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Tensions over changes

A chart of transformations of the French employment regime

**-- First DRAFT—
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Introduction

In comparative typologies, observers undergo large difficulties when it comes to position France within the whole set of developed countries. This difficulty seems obvious, for example, today as quoted in the study of P. Hall and D. Soskice (2001), work based on the varieties of capitalism founded on a logic of a combinatorial type. In each country, companies can be considered as actors, which must come to terms with a combination of variables determined on their effectiveness (professional acquaintance, training and educational system, corporate governance, inter-firm relations, labour market managing method). P. Hall and D. Soskice perceive two ideal-types covering a large spectrum on which all varieties of contemporary capitalism evolve. On one hand we can find liberal market economies where market competition and organisational hierarchy provide coordination between economic actors. On the other hand, coordinated market economies where dynamism lies more on logic of interaction (contractual links, network function etc...). How can we figure out, in such a context, the French configuration? It seems difficult, considering the abstract work which leads to the two previous ideal type models sending us back to specific nation State positions (The United States and Germany to be very precise). Very often, comparatists go beyond this type of difficulties stating the specificity of France, of its Jacobin tradition and insisting on the still predominant role of the State in all types of regulations.

Our report proceeds differently. It puts forward some prominent facts which tend to put into perspective the thesis of the omnipotence of the State and, on the contrary and all so wrong, the powerful grip of unrestrained liberalism. This report first puts forward the fact that France is affected, as many other European countries, by the morphologic transformations of funds which has a direct impact on employment: tertiarisation, steady growth of salaried working women, increase of work and labour market flexibilization. Our country was also affected by the new international economic order, of which one of its manifestations was, among others, a large restructuring of national companies' field (mergers-acquisition waves). Our report also demonstrates that the French State supported and at the same time challenged these deep transformations, through its own 'modernisation' and at the same time bringing about numerous reforms affecting all together school and training, family, companies as well as labour market. In the field of employment, the intervening role of the State evolved in a diversified way. In some domain such as the crucial field of labour market and social policies, its action was reinforced, and in other areas such as educational policy or industrial relations, it gave way to new actors. To be even more precise, it is less the action of the State alone which counts in order to understand the transformations of the employment regime, 'the French way,' than the configuration of actors in which it is inserted. It is the mutations of these transformations that we are going to try to evaluate here.

It is difficult to give a full grid of changes that came out in France in the last thirty years, in segments so different from economic and social life which is represented in the production model, education and training systems, employment regime, industrial relations or social policies. Each of these segments has their own temporality and a dynamic of change partly specific even if interdependency effects can be felt. In spite of that, we try to put forward two types of major facts, which will enlighten the meaning of the transformation of the 'French way' employment regime since the 1980's. In the first part, we will demonstrate that in spite of the turning point of 1983, the State does not disappear but re-builds its action into the most diverse areas. The second part insists on the numerous tensions associated with this large re-composition and attributed to uncertainty and instability in the conduct of changes, which

notably give the impression that reforms, laws, schemes, devices...are accumulated according to governments in power without being efficient (especially in terms of growth and employment rates)

1. Structural changes and new configuration of actors;

To understand the changes in the process as they took place in France, we must first start with the analysis of Bruno Jobert and Bruno Theret (1994), which is very helpful to highlight the dynamism of changes. They put forward a political rupture (1983), which engaged a process of economic liberalisation that is still felt nowadays. On top of that they set this change in relation with the level of European regulation putting forward the way national and European actors interact. This turning point takes place without bringing visible changes in the configuration of economic actors: the same administrative political elite which governed the country according to the Keynesian-Colbertist's concepts, ended up applying the monetarist principles in the 1980's within a context of a structural weakness of social partners. The transformation of institutional systems must be considered as a consequence of the reforms and not as a condition of its implementation.

These institutional changes can be grasped through the concept of a State Convention between people (Salais, Storper 1993). According to these authors, the State Convention "concentrates on the way actors of a given situation consider and expect the intervention of the State towards the common good" This convention guides anticipations, behaviours and reactions of actors and finally coordination too. Salais comes out with three fundamental State Conventions: the outside State, the absent State and the "located" State (*Etat extérieur, Etat absent, Etat situé*). According to the first convention traditionally dominating in France "everybody knows that there will be gaps in the coming coordination (for example in the supply of resources which are necessary) and weaknesses (for example in relation to commitments taken by ourselves and by others), everybody expects that State representatives, qualified to intervene in the given situation in progress, will call in this complementary corrective scope, everybody engages and develop an action starting from these premises."

It is this State Convention that the State himself is going to try to change, in order to improve relations with other actors as well as relations that economic and political actors develop between each other. The convention of the "outside State" was fed at the same time by the "planner State" (*Etat planificateur*), capable of determining the social and economic norm to reach from the outside and also by the figure of the "entrepreneur State" (*Etat entrepreneur*) ready to play the role of driving force for a whole economy. These two modes of activation of the outside State convention are decreasing but that does not mean "a vacuum State". Other figures step out timidly, sometimes in a more obvious way: the State as a driving force (*Etat animateur*), the State as a regulator, or the State as a facilitator.

1.1. A change in referential: the turn in austerity of 1983

In the history of these last twenty years, a date strikes out as a time of paradigmatic rupture in the relationship that the State should have with the socio economic actors: year 1983. From this date on monetarist models are going to take over the Keynesian-Colbertist model (Jobert, Theret 1994) which was the foundation of economic coordination. The monetarist model was at the essence of the economic strategy of economic deflation ordered by Francois Mitterand

two years after its election. The socialist government makes an about turn after having tried boosting measures through demand when it came to power. So it is a neo-liberal turn which offers the double characteristic of not changing the governing party (the socialist party remains in power) and for that reason, not be led by a rightist government.

This strategy is presented as the reply to a shock implying the worsening of the budget deficit and an increase in the national debt in a gloomy international context. Competitive deflation forces a way out of the inflationist consensus with gain in price competitiveness as the only belief: “ to invite public managers to insure their recovery and their competitiveness at even the expense of laying of people, de-indexation of wages, opening up of financial markets, and strong refusal to support the lame duck of the economy, to fix an objective of reducing tax and social security contributions, all of these presidential guidelines which came out in 1983 were the foundation of public policies which fitted perfectly in the monetarist liberal framework” (Jobert, Theret 1994 p 57) It is also expressed with an employment policy turned towards a supply side economy. The search for a general decrease of the labour cost through lowering of contributions is imposed by a rightist government (but it will not be denied later on by socialist governments when back to power)

The first period of the neo-liberal turn takes place in the productive and economic sphere. In a second period a social policy will be deployed which will try to coordinate the national commitment to the social welfare system and the control of labour costs (direct or indirect) of which became the leitmotiv on the right as well as on the left. A compromise is found in a progressive separation of professional and national solidarity, which accelerates at the end of the 1980. It is very clear concerning unemployment risk insurance coverage considering that in 1984 the “ASS” (allocation spécifique de solidarité) is created financed by taxes replacing the unemployment –insurance secured on contributions when this one is worn out. The setting up of the “RMI” (minimum income for insertion) in 1988, of the CSG (contribution sociale generalise), a social contribution based on all incomes and not only on wages, in 1991, the law against exclusion in 1998 falls within the scope that the State must refocus its action on the most destitute to limit what Robert Castel called a new’ vulnerability of the mass’ (Castel 1995) The turn towards a solidarity of assistance occurred through changes basically fundamental: except the RMI, the social minimum existed before 1980 and it is in reducing progressively the generosity of the unemployment insurance (in terms of access conditions and period of compensation) that a large amount of people were transferred towards social security. We will finally underline that this evolution in the equilibrium between professional and national solidarity was established based on a policy, which favours the lengthening of the subordination of the young to their parents.

1.2. The politico-administrative elite at the heart of the rupture

At the centre of the political rupture there is the political-administrative elite in a country where high State employees run between the worlds of managers, the political sphere and civil service. Bruno Jobert and Bruno Theret (1994) demonstrate very well that this elite was converted to the monetarist dogma even before the government ended up using it. The CNPF (national employers association) cannot be considered as the promoter of this idea at first, considering it appeared divided in numerous contradictory trends. We have to wait until the years 2000 for the MEDEF (ex CNPF), under the impulse of Ernest-Antoine Sellière, its chairman, became a source of proposals and changes. With the contract based links of industrial relations, the theme of individualised management of wages and of the rising of an

experience based approach is one of the major initiatives of the MEDEF (Lallement, Meriaux).

In this context, we can only notice the division and weakening of actors of industrial relations, and especially unions. The hardening of social and economic policies has increased the historical fragmentation of the union apparatus and blurred the usual cleavage within the political arena. The legitimacy of unions was weakened with the decline of its base and membership on one hand, with a minor role associated to national economic and social choices on the other hand (with the intervention for example of negotiated law which has some success during the 1970's). The transformations of industrial relations is perceived through a progressive move of the centre of gravity of collective negotiation towards the company which is displayed through numerous devices starting with Auroux laws beginning of 1980 till Fillon Law of 2004. New actors came on the scene (non confederated unions, NGO, unemployed associations, coordinations, third sector...) But because of a lack of space of institutionalised action and of representation of their interests, they remain at the limited role of protest. May be an exception should be made to the associations managing excluded population whose power increased since the setting up of the RMI (minimum income of insertion). Some of them became powerful forces of proposals, for example concerning the institutionalisation of emergency devices.

1.3. The State as a regulator, the State as a facilitator, the State as a driving force.

The aim to decrease public spending is omnipresent since the middle of the 1980's. The monetarist strategy involved the State at the utmost importance: the State as an entrepreneur is therefore rejected. The State planning Commission (commissariat au plan) with at the same time the concept of planning has lost some of its impact. Since we have observed three main waves of privatisation: 1986-1988, 1993-1997 and today, which highlights the set back of the State as a shareholder. The industrial policy is marked by the exhaustion of the large project strategy inherited from De Gaulle's time and the selling out of national figure companies. More recently it is the structure of R&D which is questioned, through the ramping substitution of the national research model performed by State employees (CNRS, INRA, INSEERM) with a more Anglo-Saxon model centred around an agency aiming at financing projects (ANR) and encouraging private funded research. The gradual withdrawal of the State as an entrepreneur does not imply its elimination. We in fact contemplate a repositioning of the State in relation to other actors, it aims at transforming expectations that actors can encounter concerning the correction of 'coordination failures'. The withdrawal of the State is therefore very relative. We in fact witness the development of a specific coordination mode which includes the elite of the State apparatus, large companies, and high finance and according to Bob Hancké "assured that large firms were able to construct a novel institutional environment for their own adjustment and then induce other relevant actors- the State, labour unions, the workforce, other companies, and the financial world- to act according to their preferences" (2001 p 333) The policy of the "hard core shareholders" used by Balladur in 1993, with the contribution of "crossed participation" in order to preserve a national capitalism of industrial leaders shows well the way the State can intervene to defend the gaullian vision of the economy through other means than the collective ownership. The union of the French pharmaceutical group Sanofi-Synthelabo with the Franco-German Aventis group in 2004, the Danone Affair, revealed if need be the powerful links which still exist between the French industrial dynasty and the political arena.

Concerning social policy, the State became a driving force (*Etat animateur*) (Donzelot, Estebe 1994) It is to notice that it is around the main social ministries and of public welfare institutions that emerged new ways to build public actions and to produce coordination. In the city policy (*politique de la ville*) as well as in insertion policy, the State, through its administrative transversal missions, has set in motion dynamism and brought together major actors to produce a common project. It calls on local communities and incite in building up local partnership with associations. The role of the State as a driving force emerged whereas two major processes of transformation of public action had been engaged: decentralisation and territoriality. Decentralisation means the transfer of competence, powers which used to be in the hands of the legislative and executive branches now given to the local councillors. Since the beginning of the 1980's, it is mainly department and regional councils (*conseils régionaux, conseils généraux*) which benefited from this decentralised move. Department council were given in two phases (Act I and II of decentralisation in 1984 and in 2004) the almost total responsibility of the managing of social security (including RMI) and the implementation of social policy. Global planning of vocational training and the building up of a new vocational adult education for young unemployed was decentralised in three phases (1983,1993, 2002-2004). Decentralisation is an important trend of these last twenty-five years.

The “territorialization” of public policies sends us to another mechanism of mobilisation of local communities this time within the State. It consists in taking into account local realities in the implementation of public policies giving a large ground in terms of targeting, sharing of the budget to decentralised State representatives. It concerns insertion measures concentrated on people, for example. The last institutional innovation is represented by the territorial project which is the fruit of the will of local actors collectively concerned in the future of their land. (For example the social territorial project). It is characterised by a growing move initiated by local actors who try to elaborate a development strategy starting from a shared diagnostic. This approach is now legitimized by the blueprint law of sustainable development date June 25 1999, which encourages regional authorities to make contracts with territorial actors about development projects.

A policy of setting up contract based links between the State and local actors (inter-region contracts and city contracts to only mention the most important) is a public action tool widely spread in a concomitant way in order to formalize new partners (Gaudin 1999) In the same way, the exterior State convention is still very present and is felt through a strong interventionist employment policy. Until 2002, the State reactivated this convention on a regular basis especially concerning creating employment in services or the regulation of working hours. The last program from the Ministry of Social Affairs (2005) is a sign of a change in strategy where the State is making it easier simplifying procedures to create employment in the local market sector. The State also tries to start a network policy concerning service provider associations so as ‘to structure’ this exploded labour market. The policy of the State consists in allowing a market to develop in giving necessary capacities and infrastructure to private people and private companies. This given convention of the State as a facilitator guides its action in matters of intermediation of employment (recent creation of the House of employment similar to a British model)

1.4. The preservation of neo-corporatist fragments, the French way

During its first term in office François Mitterrand demonstrated the difficulty in setting up a neo-corporatist model in France. It seems somewhat illogical but it is the State, which in some

areas, comes as the key figure in the new economic and social order. Faced with the failure in the dynamic of concentration, it is the State, which imposes in the last instance its own tools. It is especially true about working time regulation. The Auroux Law about the 39 working hours is a stopgap device, a response to the failure of negotiations between social partners. Since then, the power of the State in the regulation on working hours was never denied and this includes the recent Aubry Laws which did not provoke the expected boosting of co-management.

But there are sectors, which offer deviant regulation forms regarding dominant norms typical of French models. If we study the major steps of the construction of vocational adult education and its evolution, we can only notice the continuity of a regulation mode based on the neo-corporatist type. The strategy of ‘negotiated law’, which consist in adopting at the regulation level an interprofessional agreement, is still very frequent. The law about adult education in 1971 has opened up the law. In 1984, alternation training (qualification contract, orientation contract) was created in a similar way. The law about adult education in 2004 creating the contract of the professionalization and the individual right to training indicates the legislative adaptation to an inter-professional agreement signed by all social partners.

2. What kind of employment regime? The French way?

What is left of the French exception? Seen from the outside, the French system is often considered as an exception, which does not mean, that it is exceptional. We have no choice but to note that designers of various typologies of all or some parts of its productive systems have had difficulties positioning France. It involves managing systems, company management, social protection regimes, types of conventions, production models, industrial contacts, employment regulations, educational and training systems, innovation systems or different combinations of these items, these typologies give France and ambiguous position which send us back to the complexity of the French system.” Even the most subtle theoreticians are terrified by the complexity of the French system, by its redundant aspect, stratified by the segments of social past (..) The difficulty is finally to elaborate a theory taking into account the complexity of this contemporary world. This is why the fallacious dichotomy is often coming back: better to give a simple but a false image than a more realistic portrait but much more complex of the wage policy. We must acknowledge that in spite of efforts from scientists and experts, in matters related to wage policy, economists do not have a single theory fitting with what is observed” (Boyer 2001 p 16)

2.1 Productive system and work relations: some existing contradictions and tensions

Even though the French productive model is placed under the sign of complexity, it does not imply that France does not change, as we have already seen it. From this transformation, some tensions come out which reveal a certain amount of uneasiness.

2.1.1 three revealing tensions

Case Number one: we are faced with a growing growth of intermediary regulations and at the same time with a consolidation of the role of the State. From 1973 to 2005, there was excess in national public spending in favour of employment policy. In fact, this is not really a paradox. First of all even if a part of active spending increases, a large part of this raise is attributable to automatic increases of passive spending. Public spending for employment on the other hand registers spending of territorial authorities (for example training for

unemployed from departmental council) which has a mechanical effect on the total volume of spending

Another apparent contradiction comes out when studying the re-structuring of companies and of their leadership. When on one hand we observe a re-concentration of activities, especially through the constitution of large groups going well beyond borders and on the other hand the role of small and middle sized companies, which have never been so much praised by authorities.

One more paradox if we consider the regular warnings about delocalisation and des-industrialisation whereas on the other hand there is a wish towards developing service companies, at any cost, even without necessarily respecting 'decent work' (decent wages, minimum working conditions...)

2.1.2. Relations at work under tension

To be even more precise, it seems that tensions which are at the heart of re-composing employment regime the French way appear very sharply in three very specific areas in relation with relations at work.

From the view point of first the organization of labour, the French productive model brings together modes of organization 'lean production' type (where wage earners are in restraint and controlled autonomy) and organization mode 'learning' type (where wage earners are autonomous and have less constraints in their work). The tendency to concentration of financial groups fits with an expansion of simple organisational structure often found when dealing with services, hotel management and restaurant business. Beyond constraints at work, linked to objectives and to the intensification of the tasks, the economy of services did not occur without bringing degradation to working conditions for a large and non insignificant numbers of wage earners (development of part time labour, lack of regulations in some sectors of services)

Secondly, from the point of view of training and management of human resources, a strong ambivalence exists. On one hand there is a system valuing formal links between training and employment (diploma playing a major role in recruiting), on the other hand, these same links are questioned, especially because of new needs implying new kinds of certifications. At the crossroad of these two tendencies, we contemplate a rise in the role of life long training. At the same time, recent legislative devices do not take the real impact of this demand into account. The individual right to twenty hours of annual training running consecutively for five years, largely insufficient to really plan on vocational changes, shows the valsing French hesitation. Therefore the uneven spread out of efforts concerning vocational training is significant: priority is largely given to the most skilled, full time... workers, which contributes to widen the gap between integrated wage earners and the others. This inequality, already more than twenty years old, has repercussion on the trajectory of wage earners on the labour market, which in many sectors remains conform to the dualist model opposing primary and secondary labour markets.

With E. Verdier (2001), we can postulate that these multiform transformations of the employment system and of the productive model have no mechanic effect on the educational and training regime. In spite an unprecedented mass schooling implementation, mechanism of selections and of exclusion continue to play a role. Vocational training can free itself from the grasp of school training only at the higher level of education; it is only at the highest level of

training that professionalization is valued. Logic based on 'meritocracy', the French way remains when educational policies have tried to promote a professional logic closer to the German model. The failure of this strategy is connected to maintaining internal markets and companies managing practices that are associated with. The 'competence logic' only reinforced the internal space weight of valuing diplomas considering the company focuses it on its control. Well, path dependency remains very strong in this field

Thirdly, the question of time in the production model is also not without contradictions. Working time remains in France dependant on the State action, this is illustrated with the coming of the 35 working hours at the end of the 1990's and at the beginning of 2000 under the aegis of the two laws (Aubry I and II) If the State stays active in this domain, it does not mean that companies do not have a large margin for manoeuvring to set up new and more flexible devices of management. On the contrary! The coming of the 35 hours came with a lengthening of the use of the production tool, with important gains in productivity, with a reconfiguration of working conditions bearing important consequences on the life of wage earners (Lallement 2003)... This collective regulation of working hours adapts itself to a much more individualised management, see personalised working hours especially for part-timers. With a majority of women, the population who works part time has grown through a structured framework becoming favourable and then incentive but also because whole panels of the production system, especially in the service sector, found a mean of managing resources in a more and more risky and changing environment.

2.2. The employment model

Since the middle of the 1970's, whatever government in power in France, unemployment has always had very high rates. Since 1980, this rate has never even been below 8%. Almost no break on the labour market can be found, as opposed to other European experiences. It is *the* basic characteristic of the labour market and of employment in France, which incidences on priorities in terms of regulations (quantity versus quality of employment), concerning financial disequilibrium (question of financing unemployment assurance) but also in terms of social policies (dealing with the question of exclusion from the labour market and of the impoverishment of a growing fringe of the population) are very clear. From the viewpoint of employment policy since 1992, a search to lower the cost of labour became the guiding line of France. Except for some major innovations (such as the turn to 35 working hours) the desire to put some pressure on social contributions (especially for low income employment) is a permanent feature. One of the main effects of such a tendency is the 'smicardisation' (wages are kept at the lowest legal level) of a growing part of wage earners, including those who have a recognized professional qualification.

With this in background, how is the employment regime reconstructed? At first, France has been attached to a system of general education and it is in reply to a high school failure that a more vocational education system has developed. Even if we can rejoice finding a decreasing number of people leaving the schooling system without any qualification, we have to note down that the lever of the educational system revealed to be inefficient with the so called 'priority' in reducing unemployment. But labour supply has strongly been modified during these last twenty years: There was an increase in women employment and the employment rate went up for the oldest as well as for the young ones. From this viewpoint, year 2000 seems to be an important turn: after twenty consecutive years of a decline in the rate of the youngs and seniors in the whole employment, an increase, this time very clearly- started (especially among male seniors). This evolution, in conformity with the objectives of Lisbon,

did not have a lasting effect on national unemployment, the rate remained higher than 9% over 2000-2005.

Furthermore, what were the consequences of the organisational transformations and of the productive system on qualification of employments? The rise of the service sector and more specifically of activities connected to services has disrupted the way to define qualifications. To the previous scheme which associates, as in the grid of qualifications of Parodi, a content of work, a position and a level of earning; in the last period, new kinds of recognition of the value of wage earners came to replace it (classifying criteria, competence logic, individualised earnings...) To that we can add the explosion, visible since 1994, of non qualified jobs, from which we thought at wrong that this society based on knowledge and information, would extinguish.

Qualified or not, the fact of having a job does not always fit with good working conditions. The survey from the Ministry of Labour show that for now twenty years, and in spite of a growing autonomy, work intensified, control by customers, by the hierarchy, by its peers... increases etc. The evolution of borderline between work and no work seems to be a major axis in the reconstruction of the French employment system. The doubling up of the number of couple without a job between 1975 and 2002 is in contrast with the progression of women employment over this same period. A dualism- well beyond the sphere of the labour market- came out with, on one hand households with 'one or two earners' and others with 'no earners'. The lasting set up of this cleavage is the essence of what some would call the "social fracture" or the "new social question"

The 80's have seen the increase of "atypical" work contracts as well as a diversification in the type of activities (multi-jobs, constraint part time). So many differences, which make the reading of the employment system even more complex. These same years register individualism over the modes of management of earnings. This individualisation of wages (different level of negotiation, introduction of new modes of alternative earnings valuing individual performances) it came with a high moderation of earnings very clearly since the middle of the 80's. It is partly felt with the evolution of the sharing of the value added (the share of wages decrease). One of the specificity of the French model remains the difficulty of generating a balanced compromise on earnings (simultaneous increase in productivity gains and stable guaranty of earnings)

Conclusion- France and Europe

In political Science, the word 'Europeanization' became an "extremely fashionable term" (Olsen 2003) Behind this term is hiding numerous processes of various natures. We can distinguish five main one's (Lamping, Steffen 2005). First is the production of public policies by supra-national European institutions restricting Nation States, to a certain extent, to conform to directives. The second is about the direct or indirect impact of European integration over the national institutions and policies. The third send us back to the system of reciprocal influences and interaction between national actors and European institutions. Europeanization is then a dynamic process in which national actors initiatives are reinterpreted by national actors trying to enter into the European game so as to as to defend their interests. It is a process of negotiations and mutual adjustments. It means as a fourth point, the diffusion of ideas, of cognitive and normative models of resolving public problems within integrated arenas: Europeanization is played then at the level of common ideas which at the end is shared by an epistemic community made up of experts, and of 'multi-positioned'

actors capable of saying what is right and fair in a rightful way. The term also represents a change in the structure of opportunities of national actors. European integration acts then as a factor of redistribution of material and symbolical resources and as a way to send back the political game to the national level.

About employment and social policies, Europeanization has taken various forms as time went by. It mainly concentrates on two main processes: Europe was at first used as a resource by national actors who had already acquired the idea of liberal reforms. Then exchanges between the French and European elites intensified, a community of values and ideas has slowly emerged which probably had a certain impact during the attempt to reform social protection during the 90's. It is in the name of Europe and of European integration that will be led many of the unpopular policies in France. The rigorous trend was justified by European imperative coming from the decision to stay within the European monetary system "It is then that the European idea which is going to be mobilised to give its own legitimacy to this major political turn to protect from pressures of a hesitant society which will finally end up adopting this strategy" (Jobert, Theret 1994 p 51)

The treaty of Masstricht finally sealed this displayed dependence between national economic policies and the European level since political representatives will keep on referring to the pact of stability to try to impose neo liberal reforms. The thesis of Bruno Palier (2005) about Europeanization of social policies takes that direction. For this researcher, the open coordination method (OCM) is an attempt to articulate the national level and the European level through new arrangements of multi-level governing. Bruno Palier demonstrates that more and more national reforms about social protection reflect a vision promoted at the European level but that, above all, national actors perceive the OMC as a resource, which could produce a lever effect. Briefly, French policies are also the result of a European community of public policy linked to "a language close to liberal-monetarist orthodoxy" in which French economic experts are getting closer and closer.

But Europe is, fortunately not only an alibi. A full economic Actor with power, thanks to the European commission, at the first place it constitutes a space where new ambitious projects can rise in the interest of French employment. The positive effects of the Europeanization industrial policies are taking a real shape through large industrial and research projects such as Airbus, Eureka or ITER.

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