Back to Bourgeois? French social policy and the idea of solidarity

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the growing literature on the policy impact of ideas and related cultural and discursive processes by exploring the historical embeddedness of the idea of solidarity in French social policy debates.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper adopts a qualitative, historical approach that traces the development of – and the relationship between – policy ideas and social programs over time.

Findings – First, exploring the work of reformer and politician Léon Bourgeois, the paper investigates the emergence of this concept in nineteenth and early twentieth century France. Second, analyzing the work of centrist scholar and intellectual Pierre Rosanvallon, the paper studies the French debate on solidarity and welfare state reform in the late 1980s and 1990s.

Originality/value – At the broadest level, this paper shows that contemporary social policy debates are grounded in long-term historical as well as cultural processes and repertoires. Policy ideas that acquire the status of culturally resonant "keywords" can have a long history, and tracing their development is necessary to illuminate the role of ideas in contemporary social policy change.

Keywords France, Social policy, Social welfare, Social exclusion, Social change, History

Paper type Research paper

Contributing to the growing scholarship on the role of ideas and related cultural and discursive processes in policy development (e.g. Berman, 1998; Bhatia and Coleman, 2003; Blyth, 2002; Campbell, 2004; Cox, 2001; Dobbin, 1994; Hall, 1993; Hansen and King, 2001; Jenson, 1989; Lieberman, 2002; Parsons, 2007; Merrien, 1997; Pedriana and Stryker, 1997; Pfau-Effinger, 2005; Schmidt, 2002; Somers and Block, 2005; Steensland, 2006; Surel, 2000; Taylor-Gooby, 2005; Yu, 2008), this article reconstructs the uses of the idea of solidarity in French political and social policy discourse. More specifically, the article offers a comparison between the late 19th century, when this idea became part of the Republican tradition through the work of intellectuals and politicians like Léon Bourgeois (1851-1925), and the late 1980s and the 1990s, when intellectuals and politicians like Pierre Rosanvallon (1948-) referred to this idea in order to justify the adoption and the expansion of path-departing programs such as the *Revenu Minimum d'Insertion* (RMI) and the *Contribution Sociale Généralisée* (CSG).

Theoretically, the starting point of this article is the claim that ideas can become powerful ideological weapons that "allow agents to challenge existing institutional arrangements and the patterns of distribution that they enshrine" (Blyth, 2001, p. 4) These ideas form a public discourse that, through framing processes, can help convince policymakers, interest groups, and the general population that change is necessary (Schmidt, 2002). This is what Robert H. Cox labels "the social construction of the need to reform." "In a political environment the advocates of reform need to employ strategies to overcome the skepticism of others and persuade them of the importance of

reform." (Cox, 2001, p. 475) The present article draws on these insights to show that older ideas like solidarity embedded in a national cultural repertoire can help legitimize path-departing reforms. From this perspective, prominent ideas that have a strong cultural and political resonance – what Raymond Williams (1976) calls "keywords"[1] – can justify policy change through what students of social movements call "value amplification." This sociological concept "refers to the identification, idealization, and elevation of one or more values presumed basic to prospective constituents but which have not inspired collective action for any number of reasons" (Snow *et al.*, 1986, p. 469). For instance, an idea taken for granted or clichéd can be revivified through intense framing efforts, depicting it as morally essential and timeless. This is what happened in France during the late 1980s and 1990s, when the idea of solidarity was reframed to legitimize social policy reform. These framing efforts suggest that historically rooted ideas like the concept of solidarity are reinterpreted in the context of political struggles in which actors support particular forms of policy change.

At the broadest level, what this article shows is that contemporary social policy debates are grounded in long-term historical as well as cultural processes and repertoires. Policy ideas that acquire the status of culturally resonant "keywords" can have a long history, and tracing their development is necessary to illuminate the role of ideas in contemporary social policy change. Although the content of "keywords" such as equality, freedom, and solidarity change over time, the cultural repertoires to which they belong form relatively stable symbolic orders that actors draw upon to make a case for policy change (Marx Ferree, 2003). Ironically, the adoption of path-departing reforms may require the mobilization – and reframing – of well-known ideas about social and economic order. From this perspective, actors promote policy change by reframing decades or even centuries-old "keywords." In other words, this historical embeddedness of ideational processes can ironically contribute to policy change, as they help experts, intellectuals, and politicians make a stronger, culturally resonant case for reform. In contemporary Sweden, for example, constant references to the idea of social democracy have legitimized reforms that have transformed the welfare state (Cox, 2004).

The following analysis of the discourse on solidarity in France will provide further ground to the claim that historically embedded ideas are central to contemporary social policy reform. Although this article does not attempt to systematically explain French reforms through ideational analysis, it does help scholars better understand how older ideas become a major element of contemporary social policy debates. Two main sections comprise the article. First, the work of Bourgeois is discussed in order to explore the original meaning of the idea of solidarity when it emerged as a central element of the debate on social policy reform during the Third Republic (1870-1940). Second, the French debate of the late 1980s and 1990s about social policy restructuring is analyzed through a discussion of the work of Rosanvallon, who mobilized – and gave a new meaning to – the idea of solidarity in order to legitimize reforms centered on social inclusion and fiscal sustainability. Each of these sections corresponds to one of two historical moments: the emergence of the first modern social programs and the "new politics of the welfare state" (Pierson, 2001), which is about the restructuring of well-entrenched policies.

The Bourgeois moment
In France, solidarity emerged as a major social and political idea during the first decades of the Third Republic (1870-1940). At that time, it became clear that the establishment of male suffrage (1848) and the Republican regime (1870) were not

sufficient to forestall the struggle between market liberalism and socialism and to firmly establish the social foundations of the Republic (Béland and Zamorano Villarreal, 2000).

In France, this struggle was at the heart of the "social question;" namely, the social and economic problems stemming from the industrial revolution and urbanization. Although Hannah Arendt (1963) rightly traces the origin of this issue back to the French Revolution, it is the 1848 debate on the "right to work" that firmly established the "social question" at the center of French political life. This debate exacerbated the ideological opposition between market liberalism and socialism over the role of the state within French economy and society (Donzelot, 1994 [1984]). A few decades later, shortly after the institution of the Third Republic, it became increasingly clear that, contrary to the early expectations of the Republican founders, the full recognition of civil and political rights was not the solution to enduring ideological and political tensions stemming from the "social question," which remained an enduring threat to their new political order. To anchor this order, it seemed necessary to regulate a fragmented society that could produce repetitive and irrational violence[2].

Rejecting both statism and economic individualism, solidarism emerged during this period as a political and ideological compromise. In order to regulate socio-economic life, solidarism sought to move beyond both socialism and market liberalism without threatening personal freedom. The concept of solidarity, employed some decades before by Pierre Leroux, was the "keyword" of this intellectual and political movement (Humphreys, 1999)[3]. Léon Bourgeois's *Solidarité* is an essential text for understanding what Jack Hayward (1961) aptly describes as "the official social philosophy of the French Third Republic."

Among the advocates of solidarism, Léon Bourgeois was the most famous and the most respected (Béland and Hansen, 2000; Béland and Zamorano Villarreal, 2000). Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1920, he had held a number of key executive positions between 1888 and 1896, including the one of prime minister. In *Solidarité*, a short essay first published in 1896 and reprinted six times until 1912, Bourgeois attempts to convince the reader that his seemingly radical political vision is in fact moderate and even conservative in nature. For him, a set of moderate reforms, ranging from mutualism to an extended public education system, could help preserve the Republic by establishing a coherent, enduring, and sustainable political and social order[4]. For Bourgeois, the idea of solidarity is the only possible foundation for such a socially grounded Republic. A secular alternative to the Catholic idea of charity, solidarity became the heart of a materialist creed grounded in sound scientific knowledge (Dubois, 1987, p. 9; Moreau de Bellaing, 1985, p. 40).

Written by an active politician, *Solidarité* is more a piece of political rhetoric than a coherent theoretical analysis[5]. Yet, Bourgeois employs a philosophical and scientific vocabulary meant to give more legitimacy to his reformist views. Tied to the positivist tradition and close to sociologist Émile Durkheim, Bourgeois sketches a broad and seemingly scientific theory of natural and social "reciprocal dependency." Using the "latest scientific discoveries," he shows that, contrary to the basic assumption of social Darwinism and market liberalism, competition is not the prime mover of the natural and social order[6]. According to him, new trends in biology confirmed the belief that cooperation is the vital principle of nature and society (Bourgeois, 1998 [1896], pp. 23-4). For Bourgeois, all beings are organically linked together in a world centered on cooperation rather than competition. But such interdependency, contrary to the hierarchical order defended by conservative thinker Joseph De Maistre, is not a

negation of personal freedom. In fact, for Bourgeois, freedom is necessary to achieve progress: "In the history of societies as in the one of species, it has been recognized that the struggle for individual development is the first necessary condition to progress" (Bourgeois, 1998 [1896], p. 27)[7]. Yet, individual forces need to be coordinated because, on their own, they cannot favor the emergence of stable social institutions. In other words, laissez-faire cannot lead to the creation of a stable social order in which the security and even the survival of individuals is possible in the long run. By rhetorically dissolving the apparent contradiction between solidarity and freedom, Bourgeois takes aim at the representation of society as a self-regulating market. In order to legitimate a society based on cooperation, he mobilizes a discourse borrowed from the natural sciences. Ironically, like social Darwinist Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), he refers to biology in order to describe how society works and should work[8].

According to Bourgeois, the imperfections that come with "natural solidarity" should be corrected with a dose of political voluntarism. Yet, Bourgeois resists the socialist conception of a "transcendent state" that could impose a set of rules and obligations onto society. Following his contemporary Émile Durkheim (1858-1917), Bourgeois defines the state as a social and historical construction that is not located outside "civil society." From this perspective, the moral obligations necessary for the preservation of social and political order constitute a set of self-imposed rules (Bourgeois, 1998 [1896], p. 35). Bourgeois elaborates a new model of the social contract, diverging quite sharply from the one developed by the modern natural law tradition associated with the work of authors like Locke (1980 [1690]) and Rousseau (1968 [1762]). Instead of being the somewhat mythical origin of the political and social order, Bourgeois's "quasi social contract" is an implicit source of the moral obligations inherent to any human association[9]. These obligations arise from the acknowledgement that each individual has a debt toward the society as a whole (Bourgeois, 1998 [1896], p. 39). Indebted from birth toward his/her ancestors and contemporaries, the individual should pay this debt to the next generations by contributing to human progress. If an individual refuses to pay his/her debt, society – through state actions – should intervene in order to restore justice, which is nothing else than the "law of solidarity." Here, Bourgeois formulates an argument against the liberal call for the absolute respect of private contracts. Legitimizing social law and social rights (Horne, 2002, p. 119), he shows how law should restore justice when individuals do not fulfill their solidarity duties. Because freedom is considered to be the counterpart of social debts and duties, the intervention of the state in the economy seems to be coherent with the ideal of justice and interdependence.

In addition to respecting personal freedom, social legislation should also encourage each individual to settle his social debt to society as a whole in order to preserve a just order. Free public education, social assistance for the poor, and state support for voluntary mutualism comprise the core reforms Bourgeois called for. Even if his push for voluntarism largely failed, the idea of solidarity and the related concepts of social debt and interdependency became a theoretical basis for the social reforms emerging in France at the turn of the century (i.e. the *Loi sur les accidents de travail* [1898] and the *Retraites ouvrières et paysannes* [1910]). In such a context, one can notice the convergence between the idea of solidarity and the social insurance principles on which these social reforms were based. Social insurance is a method to socialize industrial risks grounded in both shared obligations and feelings of interdependence (Castel, 1995; Ewald, 1986)[10].

The idea of solidarity put forward by Bougeois and other proponents of solidarism quickly became a "keyword" of the Third Republic and, more generally, the French Republican tradition and cultural repertoire (Lamont, 2000). Within the French political and legal tradition, solidarity meshed with the old revolutionary idea of fraternity (Borgetto, 1993). Grounded in a positivist theory of nature, solidarity was a way to reconcile freedom and equality through an appeal to its scientific basis. In an era when appeals to science resonated on the left and the right, Bourgeois's elaboration of solidarism provided a means for rooting the Republic in a scientific discourse, and consequently creating an ideological space between market liberalism and socialism. Although these two traditions remained central to French politics and a number of intellectuals rejected solidarism (Horne, 2002), the idea of solidarity, as a culturally resonant "keyword," helped legitimize social reforms in France during – and long after – the Third Republic.

Back to Bourgeois?

Although solidarism as an intellectual movement declined as soon as much of its program was established during the first two decades of the twentieth century, solidarity remained an influential idea in France. After World War Two, for example, solidarity became a key principle of French public law and the ideological core of the post-war Social Security system. Yet, although a 1945 executive order proclaimed the creation of a system based on "national solidarity," resistance from specific occupational groups favored the emergence of a fragmented social insurance system associated with the idea of "occupational solidarity." This is true because a number of occupational groups gained separate protection outside the main social insurance scheme, known as *régime général* (Baldwin, 1990; Bonoli and Palier, 1996).

During the post-war era, the institutionalization of the idea of solidarity meant that it lost its status as a reformist "keyword." Although it remained central to the French cultural repertoire and everyday life discourse (Lamont, 2000), as a social policy idea, solidarity became mainly an institutional reference (Chevallier, 1992). During the 1980s and 1990s, however, looming economic problems gave a new reformist and political meaning to the culturally resonant idea of solidarity. During these two decades, what became known as social exclusion remained a major social and political concern that pointed to the apparent inability of the existing social insurance system to help the marginalized (Béland and Hansen, 2000). Used as early as in the 1970s to refer to the situation of citizens separated from mainstream society because of disability, mental illness, or poverty (Lenoir, 1974), the idea of social exclusion points to many different social and economic problems ranging from long-term unemployment to racism and ethnic discrimination (Lamarque, 1995; for an historical perspective: Goguel d'Allondans, 2003; Silver, 1994). In the context of the Republican tradition and the French cultural repertoire, social exclusion is widely perceived as a threat to social solidarity and the unity of the national community (Merrien, 1997, pp. 72-3). Although criticized for its simplistic character (Castel, 1995; Paugam, 1991), the idea of social exclusion became a major aspect of French social and economic debates during the 1990s. Constructed as a major national problem, this idea also became central to scholarly and political debates (Bourdelais *et al.*, 1996; Donzelot, 1991; Ferréol, 1993; Rosanvallon, 2000 [1995]; for recent perspectives, see Paugam, 2007). As Gilles Lamarque (1995, p. 3) rightly argues, "The term [social exclusion] has diffused so much that it has now become one of the keywords of the elites' vocabulary." For example, in 1995, Jacques Chirac made the struggle against social exclusion and the related issue of

fracture sociale a major aspect of his presidential campaign (Béland and Hansen, 2000). Simultaneously, the idea of social exclusion became increasingly influential elsewhere in Europe, including Britain, where "New Labour" increasingly focused on the fight against this newly defined set of social problems (Levitas, 2005 [1999]).

Since the late 1980s, the term solidarity has been used intensively to legitimize new policies aimed at fighting social exclusion and, more generally, adapting the French welfare state to changing social and economic circumstances (Béland and Zamorano Villarreal, 2000). Back again as a reformist "keyword" at the center of French political and social debates, the idea of solidarity took a different meaning than the concept used by Léon Bourgeois a century earlier. In his 1896 essay, Bourgeois referred to an organicist conception of solidarity grounded in a positivistic, scientific, and biological language. A century later, the idea of solidarity refers more to a humanistic conception centered on citizenship, social inclusion, and basic human rights (Chevallier, 1992, p. 132). The disappearance of the scientific meaning of solidarity mirrors the decline of positivism as a major social and political discourse in French society.

A prime example of the new discourse about solidarity that crystallized in the late 1980s and the 1990s is Pierre Rosanvallon's *The New Social Question* [*La nouvelle question sociale*], which appeared in 1995. In this widely cited and controversial essay, this left-leaning yet centrist scholar and intellectual attempts to legitimize a transformation of the French welfare state that took shape during the years Michel Rocard served as Prime Minister (1988-1991). During these years, the French government adopted two major programs that Rosanvallon describes as path-departing measures that began to move the French welfare state away from the social insurance logic that had dominated the post-war era: the RMI and the CSG.

First, the RMI offers a minimum income to unemployed individuals over the age of 25 who are not covered by unemployment insurance[11]. Tax-financed and rooted in the idea that social assistance is a right of citizenship, the RMI is also tied to the logic of activation, in the sense that its goal is to help citizens who are excluded from the labor market to enter it through training programs and internships, among other things. Traditional social insurance schemes can seldom help the excluded because they are designed primarily to protect workers with relatively stable job histories. For Rosanvallon, the RMI is the first step in the creation of an "active welfare state" that fights social exclusion while moving away from both social insurance and traditional – passive – social assistance. This is true, he argues, because the RMI involves the signing of an "insertion contract" according to which the beneficiary agrees to actively seek his or her economic insertion. Rosanvallon describes the RMI as nothing less than "revolutionary" because "[it] represents a new type of social right, occupying a middle position between rights and contracts. It is a right in that it is accessible to anyone and recognizes that the excluded should obtain a minimum income to allow them to reenter society; thus it corresponds to a social debt. But it is also a contract insofar as it is linked to an exchange: the beneficiary's commitment to inclusion." (Rosanvallon, 2000 [1995], p. 83) In Rosanvallon's 1995 essay and in contemporary French political discourse in general, the emphasis on social debt is explicitly tied to the idea of national solidarity, according to which the state, as the legitimate expression of the community of citizens, has the obligation to protect citizens against deprivation. In other words, full participation in national, social, and economic life is seen as a citizenship right and a moral obligation of solidarity. In exchange for this support from the state, the excluded must make a concerted effort to participate in economic and social life. In this way the notion of debt acquires a symmetry that is largely absent from the Anglo-

American concept of workfare (Morel, 2000). Depicted as a key citizenship right and a consequence of national solidarity, the RMI is explicitly tied to the French Republican tradition in which Bourgeois played a major role. This is why, when launching the RMI in 1988, Michel Rocard made numerous references to the idea of solidarity, and even labeled the special tax on wealth initially designed to finance the RMI a "solidarity contribution" (Rocard, 1988). In his book, following Rocard, Rosanvallon (2000 [1995]) emphasizes the relationship between national solidarity and taxes created to finance social programs like the RMI.

Second, implemented in 1991 and raised several times during the following decade, the CSG is depicted as an alternative to social insurance contributions and "occupational solidarity" (Rosanvallon, 2000 [1995]). Levied on all incomes including investments and social insurance benefits, this flat tax introduced a shift from contribution financing to tax financing in the French welfare state (Barbier and Théret, 2004; Palier, 2002). In his 1995 essay, Rosanvallon depicts the CSG as a new expression of national solidarity that should help France shore up the deficits of existing social insurance schemes without major hikes in contributions. According to him, social insurance is largely a thing of the past, and his appeal for tax-based financing implicitly stems from liberal assumptions about the alleged economic costs of higher social contributions in an era of increasingly global market competition. From this angle, Rosanvallon's essay, just like the reforms enacted under Michel Rocard, is a "third way" attempt to articulate national solidarity and the perceived imperatives of economic liberalism, which became increasingly influential in France during the 1980s and 1990s (Jobert and Théret, 1994).

In the name of national solidarity and the related fight against social exclusion, Rosanvallon legitimizes a path-departing transformation of the French welfare state. In his essay, the numerous references to national solidarity help him depict this transformation as both necessary and consistent with one of France's "keywords." As Rosanvallon notes, labor unions – with the main exception of the *Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail* (CFDT) for which he worked in the past – generally oppose this transformation of the French welfare state, as they benefit from their status as "social partner" within the existing social insurance system. For him, the fact that unions gain both money and institutional recognition from their participation in the social insurance system means that any move away from contribution-based financing would represent an attack against their prerogatives. Thus, Rosanvallon reframes an old, traditionally progressive, and culturally resonant idea – solidarity – to legitimize reforms that many labor officials opposed (Rosanvallon, 2000 [1995], p. 42).

In the field of health care reform, the growing role of tax-based funding that Rosanvallon called for rapidly materialized, notably after the enactment of what survived of the Juppé Plan that triggered the massive strikes of December 1995. This trend increased the direct role of the state in the French social insurance system (Palier, 2002). Facing this situation, pro-union scholars and intellectuals like Bernard Friot (1998, pp. 253-78) argue that the discourse on social exclusion and national solidarity so prominent in Rosanvallon's essay is part of a "regressive ideology" aimed at promoting a liberal model of social protection. For Friot (1998), the idea of national solidarity that justifies attacks against social insurance is a mere ideological tool in the hands of proponents of the regressive "Beveridgean model" imported from liberal Britain. Although Friot (1998) does not mention Rosanvallon by name in his book *Puissances to Salariat*, it constitutes a bold attack against him and other proponents of an "active welfare state" that emphasized national solidarity at the expense of occupational

solidarity and what he calls "socialized wage." Ironically, the same year as Friot's book appeared, the French government adopted a "global law against social exclusion" that pushed the French welfare state further in the direction of national solidarity advocated by Rocard, Rosanvallon, and their allies (Fenoglio, 1998). For these actors, in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, the old idea of solidarity represented a powerful political weapon in the symbolic struggle over the institutional and ideological redefinition of the French welfare state. Deprived of its scientific aura, the idea of solidarity, which Bourgeois and his contemporaries placed at the core of the French Republican tradition, remained a culturally resonant "keyword" that, once reframed, helped make a case for path-departing – and politically contested – reforms.

Conclusion

Drawing on the growing literature on ideas and social policy, this article argues that the idea of solidarity became a major aspect of the French social policy debate during the late 1980s and 1990s. Embedded in the French Republican tradition and cultural repertoire, Bourgeois and others framed it as a major source of social and political order. Decades later, the idea of solidarity became a major symbolic resource used to legitimize path-departing reforms associated with the fight against both social exclusion and fiscal challenges facing the social insurance funds. Yet, this return of solidarity to the center of the French political and social policy debate in the late 1980s and 1990s should not obscure the fact that this idea had by then taken a rather different meaning than the one it had almost a century earlier, in the work of Bourgeois and his contemporaries. Despite the continuity of the discourse of social debt in appeals to solidarity, scientific legitimacy was no longer the basis for a conception of social integration along the lines Bourgeois drew. Since the 1980s and 1990s, solidarity is widely seen as an obligation of citizenship linked to social inclusion and basic human rights (Béland and Hansen, 2000; Béland and Zamorano Villarreal, 2000). Although this obligation is not always legally established, solidarity is considered a means to achieve full participation of each citizen into the social and economic life of the nation. As opposed to the situation prevailing in countries like Britain and the USA, the focus on solidarity favors a much less punitive vision of activation than the one associated with the Anglo-American concept of workfare (Clasen and Clegg, 2003; Morel, 2000). Future research on the idea of solidarity could take a comparative perspective to understand the changing meaning of solidarity in France and in countries like Germany, where this idea remains influential in contemporary social policy debates (Bhatia and Coleman, 2003).

Theoretically, this article suggests that culturally resonant ideas that have a long history can serve as effective discursive resources through framing processes that celebrate these ideas while altering their meaning. This is why the study of the ideas-social policy nexus should adopt a long-term historical perspective focusing on the genealogy of major ideas and keywords that are at the heart of the contemporary debates about policy change and the future of the welfare state. Only such a historical perspective can help scholars grasp the origins and the recent transformations of the ideas and "keywords" that give meaning and help legitimize welfare state restructuring in advanced industrial societies. In order to place current trends in their broadest historical and ideological context, scholars interested in the role of ideas in policy change should take a long-term perspective.

Notes

1. For an application of the concept of "keyword" to social policy analysis, see Fraser and Gordon (1994).

2. By the end of the nineteenth century, the concepts of crowd (Le Bon, 1896 [1895]) and anomie (Durkheim, 1997 [1897]) became symbols of the disorders provoked by economic deprivation and social fragmentation.

3. Solidarity first emerged as a juridical concept: Hayward (1959).

4. That is not to say that, as opposed to what Sanford Elwitt (1986) argues, Bourgeois was simply attempting to protect "his" bourgeois class against a revolutionary threat.

5. For a more scholarly version of solidarism see the work of Alfred Fouillée (1909).

6. Among these "discoveries," the birth of microbiology (Pasteur) played an important role. For Bourgeois and many of his contemporaries, microbes offered a negative illustration of human interdependence that legitimized state intervention: Rosanvallon (1990, pp. 128-34).

7. Original French quote: "Dans l'histoire des sociétés comme dans celle des espèces, on a reconnu que la lutte pour le développement individuel est la condition première de tout progrès."

8. For Marshall Sahlins (1976), this remains the "method" of contemporary sociobiology. One should note that social Darwinism was quite weak in late nineteenth-century France (Béjin, 1992).

9. Bourgeois "discovered" this notion in French jurisprudence (Perquignot, 1987, p. 633).

10. For Bourgeois, however, mutualism seemed morally superior to compulsory insurance because it emerged from free association and not state-imposed rules (Dubois, 1987, p. 11). Later, he finally decided to support the idea of social insurance (Hayward, 1967, p. 37).

11. For a critical perspective on this program see Bec (1998, pp. 157-76).

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