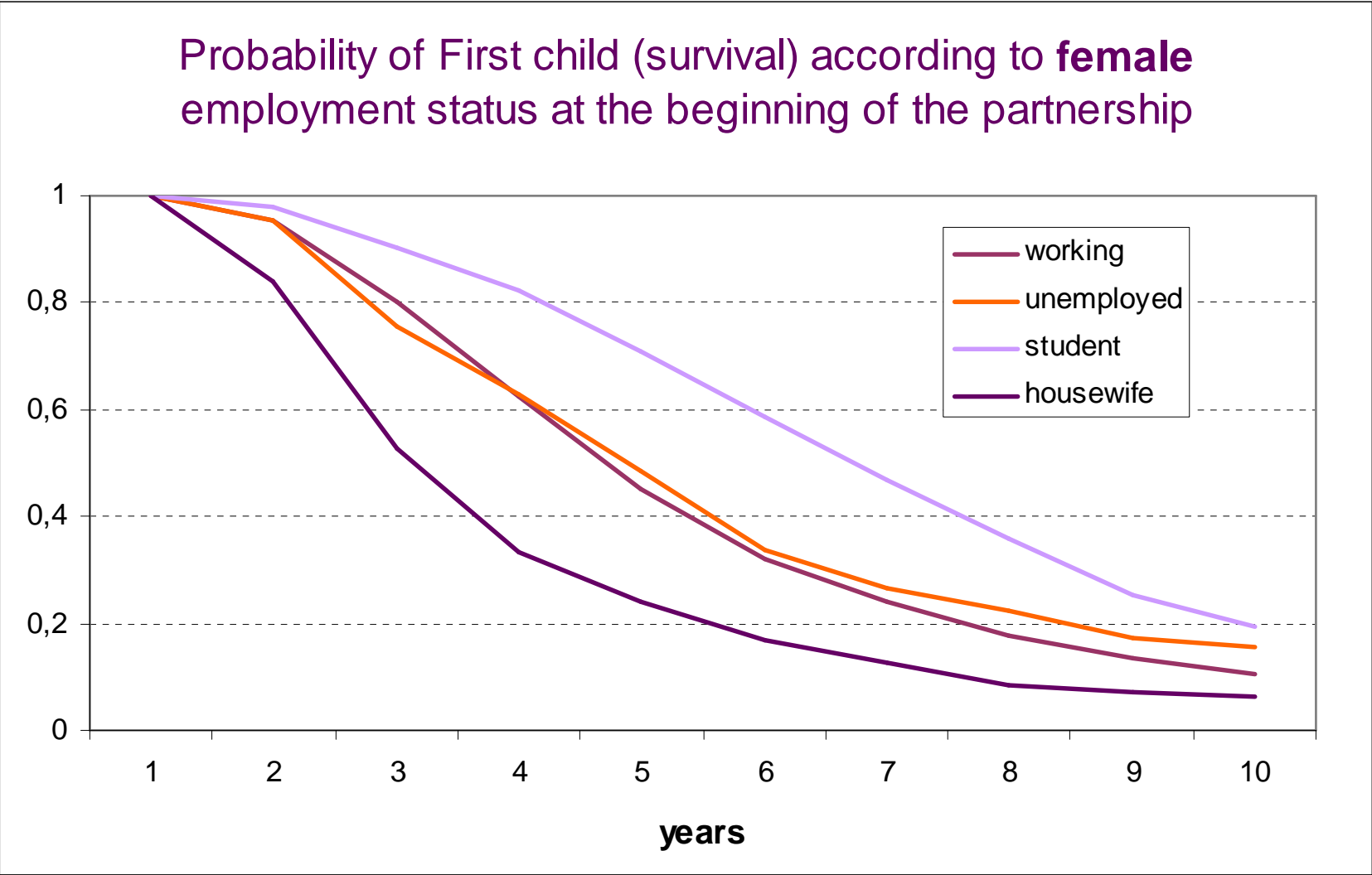


## II Timing of childbearing

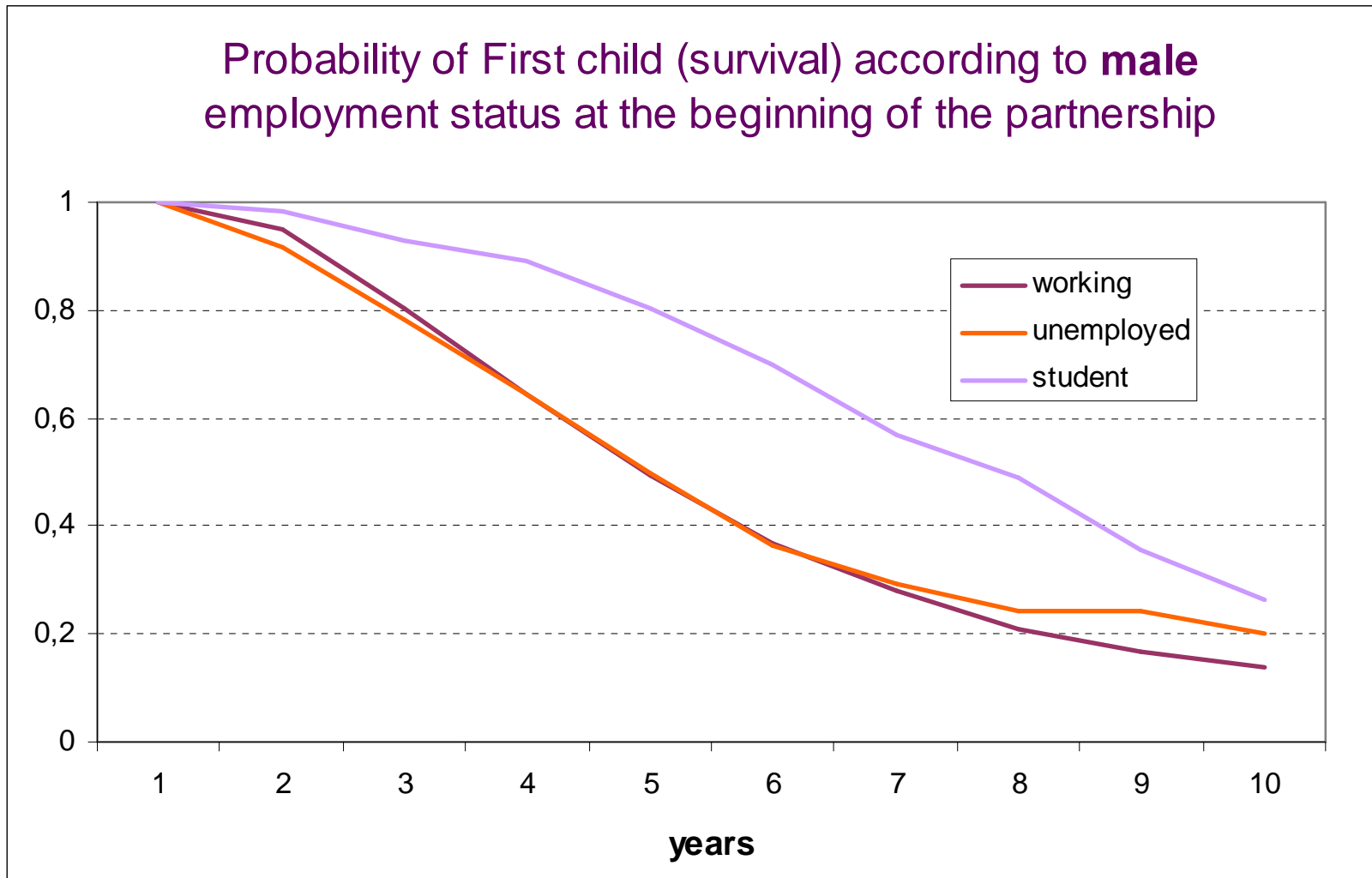
- **Sample** : women and men having already formed a couple (3537 men, 4659 women).
- **Duration models (Cox models) on**
  - the timing between first partnership and first child
  - the timing between the two first births
- **Variables of interest**
  - Professional situation at the couple formation
  - Last year professional situation during partnership (time-varying)
  - Ratio of unemployment / activity period (time-varying) = nb of years with unemployment spells ( $\geq 6$  months) / time since end of studies
- **Covariates**  
religiosity, type of union (time-varying), education, number of siblings, age at first partnership, generation.



### Probability of First child (survival) according to **female** employment status at the beginning of the partnership



Probability of First child (survival) according to **male** employment status at the beginning of the partnership





# Timing between first partnership and first child

(Semi-parametric duration model, Cox)

| professionnal situation                     | MEN                |                           |                    | WOMEN             |                           |                    |
|---|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
|   | at union formation | Previous year (time var.) | ratios (time var.) | at union formaion | Previous year (time var.) | ratios (time var.) |
| <b>Respondant's professionnal situation</b> |                    |                           |                    |                   |                           |                    |
| working                                     | <i>ref</i>         | <i>ref</i>                |                    | <i>ref</i>        | <i>ref</i>                |                    |
| unemployed                                  | -0.123             | -0.274**                  |                    | -0.115            | 0.025                     |                    |
| insecure job                                | na                 | -0.163*                   |                    | na                | -0.206***                 |                    |
| Student                                     | -0.226***          | -0.486***                 |                    | -0.253***         | -0.631***                 |                    |
| housewife                                   |                    |                           |                    | 0.395***          | 0.282***                  |                    |
| <b>Ratios</b>                               |                    |                           |                    |                   |                           |                    |
| unemployment                                |                    |                           | -0.292*            |                   |                           | 0.094              |
| job insecurity                              |                    |                           | -0.274***          |                   |                           | -0.327***          |
| N   | 3537               |                           |                    | 4659              |                           |                    |
| events                                      | 2424               |                           |                    | 3260              |                           |                    |

controlled by religiosity, type of union (dynamic), education, number of siblings, age at first partnership, generation.

# Crossed uncertainty(t-1) and education

|                           | Men      | Women  |
|---------------------------|----------|--------|
| Unemployed*high educated: | ns       | ns     |
| Unemployed*low educated   | - 0,29** | ns     |
| Short-term*high educated  | -0,39**  | -0,35* |
| Short-term*low educated   | ns       | ns     |

# Timing between first and second child

(Semi-parametric duration model, Cox)

| professional situation                     | MEN                  |                     |                  | WOMEN                |                     |                  |
|--|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
|  | at first child birth | last year (dynamic) | ratios (dynamic) | at first child birth | last year (dynamic) | ratios (dynamic) |
| <i>Respondant's professional situation</i> |                      |                     |                  |                      |                     |                  |
| working                                    | ref                  | ref                 |                  | ref                  | ref                 |                  |
| unemployed                                 | -0.178               | -0.120              |                  | 0.094                | -0.007              |                  |
| insecure job                               | na                   | -0.066              |                  | na                   | -0.042              |                  |
| Student                                    | -0.011               | 0.159               |                  | -0.005               | -0.366***           |                  |
| housewife                                  |                      |                     |                  | 0.242***             | 0.298***            |                  |
| <i>Ratios since first child</i>            |                      |                     |                  |                      |                     |                  |
| unemployment                               |                      |                     | -0.077           |                      |                     | -0.038           |
| job insecurity                             |                      |                     | -0.231           |                      |                     | -0.062           |
| N  | 2422                 |                     |                  | 3260                 |                     |                  |
| events                                     | 1697                 |                     |                  | 2351                 |                     |                  |

controlled by religiosity, type of union (dynamic), education, number of siblings, age at first child, generation.



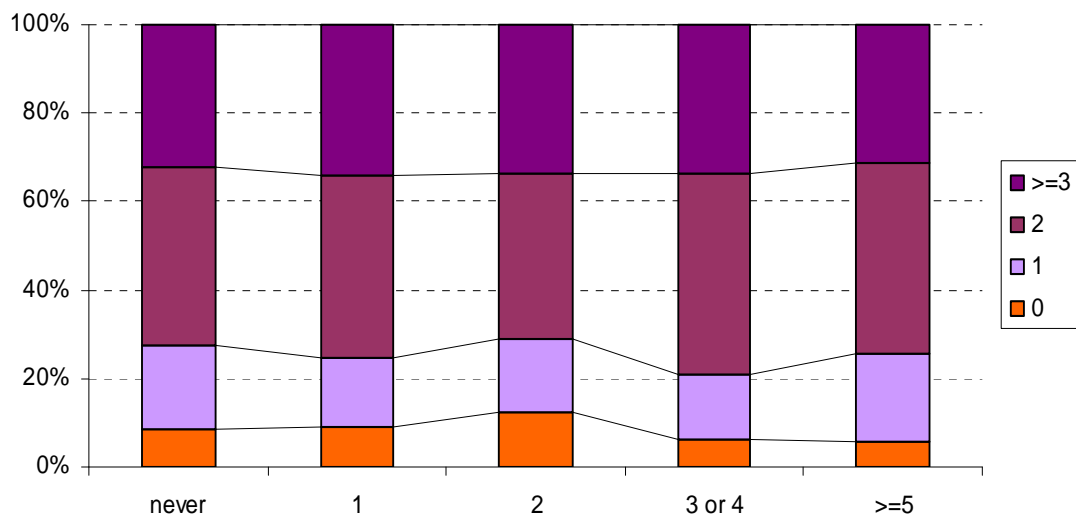
## III Completed fertility

« Completed fertility » = nb of children at 40 years old.

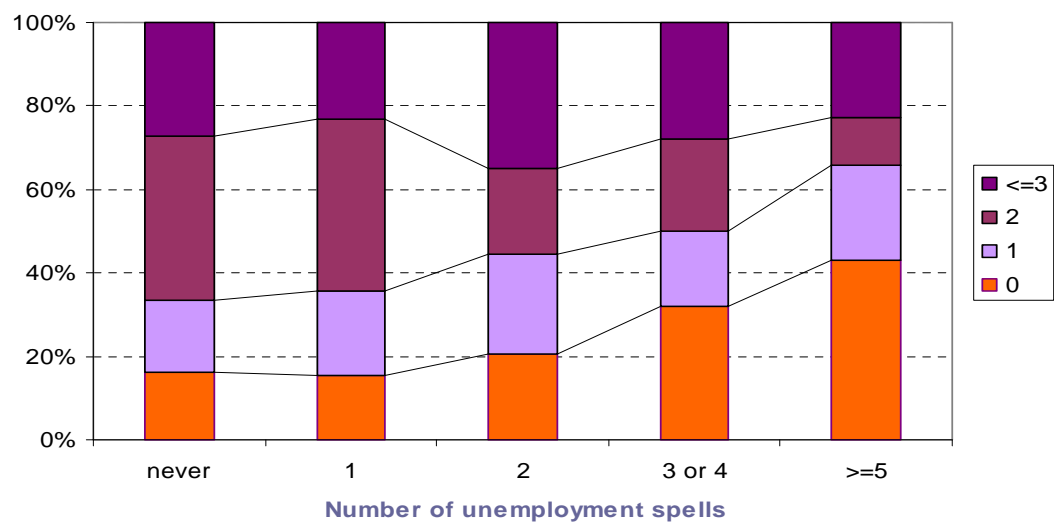
- Sample: People aged 40-49 (1464 M and 1635 F)
- Method: Ordered polytomic model controlled for number of siblings, religiosity, social group, education,  
+ number of years in partnership,  
+ number of partnerships
- Interest covariates
  - Ratio unemployment
  - Ratio insecure job



### Number of children according to **Female** job history



### Number of children according to **male** job history



# Completed fertility: Results

|                         | MEN        | WOMEN      |
|-------------------------|------------|------------|
| ratio unemployment      | -1,075 *** | -0,238     |
| ratio insecure job      | 0,332      | 0,067      |
| ratio housewife         |            | 1,381 ***  |
| number of siblings      | 0,108 ***  | 0,082 ***  |
| religiosity =high       | 0,300 ***  | 0,165 ***  |
| second generation       | -0,092     | -0,311 *** |
| immigrant               | 0,107      | 0,056      |
| ratio marital life      | 0,118 ***  | 0,083 ***  |
| 2 unions and +          | 0,037      | 0,112 *    |
| social group            |            |            |
| farmer                  | -0,031     | 0,086      |
| executives              | -0,110     | 0,126      |
| intermediate position   | -0,156     | 0,072      |
| manual worker           | -0,015     | 0,051      |
| education (ref=primary) |            |            |
| high                    | 0,296 ***  | 0,098      |
| secondary               | 0,224 ***  | 0,051      |
| no diploma              | 0,120      | 0,114      |
| /cut1                   | 0,794      | 0,296      |
| /cut2                   | 1,568      | 1,219      |
| /cut3                   | 2,740      | 2,523      |
| /cut4                   | 3,781      | 3,616      |
| N                       | 1464       | 1635       |



# Conclusion

Economic uncertainty

- plays on family formation but not on family expansion
- plays differently for the women and men

## Unemployment:

**Women** : Validation of neither of the 2 hypothesis

- They do not postpone motherhood,
- Unemployed women do not use motherhood as a shelter

**Men** : clear  $<0$  effect of unemployment, mainly for intentions and timing, durable effects only for those who face several spells of unemployment during life cycle.

→ Men= still symbolic breadwinner

## Short-term jobs

**Women**: the perceived cost of having children is higher: less desire and postponement of motherhood until the stable position specially for highly educated. But no effect on completed fertility at all.

**Men** : only postponement

→ Stable and generous state family policy protects from negative effect whatever the employment status



# Thank you

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Reproductive decision-making  
in a macro-micro perspective

