6. TECHNICAL ANNEX

The French FFS was conducted under the name of Survey on Family **The sample**
Situations and Employment (ESFE). Interviewing took place imme-
diately after the Employment Survey carried out by INSEE in March
1994. The Employment Survey is conducted annually on 75,000
households (Gissot, 1995), one third of the sample being replaced
each year so that each household is visited three years in a row.
Information is collected on all adults (aged 15 and over). Of the
25,000 households being interviewed for the third and last time in
1994, 5,900 were selected to participate in the ESFE survey. The
Employment Survey was conducted using CAPI[17], and the house-
holds sampled for the ESFE were also selected using CAPI directly
from the household structure table, and from responses to a single
additional question: "Is there, in this household, a child living with
only one or neither of his or her parents?" The probability of being
sampled varied from 11/12 for a household containing such a child
or an unmarried couple with children, to 2.5/12 for a household
containing a married couple. In the selected households, an adult
respondent was chosen by the KISH method (Toulemon, 1994b).
Thanks to this unequal probabilities procedure, the sample included
1,411 lone-parents or blended families, whereas a random sample of
the same size would have contained only 560 such households.

By coupling the FFS survey with the annual Employment Survey, **Participation**
we were able to use a representative and updated list of addresses
and benefited from the expertise of INSEE's team of interviewers.
However, because interviewing for the FFS took place immediately
after the Employment Survey, there was a tendency for this team to
consider it as "secondary" to their main task. As a result, non-
response was slightly higher than expected (16 per cent refusals or
interviews that could not be conducted for various reasons), and the
quality of the data is apparently worse for men than for women (a
result already observed in other surveys). Overall, however, the non-
response rate is comparable to other countries (Appendix, table 36).

In terms of family structure (presence of a child living with only one
or neither of his or her parents, legal and de facto conjugal situation
of adults), the structure of the sample is very much as expected
(Toulemon, 1994b). As is generally the case in surveys of this kind,
non-response (people who refused to participate or who could not be
contacted) was highest among unmarried men and women.

The unmarried category consists of persons living in consensual
unions and of people living alone. A comparison of responses on
conjugal situation as reported in the FFS survey with the household
schedules completed prior to the Employment Survey showed that
the responses tallied to an extremely high degree (Toulemon,
1997a). The family situations described (by the 75,000 households
interviewed for the Employment Survey) can thus be considered
accurate. Although information on the households not having partic-
ipated in this survey is imprecise, the probabilities of participating in
the FFS survey, among members of the households selected from
the Employment Survey sample, seem to be very similar for married
persons and those in consensual unions, and lower for persons not

currently living in a partnership.

The probability of participation was estimated for married persons and assumed to be identical for those in consensual unions. On this assumption, a set of weights was constructed based on post-stratification by sex, age (five-year groups) and conjugal status (in a marital or non-marital union, not in a union), the reference population being the population living in private households. The lack of reliable data on distribution by number of children made it impossible to post-stratify according to this variable. Neither did we post-stratify by other variables such as occupation or educational attainment, since in this case the most accurate estimates were those derived from the Employment Survey (the questions being much more accurate than in the census, for instance).

Interviews

Interviews in surveys on birth control have traditionally been conducted only on and by women. The pilot survey showed that reception was the same whether the respondent was male or female, and that the interviewer's gender also had no influence – either directly or in interaction with that of the respondent – on the course of the interviews. Interviewing for the FFS was therefore conducted by men or women indiscriminately, and selection of the respondent from among the members of the household was independent of the interviewer's gender.

The interviewing was conducted using a written questionnaire, and lasted 32 minutes on average (the first and third quartiles being 25 and 40 minutes). The survey file contained the information from the Employment Survey for all household members. Paradoxically, retrospective information on employment was not complete. The Employment Survey provides very precise data on activity at time of survey and during the last twelve months. Since respondents are interviewed for three successive years, retrospective information was available for a period of 36 months[18]. But there is no information for periods earlier than this and since it was impossible to go back over this subject we had to make do with a single question on date of entry into the labour market.

The standard file

The standard survey file contains the information relative to 4,885 men and women born between 1944 and 1973. In addition to this sample of adults, the households containing no "adult" but one child under age 18 (born in 1976 or later) were eligible, so as to obtain a representative sample of children living in ordinary households. This additional sample of children living without an adult aged 20-49 was not included in the FFS Standard Recode File and is not used in the present report. The survey questionnaire was not totally identical to the model (Economic Commission for Europe, 1992).

The tables at the end of this report were calculated using ISSA software, based on the computer program written by the FFS Project Manager, (Economic Commission for Europe, 1993). The computer program we used to create the Standard Recode File from the survey file is available at INED; it was written by Annie Carré in collaboration with Laurent Toulemon. Users are asked to consult the file description for differences with the standard file. The authors will be grateful to anyone for pointing out errors remaining in this file,

which is not their "working file", but was created ad hoc to facilitate comparative analysis for the FFS.

The sample consisted of 4,885 persons (2,944 women and 1,941 men) born between 1944 and 1973, aged 20-49 on 1 January 1994. Interviewing took place in April and May 1994. The ages in the tables presented here are ages at time of survey; 10 women and 13 men who had reached their 50th birthday by the time of interviewing were excluded from the calculations which are thus based on 2,934 women and 1,928 men. When day of birth was unknown, age at end of survey month was used. Age group 20-24 is slightly biased, because persons who were not aged 20 on 1 January 1994 were excluded from the sample (although some were 20 at time of survey).

Definition of ages and cumulated data

Finally, it is worth recalling that in all tables referring to cumulative frequencies by age x, x should be read as "at age x and earlier" or "before the x+1th birthday". They should be interpreted with caution because of the cut-off points of the survey. For instance, in age group 20-24, the cumulative frequencies are exact up to and including age 19. For unions at age 20, we are "missing" the unions of respondents aged 20 at time of survey; for unions at age 24, we are missing all unions of persons aged 20, 21, 22 and 23 at time of survey, and some of those aged 24. The cumulative proportions are not calculated by the life-table method and so are underestimated for the last four years of age. Assuming a uniform distribution of events, we are missing 10 per cent of events at age 20, 30 per cent at 21, 50 per cent at 22, 70 per cent at 23 and 90 per cent at 24. These inaccurate figures are therefore deleted from the tables.