

***Mauritius: Can one talk about specificity of  
Creole Demography?***

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### ***Mauritius: Can one talk about specificity of Creole Demography?***

The question of the Créolité has always been a point of debate, from the Antilles with Aimé Césaire to the Indian Ocean, with, for instance Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau et Raphaël Confiant with “Eloge de la Créolité”, but, since these last few years the question became even more lively. Two texts, published in the Reunion Island and in Mauritius, respectively in 2003 and 2005, explore the place of the islands in the globalisation’s phenomenon.

*Amarres, Créolisations india-océanes* (2003), from Françoise Vergès and Carpanin Marimoutou from the Reunion Island, and *L'Interculturel ou la guerre* (2005), from the Mauritian Issa Asgarally, try to place the Islands in the global picture and highlight the role of the Islands in the world. Indeed, the islands of the Indian Ocean in general, and Mauritius in particular have recently realized their geographical and economical potential: « *Radicalement marqué par le divers, l'hétérogénéité, [l'Océan Indien] préfigure le monde mondialisé en formation, avec ses inégalités, ses tensions, ses guerres potentielles, son cosmopolitisme, son dynamisme, sa créativité* » (Amarres, 21).

The history of Mauritius between slavery and colonialism is very particular, and could have led to internal tensions or, as F. Vergès wrote in “Amares”, to potential wars. But Mauritius is the perfect example of a peaceful cosmopolitan society, which stands between post-colonialism and post-modernism and manages to live an intercultural present free from important ethnic, religious or cultural clashes. However, Asgarally, through a citation of Amin Maalouf, showed the danger of a possible “identité culturelle meurtrière” as a response to historical dispossessions.

In Mauritius, the philosophy seems to be different than the usual multiculturalism or syncretism. Issa Asgarally develops a new approach : the interculturalism: « *c'est une nouvelle manière de concevoir l'identité, de transcender le multiculturalisme, de promouvoir le véritable échange entre les cultures, de penser et de reformuler les expériences historiques, de refuser la thèse du “ choc des civilisations ”, de désamorcer la “ guerre des langues ”, d'analyser les relations entre la culture, l'information et la communication à l'heure de la mondialisation, de construire des passerelles entre les littératures du monde, de former et de développer la pensée critique grâce à l'apport de la philosophie, d'explorer la dimension culturelle et non culturelle du religieux. Et, finalement, d'introduire cette nouvelle manière de voir et d'agir à l'école, espace commun de rencontre et de vie* ».

His main point is to avoid “the war of languages”, and to promote exchanges between cultures.

But more than a cultural aspect, one can wonder how deep this Mauritian “interculturalism” goes? Is it just a matter of culture or is it deeply implanted into the population itself?

If yes, one can wonder about the characteristics of the population (and its sub-populations’ components) which underwent the demographic transition, and also think of the role of this powerful language: the Creole.

Is Mauritius a patchwork of very different populations which have very different demographic patterns or is the demography in Mauritius homogenous? In other words is there a Creole Demography?

To answer the question we will consider the language, the structure of the population, as well as nuptiality and fertility issues, using the data of the Mauritian Population and Housing Census 2000.

## Linguistic group distribution

Table 1. Distribution of the population by language group per sex, in 2000.

	Male	Female	Total
Creole	38.65	37.94	38.29
Chinese languages	1.51	2.32	1.92
French	1.72	1.86	1.79
English and other europ	0.15	0.18	0.16
Arabic	0.07	0.06	0.07
Bhojpuri	30.28	30.30	30.28
Other Indian languages	13.00	12.87	12.93
Creole & Chinese	0.30	0.28	0.29
Creole & French	1.48	1.59	1.54
Creole & Other Europ	0.39	0.37	0.38
Creole & Bhojpur	5.55	5.53	5.54
Creole and other Indian language	2.63	2.61	2.62
European and other languages	0.37	0.38	0.38
Indians languages mixed	2.60	2.55	2.58
Other	0.10	0.08	0.09
NR	0.60	0.49	0.54
NA	0.62	0.58	0.61
<b>All Languages</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<i>Number</i>	<i>593313</i>	<i>603120</i>	<i>1196433</i>

Creole is without a doubt the largest linguistic group in the country. More than 38% of the population state that they belong to the Creole group. The balance between male and female is respected, even if the balance is slightly in favour of males.

This result is however matching the overall gender balance of the Creole group (see table 3).

If we add this group to the other ones which define themselves as belonging not only to the Creole population but to a second language as well, then it is more than 48 % of the population of the republic which identify itself as belonging to the Creole linguistic group.

The rest of the population is essentially made of a second linguistic “majority”. The Indian languages account for almost 46% of the population. Out of this 46%, 30% belong to the Bhojpuri group, 13% to other Indian languages and 2.6% to mixed Indian Languages.

The rest of the population is essentially made of, in the same proportions, by less than 2% of French and Chinese.

These results do not show the degree of usage of a specific tongue, but more the degree of appurtenance to a linguistic group. These linguistic groups, even if they cannot be assimilated to strict population groups (and it is certainly not the point of this paper) enable to create de facto homogenous sub-population groups. From there, one will see if different demographic behaviours coexist in Mauritius or, even if Mauritius is know as the “Multicultural Rainbow Nation”, the demography is somehow homogenous.

Table 2. Language usually spoken, by linguistic group, per 100 speakers of each linguistic group.

Language group	Language usually spoken											All Languages	NA	NR	Other	Indian lang mixed	Europ and other lang	Creole and other indian	Creole & Bhojpur	Creole & Other Europ	Creole & French	Creole & Chinese	Indian other	Bhojपुर	Arabic	English and other Europ.	Chinese lang.	French	Creole	Number
	Creole	Chinese lang.	French	English and other Europ.	Arabic	Bhojपुर	Indian other	Creole & Chinese	Creole & French	Creole & Other Europ	Creole & Bhojpur																			
<b>Creole</b>	<b>93.06</b>	0.02	2.31	0.12	0.00	0.12	0.03	0.01	3.43	0.41	0.18	0.12	0.13	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.02	<b>459125</b>	
<b>Chinese languages</b>	48.91	<b>37.06</b>	3.96	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	4.42	2.09	0.58	0.02	1.48	0.78	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.02	<b>22916</b>	
<b>French</b>	6.94	0.02	<b>84.46</b>	0.02	0.00	0.02	0.03	0.00	5.36	0.74	0.06	0.02	1.33	0.01	0.03	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.03	0.21	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.03	<b>21454</b>	
<b>English and other europ</b>	8.66	0.05	20.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.67	0.00	3.55	4.28	0.52	0.05	4.02	0.05	0.21	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	<b>1941</b>	
<b>Arabic</b>	79.65	0.00	2.47	0.25	0.00	0.25	3.21	0.00	2.10	0.12	0.99	4.07	0.99	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	<b>811</b>	
<b>Bhojपुर</b>	51.83	0.01	0.32	<b>35.04</b>	0.00	<b>35.04</b>	0.78	0.00	0.40	0.18	10.18	0.46	0.17	0.49	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	<b>362382</b>	
<b>Indian lang</b>	74.62	0.02	1.21	3.86	0.01	3.86	<b>8.63</b>	0.00	1.54	0.48	2.02	5.89	0.67	0.27	0.03	0.09	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	<b>154706</b>	
<b>Creole &amp; Chinese</b>	65.41	2.27	4.56	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	<b>12.45</b>	11.33	2.38	0.11	0.46	0.89	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	<b>3487</b>	
<b>Creole &amp; French</b>	35.90	0.05	22.92	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.03	<b>38.20</b>	1.42	0.21	0.17	0.49	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	<b>18408</b>
<b>Creole &amp; Other European</b>	38.90	0.02	17.23	0.15	0.00	0.15	0.22	0.07	21.45	<b>14.83</b>	1.21	0.44	1.74	0.00	0.18	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	<b>4545</b>
<b>Creole &amp; Bhojपुर</b>	61.47	0.01	0.57	5.72	0.00	5.72	0.14	0.00	2.87	0.76	<b>26.60</b>	0.93	0.53	0.20	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	<b>66244</b>	
<b>Creole and other indian</b>	74.69	0.04	0.89	0.43	0.00	0.43	0.99	0.00	5.06	1.29	1.74	<b>13.27</b>	1.20	0.13	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	<b>31361</b>	
<b>European and other</b>	31.33	0.11	26.56	1.04	0.16	1.04	1.36	0.18	9.38	3.67	3.11	2.67	<b>13.62</b>	0.36	0.09	0.02	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	<b>4500</b>	
<b>Indian mixed lang</b>	37.23	0.00	0.75	16.96	0.00	16.96	2.92	0.00	1.55	0.72	16.48	3.82	1.42	<b>17.63</b>	0.13	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	<b>30840</b>	
<b>Other</b>	20.06	0.19	8.76	0.56	0.00	0.56	1.60	0.00	3.86	2.64	0.38	0.47	1.98	0.75	<b>50.09</b>	0.09	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	<b>1062</b>	
<b>NR</b>	3.15	0.34	0.71	0.09	0.00	0.09	1.39	0.00	0.42	0.15	0.22	0.14	0.19	0.00	1.91	<b>91.00</b>	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	1.91	1.91	1.91	1.91	1.91	1.91	1.91	<b>6480</b>	
<b>NA</b>	0.18	0.00	0.01	0.04	0.00	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	<b>7344</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>69.46</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>3.38</b>	<b>11.93</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>11.93</b>	<b>1.49</b>	<b>0.13</b>	<b>2.85</b>	<b>0.50</b>	<b>5.38</b>	<b>1.49</b>	<b>0.40</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>0.07</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>0.07</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>0.40</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>0.07</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>1196606</b>	

The above table give precious information not only on the linguistic group Mauritians affiliate themselves to, but also the actual language spoken in every day's life.

In total, 70 % of the entire population communicate essentially in Creole Morysien. If we add to this number the proportion of people who speak Creole plus another language, then the proportion reaches 80%. In other words 80% of the Mauritians speak Creole everyday, as the language of communication.

Almost 12% of the population speaks Bhojपुरi and a total of 14% of the population speaks an Indian language (Bhojपुरi included).

Less than 4% speaks only French.

If Mauritius is a multicultural nation, it is, nevertheless, a homogenous country language wise. The Creole is by far the most spoken language. Even if only 48% of the population define itself as belonging to the Creole linguistic group, 80% of the Mauritians speak Creole as the communication language.

Amongst the Creole, 93% of them speak exclusively the language while 6 % speak French or French and Creole.

French speak exclusively French in 84% of the cases, as it is widely understood thanks to common roots with Creole, and for the remaining 16%, they speak Creole.

Mauritians belonging to an Indian linguistic group, communicate in Bhojpuri for 35% of them and for only 8% for them in another Indian language. The rest of the Indian language group members communicate on a regular basis in Creole.

When we speak about “Créolité”, we often refer to the feeling of appurtenance to the Creole population group, somehow volatile in itself, as the origin of the Creole is a mix from the beginning, but we seldom refer to the language itself. It is commonly understood that exists a Creole culture, and this, not because of the language but because of a common history of slavery and colonialism. But, it is clear that the country has a very common point: the language. And if this language is vector of homogeneity, then, we will probably see that there are not “demographies” in Mauritius but somehow one and homogeneous “demography”. Already the study of the language shows us, such homogeneity.

## Gender Distribution

Table 3. Distribution of the population by sex per language group, in 2000

	Male	Female	Total	Number
Creole	50.06	49.94	100.00	458125
Chinese languages	38.99	61.01	100.00	22916
French	47.63	52.37	100.00	21455
English and other europ	45.18	54.82	100.00	1941
Arabic	51.66	48.34	100.00	811
Bhojpuri	49.57	50.43	100.00	362382
Other Indian languages	49.84	50.16	100.00	154706
Creole & Chinese	50.85	49.15	100.00	3487
Creole & French	47.80	52.20	100.00	18408
Creole & Other Europ	50.56	49.44	100.00	4545
Creole & Bhojpur	49.66	50.34	100.00	66244
Creole and other Indian language	49.73	50.27	100.00	31361
European and other languages	49.07	50.93	100.00	4500
Indians languages mixed	50.09	49.91	100.00	30839
Other	53.77	46.23	100.00	1062
NR	54.65	45.35	100.00	6477
NA	51.18	48.82	100.00	7174
<b>All Languages</b>	49.59	50.41	100.00	1196433

The overall sex ratio of the Island is normal and slightly in favour of females.

The Creole linguistic group has a gender distribution which is slightly in favour of male, but this can be explained by the population structure which is still young, and a bit younger than the other linguistic groups (see the following Creole population pyramid).

More than 28% of the Creole linguistic group is under 15 years old, against 24% of the Bhojpuri group for instance.

The male to female sex ration at birth and in the early years of life being in favour of males, the age distribution can be explained by this phenomenon.

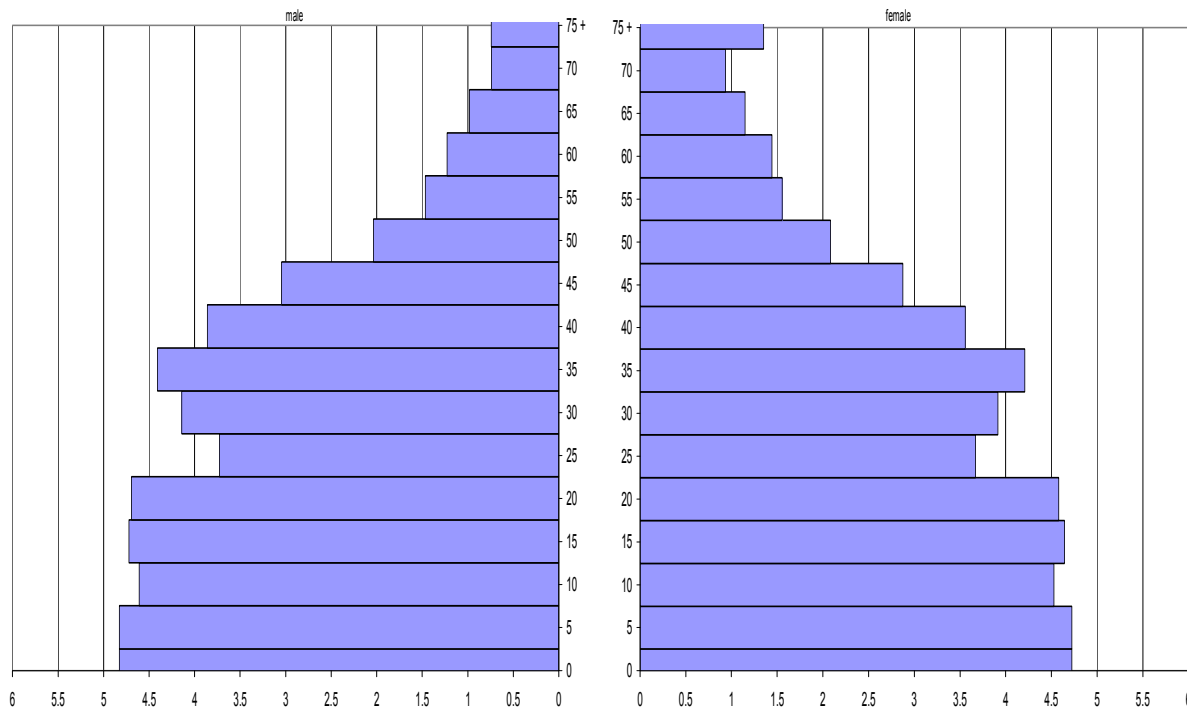
The ratio is pretty much homogenous amongst all linguistic groups of the Island except for the Chinese population where the sex ratio is noticeably in favour of females. Looking at the age structure, we can see that the age distribution by gender is totally unbalanced at the reproductive ages. Between 20 to 35 years old the proportion of females is much higher than the one of males. This could be explained by data errors or more likely by selective immigration of females or emigration of males.

Regarding French, English and other Europeans, the report male/female is a bit more in favour of females. In these cases as well, the structure by age plays a role as these linguistic groups have an older population than the Creole (More French an European females at the older ages), which explain the small difference in the distribution.

The overall gender structure is normal and homogenous across all the linguistic groups (Chinese excluded), and do not show any demographic particularity for a specific group or another.

## Structure by age of the population

### Creole linguistic group



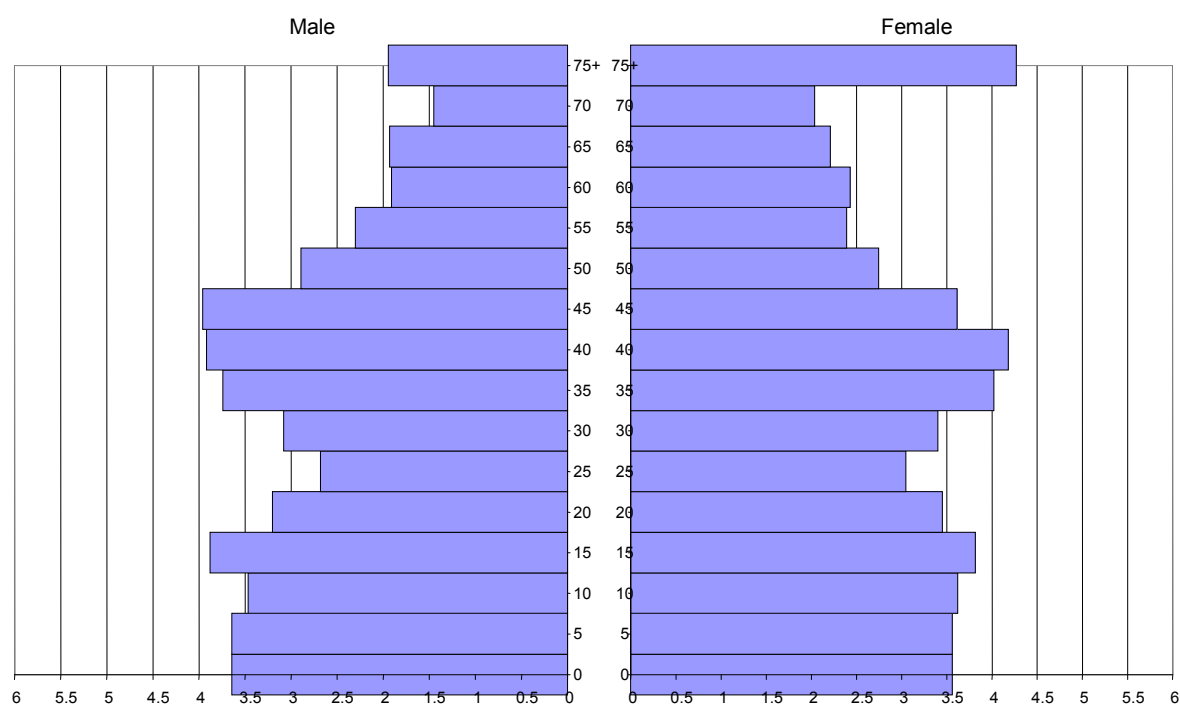
*Population Pyramid of the Creole linguistic group. 2000*

The Pyramid is well balanced, and shows a young population, but which has already begun its demographic transition. This population pyramid corresponds to the overall pyramid of the Mauritian population as the Creole group is the heaviest one as it represents the majority of the inhabitant in Mauritius. The basis of the pyramid tends to stay stable, group of generations after group of generations which announce an aging population in the near future, and an evident decrease in the total number of children per women (longitudinal indicator) as well as a decrease of the Total Fertility Rate (transversal indicator).

In the same proportion for males and females we see that at the active ages the pyramid tends to shrink. 25 to 35 years ago the fertility was still high in the island and this shrinkage cannot be explained by a brutal decrease in fertility of generation 1975 to generation 1965. More likely the shape of the pyramid reflects emigration of male and females of active ages. This phenomenon does not only have an incidence on the labour market of the island but obviously on the fertility as well, as a certain number of native Mauritian in reproductive age is abroad.

As a consequence, such emigration contributes also to the aging of the population.

French group.



*Population Pyramid of the French linguistic group, 2000*

The shape of the pyramid of the French linguistic group is the one of European countries where the demographic transition is complete.

The fertility is at a very low level as we can see that the basis of the pyramid is smaller than the middle of it. If we compare the 30 to 45 years old group to the 0 to 15 years old, we can clearly see that fertility is below the level of replacement of generations.

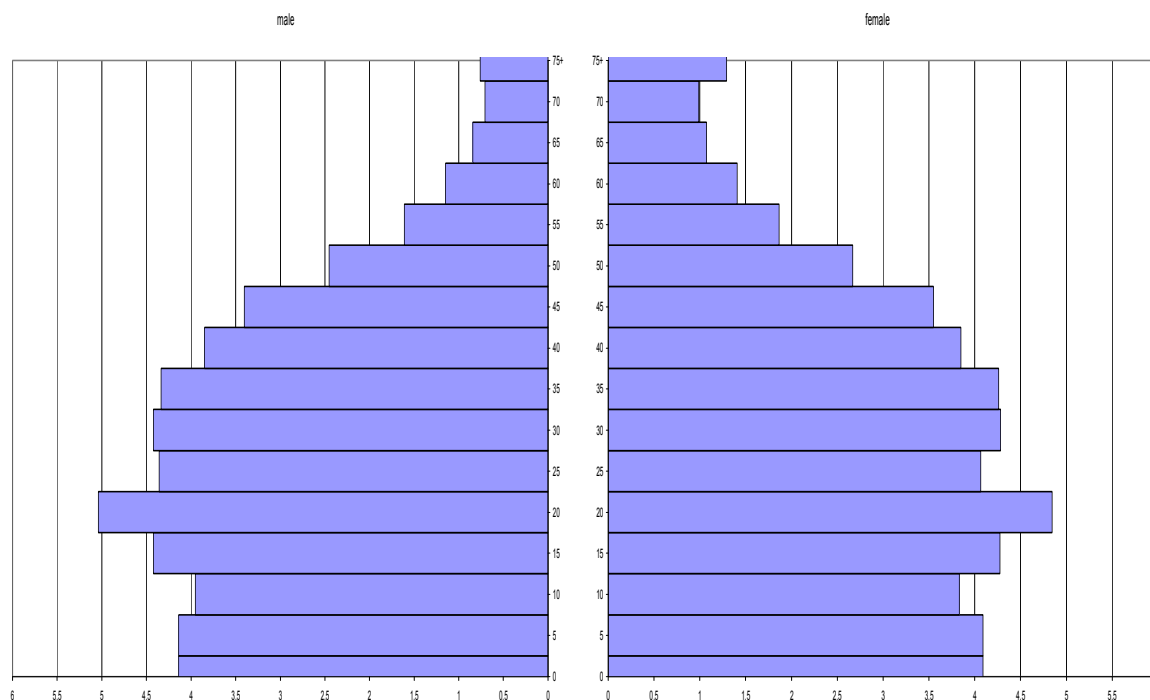
It is an aging population with high life expectancy, where the one of females is higher than the one of males.

Emigration seems also to touch this sub-population group as the pyramid shrinks at the active age, both for males and females.

The population belonging to the French linguistic group is therefore older than the Creole one, but might show the demographic future of the Creole group.



## Bhojpuri linguistic group



*Population Pyramid of the Bhojpuri linguistic group. 2000*

The shape of the Bhojpuri group is symmetrical, which shows a good balance between genders at all ages.

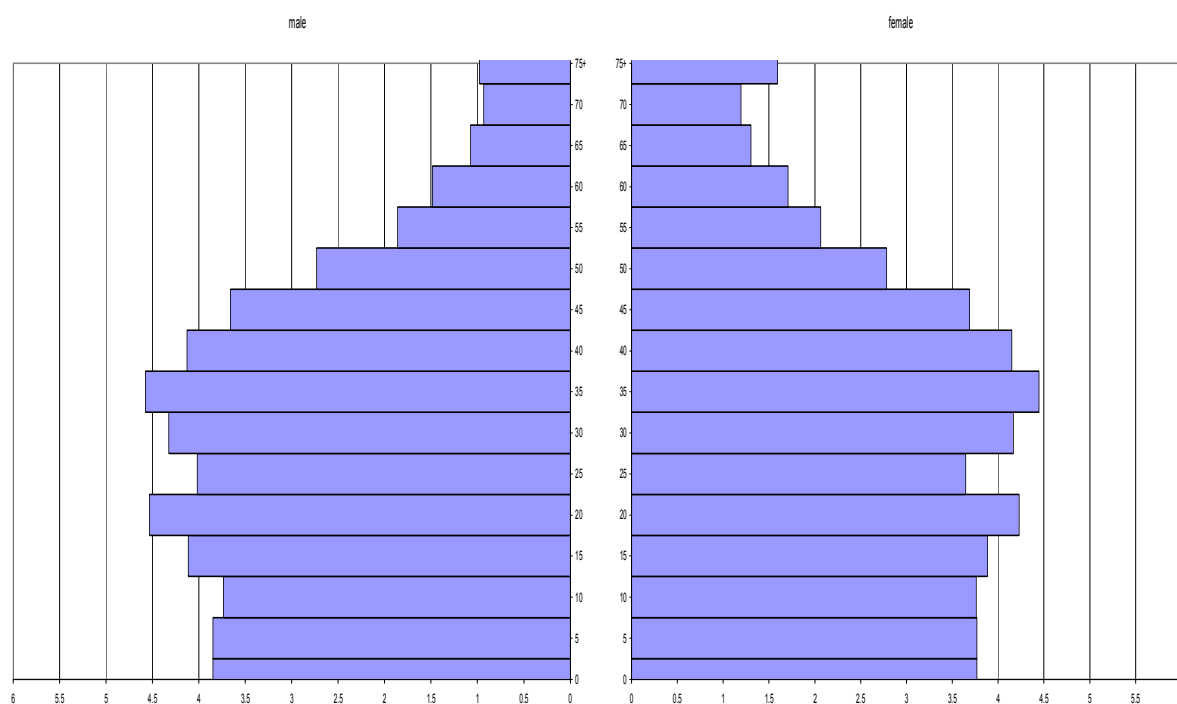
The shape of the pyramid shows a population which has begun the demographic transition, but which is still at an early stage of the end of the transition.

The mortality is controlled but still important, the life expectancy is higher for females than for males. The fertility tends to decrease but the replacement of generation is still insured.

No evidence in the Bhojpuri group of emigration, the population at all ages is stable, in particular at the active ages.

Contrarily to the other sub population groups, this one might show evidence of immigration in the generation group 1975/1980, or a deviation from another India dialect to the assimilation to Bhojpuri. The pyramid of the other Indian linguistic group, (see below), shows a decrease in this age group corresponding to the Bhojpuri increase.

## Other Indian Languages group



*Population Pyramid of the Other Indian linguistic group. 2000*

This pyramid shows the same pattern as the Bhojpuri group, to finally have a homogenous Hindu-Indian sub population group.

One can see the evidences of the achievement of the demographic transition. The generation group 1975/1980 is smaller than its neighbour groups of generation. This could be explained by emigration, but it is more likely a matter of language group assimilation to Bhojpuri.

## Religion

Table 4. Religious status by language group, per 100 speakers of each linguistic group

	No Religion	Buddhist	Chinese	Protestant	Roman Catholic	Other Christian	Hindu	Other Hindu	Muslim	Other religion	NA	Total	Number
Creole	0.39	0.04	0.03	<b>17.30</b>	<b>49.89</b>	0.60	7.42	6.81	<b>17.44</b>	0.10	0.00	<b>100.00</b>	<i>458064</i>
Chinese lang	7.53	<b>15.62</b>	<b>16.37</b>	13.03	<b>43.64</b>	1.03	0.10	0.09	0.20	2.38	0.01	<b>100.00</b>	<i>22421</i>
French	1.57	0.03	0.00	11.10	<b>83.77</b>	0.90	0.81	0.42	1.28	0.11	0.00	<b>100.00</b>	<i>21407</i>
Eng other eur	5.66	0.57	0.05	<b>28.00</b>	<b>38.81</b>	5.30	7.74	3.12	8.88	1.87	0.00	<b>100.00</b>	<i>1925</i>
Arabic	0.25	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.37	0.00	0.62	0.12	<b>97.29</b>	1.11	0.00	<b>100.00</b>	<i>811</i>
Bhojpuri	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.62	0.13	0.05	<b>77.51</b>	<b>9.28</b>	<b>12.30</b>	0.06	0.00	<b>100.00</b>	<i>362354</i>
Other Indian	0.15	0.08	0.00	1.62	0.84	0.15	<b>24.47</b>	<b>48.17</b>	<b>24.34</b>	0.17	0.01	<b>100.00</b>	<i>154689</i>
Creole & Chinese	1.69	3.33	2.64	18.04	<b>71.57</b>	1.03	0.66	0.37	0.63	0.03	0.00	<b>100.00</b>	<i>3486</i>
Creole & French	0.92	0.05	0.02	17.17	<b>69.01</b>	1.09	4.13	2.13	5.30	0.20	0.00	<b>100.00</b>	<i>18394</i>
Creole & Other													
Europ	1.15	0.04	0.02	14.36	<b>48.13</b>	1.04	13.72	6.04	<b>15.24</b>	0.26	0.00	<b>100.00</b>	<i>4540</i>
Creole & Bhojpur	0.14	0.00	0.00	1.62	1.24	0.14	<b>69.71</b>	5.58	<b>21.44</b>	0.11	0.01	<b>100.00</b>	<i>66242</i>
Creole other indian	0.21	0.17	0.03	3.45	4.70	0.27	<b>16.99</b>	<b>33.73</b>	<b>40.27</b>	0.18	0.00	<b>100.00</b>	<i>31357</i>
Europ nd other lang	1.74	0.76	0.29	10.84	<b>37.68</b>	1.18	21.69	8.46	16.83	0.53	0.00	<b>100.00</b>	<i>4491</i>
Indian mixed	0.13	0.02	0.04	1.02	0.44	0.12	48.65	34.94	14.55	0.09	0.01	<b>100.00</b>	<i>30840</i>
Other	1.99	10.12	0.00	15.89	29.42	6.15	12.87	3.41	15.33	4.73	0.09	<b>100.00</b>	<i>1057</i>
NR	1.80	0.12	6.36	3.54	34.69	0.00	22.63	7.38	23.23	0.18	0.06	<b>100.00</b>	<i>1666</i>
NA	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.22	0.04	0.11	0.00	99.61	<b>100.00</b>	<i>7344</i>
All Language	0.41	0.35	0.34	8.18	<b>23.60</b>	0.36	<b>35.47</b>	13.92	16.60	0.15	0.62	<b>100.00</b>	<i>1191088</i>

Even though religion is not part of the demographic specificities of a population, but more part of the cultural characteristics, it seems important to have an idea of the religious affiliation of the different sub-population in Mauritius, to understand potential differences in their demographic behaviours.

The Creole population is mainly Christian (68%), with a majority of Catholic. 17% are Muslim while almost 15 % are Hindu.

Amongst the Chinese, one can find a majority of Christians (60%), followed by Oriental faiths (Buddhism 16% and Chinese 17%).

The French are essentially Catholic (83%), the English and other Europeans are shared between the Catholic (39%) and Protestant (28%) faiths.

When considering the Bhojpuri group, one can see that they embrace the Hindu religions for 86% while 12% are Muslim.

The other Indian sub-populations are also distributed between Hinduism and Islam.

Overall, the population is composed by more than 50% of Hindus, almost 24% of Catholics, almost 17% of Muslims, and 8% of Protestants.

Even if the population is quite heterogeneous religion wise, there is one point of similarity. The appurtenance to a religious group is universal. Only 0.4% of the population states not to belong to any religious congregation.

Therefore, Mauritius is a country with a strong religious component and influence.

## Households' characteristics.

Table 5. Composition of Households by language group per household member, per 100 households

	Head of Household	Spouse of Head	Son/ Daughter	Son/ Daughter-in-law	Grandchild	Mother/ Father	Other Relative	Non-relative	NR
<b>Creole</b>	100.00	77.07	184.19	7.95	17.11	5.45	15.01	2.54	0.01
<b>Chinese Lang</b>	100.00	70.07	128.37	6.00	8.34	10.88	13.34	140.62	0.00
<b>French</b>	100.00	68.56	121.48	2.23	4.19	3.22	10.39	5.11	0.01
<b>English other Europ</b>	100.00	60.45	100.36	7.99	5.44	1.63	8.89	12.70	0.00
<b>Arabic</b>	100.00	87.43	173.82	12.57	20.94	8.90	19.37	1.57	0.00
<b>Bhojpuri</b>	100.00	77.61	171.90	11.15	15.74	10.07	12.05	0.59	0.00
<b>Indian other</b>	100.00	76.91	152.98	9.15	13.52	9.29	12.35	5.84	0.00
<b>Creole &amp; Chinese</b>	100.00	74.28	159.77	7.04	11.42	5.66	12.38	1.49	0.11
<b>Creole &amp; French</b>	100.00	76.19	156.06	5.27	11.28	4.97	15.06	5.43	0.43
<b>Creole &amp; Other Europ</b>	100.00	76.77	175.83	6.49	10.85	2.90	11.78	3.50	0.00
<b>Creole &amp; Bhojpur</b>	100.00	77.89	162.38	10.86	14.48	8.95	11.98	0.93	0.00
<b>Creole nd other indian</b>	100.00	76.73	154.23	8.84	13.61	8.97	13.10	1.79	0.01
<b>European nd other lang</b>	100.00	73.29	185.45	6.83	12.78	3.82	11.71	5.41	0.00
<b>Indian mixed</b>	100.00	77.11	178.05	10.78	16.05	10.16	11.18	3.15	0.00
Other	100.00	inconsist	107.47	10.92	4.60	2.30	18.39	263.22	0.00
NR	100.00	34.01	95.94	7.11	9.14	7.11	32.49	inconsist	0.51
NA	100.00	38.14	78.81	28.81	61.44	7.20	101.27	inconsist	0.00
<b>All Languages</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>76.94</b>	<b>170.67</b>	<b>9.16</b>	<b>15.33</b>	<b>7.81</b>	<b>13.32</b>	<b>8.93</b>	<b>0.02</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>297523</b>	<b>228909</b>	<b>507778</b>	<b>27246</b>	<b>45622</b>	<b>23251</b>	<b>39641</b>	<b>26577</b>	<b>46</b>

As shown in the table 5, overall, households are composed of one head and in 77% of the households, of one spouse, 1.7 children, and few other relatives.

In only 0.15% of the households, one can find a grand child, in less than 0.1% one son or daughter-in-law, or parents.

We can see that Creole households are composed of one head and a spouse in 77% of the cases, with 1.9 children still living in the household. Very few other relatives are part of Creole households.

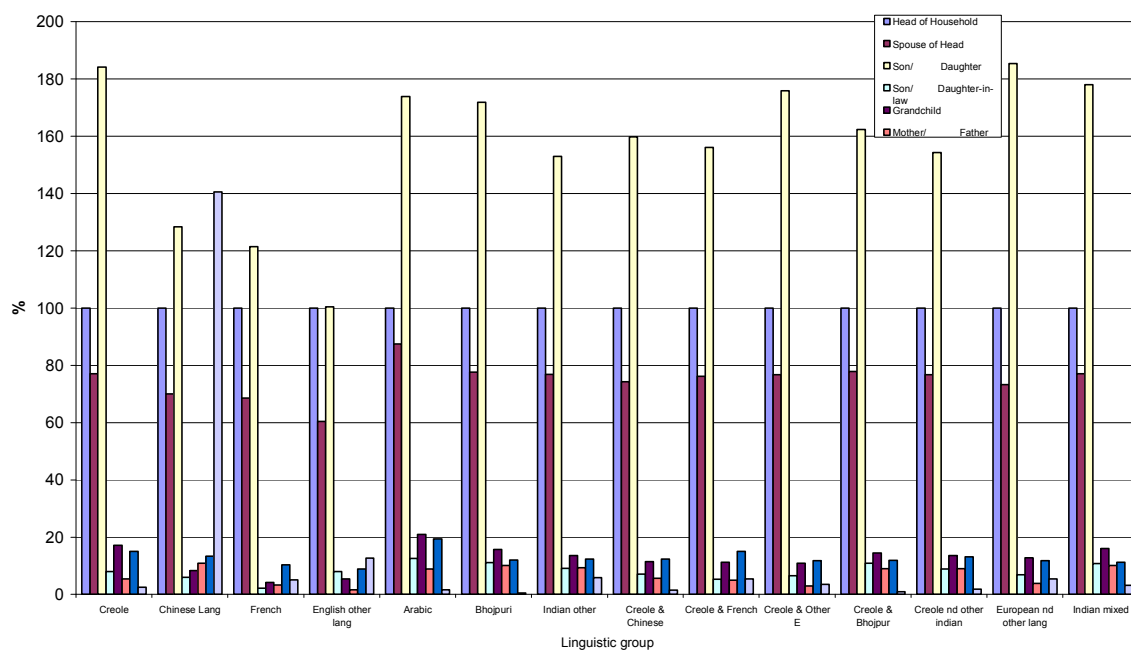
We see exactly the same pattern with Bhojpuri households, which are made up of one head, in 78% of a spouse, and an average of 1.72 children still living in the household. As the Creole linguistic group, the Bhojpuri one is essentially composed of a nucleus family and do not host many other relatives.

Looking at the French linguistic group we see a more modern pattern, with the presence of a spouse in only 68% of the households, and an average of 1.2 children still at home. The presence of other relatives is negligible.

One can observe the same trend in the English and other European group, with an even lower level of presence of spouse and children.

The case of the Chinese group is a bit different, even if one can find almost the same degree of presence of spouses as the overall population, (70%), the children's average is a bit lower (1.3 children) and the presence of other relatives is much higher than any other Mauritian sub-population with an average of 1.4 other relatives in each Chinese households.

Figure 1. Households' composition and linguistic group



The figure 1, above, shows that the composition of the households is somehow homogenous across the different groups, with the exception of the presence of non-relatives in Chinese households and the French and European smaller households (see table 6).

Table 6. Average number of household members by linguistic groups.

Linguistic group	Average number of household members
<b>Creole</b>	4.09
<b>Chinese Lang</b>	4.78
<b>French</b>	3.15
<b>English other lang</b>	2.97
<b>Arabic</b>	4.25
<b>Bhojpuri</b>	3.99
<b>Indian other</b>	3.80
<b>Creole &amp; Chinese</b>	3.72
<b>Creole &amp; French</b>	3.75
<b>Creole &amp; Other Europ</b>	3.88
<b>Creole &amp; Bhojpur</b>	3.87
<b>Creole nd other indian</b>	3.77
<b>European nd other lang</b>	3.99
<b>Indian mixed</b>	4.06
<b>All groups</b>	4.02

## Marital status.

Table 7. Marital status by population group, per 100 persons of each group aged 15 years old and over

	Widowed	Divorced	Separated	Married Civil or Religious	Consensual Union	Single	Unmarried Parent	NR	NA	Total	Number
Creole	6.34	0.98	2.55	51.80	4.60	33.22	0.49	0.02	0.00	100.00	344737
Chinese	4.90	0.59	0.36	53.29	0.49	39.79	0.05	0.53	0.00	100.00	20494
French	7.58	2.36	1.57	54.12	2.12	31.90	0.33	0.03	0.00	100.00	17444
Eng nd europ	3.93	1.81	1.56	68.41	1.75	22.41	0.06	0.06	0.00	100.00	1602
Arabic	5.72	0.16	1.80	62.58	0.33	29.25	0.16	0.00	0.00	100.00	612
Bhojpuri	8.05	0.52	1.84	57.78	0.42	31.34	0.05	0.01	0.00	100.00	285178
Indian other	8.11	0.68	1.81	58.41	0.56	30.33	0.05	0.05	0.00	100.00	124039
Creole & Chinese	5.85	0.96	1.10	55.02	1.74	35.05	0.28	0.00	0.00	100.00	2819
Creole & French	7.14	1.90	2.00	54.08	1.67	32.77	0.40	0.03	0.00	100.00	14577
Creole & Other Europ	3.83	1.30	1.88	54.96	1.27	36.54	0.22	0.00	0.00	100.00	3626
Creole & Bhojpur	7.38	0.62	1.60	59.67	0.49	30.14	0.05	0.02	0.02	100.00	52559
Creole nd other indian	7.84	0.80	1.49	59.09	0.65	30.03	0.08	0.01	0.00	100.00	24845
Europ nd other lang	5.55	1.72	1.52	53.14	1.26	36.66	0.15	0.00	0.00	100.00	3423
Indian mixed	7.36	0.56	1.49	57.80	0.31	32.42	0.04	0.01	0.00	100.00	24218
Other	0.95	0.74	0.74	50.21	0.63	46.53	0.11	0.11	0.00	100.00	950
NR	3.54	0.52	0.87	47.03	0.67	25.43	0.02	21.73	0.18	100.00	6098
NA	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.29	0.02	0.12	0.00	0.03	99.50	100.00	6646
All lang gp	7.14	0.79	2.01	55.07	2.05	31.83	0.22	0.17	0.71	100.00	933867

The marriage, understood here as all forms of marriage (civil, religious, civil and religious), is the principal form of union in the Mauritian society.

Overall, 55% of the population aged 15 years old and over is married, against 2% who live in a consensual union.

The consensual union is used by 4.6% of the Creole linguistic group followed by the French, English and other Europeans with 2%. In all the other groups, the consensual union is almost inexistent.

The divorce or the separation is also very seldom.

The Creole community divorces for less than 1%. In other words only 2 marriages out of 100 terminate by a divorce.

The French community divorces for 2.36%. For this sub-group 4 marriages out of 100 end up in a divorce.

For the rest of the population the divorce is even lower and almost never stated in the Bhojpuri and the other Indian linguistic communities.

The separation is also very rare, even if one can find more separations than divorces in the Indian population especially.

In all the different linguistic groups, approximately 1/3 of the population is single. This is explained in particular by the increase in the age at first marriage in the country. The Chinese linguistic group shows a higher proportion of singles than any other sub-population. This result can probably be explained by a very unbalanced sex ratio at the adult ages in favour of females who are outnumbering the males of the same age groups.

## Proportion of singles, married, and calendar of unions.

Table 8. Proportion of singles, by linguistic groups per age.

single	15 - 19 yrs	20 - 24 yrs	25 - 29 yrs	30 - 34 yrs	35 - 39 yrs	40 - 44 yrs	45 - 49 yrs
Creole	93.75	66.42	32.67	16.50	10.86	8.24	6.93
chinese	99.55	63.65	19.45	25.23	19.67	17.84	12.98
French	98.61	84.72	45.60	20.14	13.46	9.33	8.74
Eng nd European	94.87	71.05	24.56	15.05	10.38	7.14	2.44
Arabic	90.79	64.58	33.33	11.76	9.86	5.48	5.36
Bhojpuri	94.92	67.96	35.57	15.92	10.28	7.65	6.34
indian other	95.13	70.67	38.77	17.32	11.53	8.85	7.36
Creole & Chinese	97.19	82.79	55.13	37.20	19.37	10.78	10.45
Creole & French	97.63	76.39	41.33	20.28	13.25	9.71	9.67
Creole & Other Europ	97.93	77.75	43.62	20.84	15.40	12.46	7.51
Creole & Bhojpur	94.68	68.34	34.49	16.91	10.26	7.48	6.45
Creole other indian	94.66	69.12	36.29	18.10	13.27	9.45	8.63
Europ other	97.21	82.46	45.67	23.22	15.60	11.64	9.22
Indian mixed	96.64	73.46	40.46	18.82	11.04	7.77	6.52
<b>All groups</b>	<b>94.40</b>	<b>68.60</b>	<b>35.59</b>	<b>16.93</b>	<b>11.10</b>	<b>8.38</b>	<b>7.06</b>

Table 9. Proportion of married, by linguistic groups per age.

Married	15 - 19 yrs	20 - 24 yrs	25 - 29 yrs	30 - 34 yrs	35 - 39 yrs	40 - 44 yrs	45 - 49 yrs
Creole	6.25	33.58	67.33	83.50	89.14	91.76	93.07
chinese	0.45	36.35	80.55	74.77	80.33	82.16	87.02
French	1.39	15.28	54.40	79.86	86.54	90.67	91.26
Eng nd European	5.13	28.95	75.44	84.95	89.62	92.86	97.56
Arabic	9.21	35.42	66.67	88.24	90.14	94.52	94.64
Bhojpuri	5.08	32.04	64.43	84.08	89.72	92.35	93.66
indian other	4.87	29.33	61.23	82.68	88.47	91.15	92.64
Creole & Chinese	2.81	17.21	44.87	62.80	80.63	89.22	89.55
Creole & French	2.37	23.61	58.67	79.72	86.75	90.29	90.33
Creole & Other Europ	2.07	22.25	56.38	79.16	84.60	87.54	92.49
Creole & Bhojpur	5.32	31.66	65.51	83.09	89.74	92.52	93.55
Creole other indian	5.34	30.88	63.71	81.90	86.73	90.55	91.37
Europ other	2.79	17.54	54.33	76.78	84.40	88.36	90.78
Indian mixed	3.36	26.54	59.54	81.18	88.96	92.23	93.48
<b>All groups</b>	<b>5.60</b>	<b>31.40</b>	<b>64.41</b>	<b>83.07</b>	<b>88.90</b>	<b>91.62</b>	<b>92.94</b>

The two tables show the pace of unions, as materialised by the graphs below.

We can see that half of the marriages occur towards 29 years old, except for the Chinese population where the marriages occur essentially before 30 years old, but slow down after this age.

Overall, 7% of the population of Mauritius stays single (as we considered that very few marriages occur after 50 years old).

The Creole and the Bhojpuri get married at the same pace. At the age 30 to 34 years-old 84% of the two sub-populations are married. We find the same proportions for the rest of the population, with an exception for the French who married later but arrive almost at the same level of the Creole and the Bhojpuri at ages 34-35.

Figure 3 . Proportion of singles by age

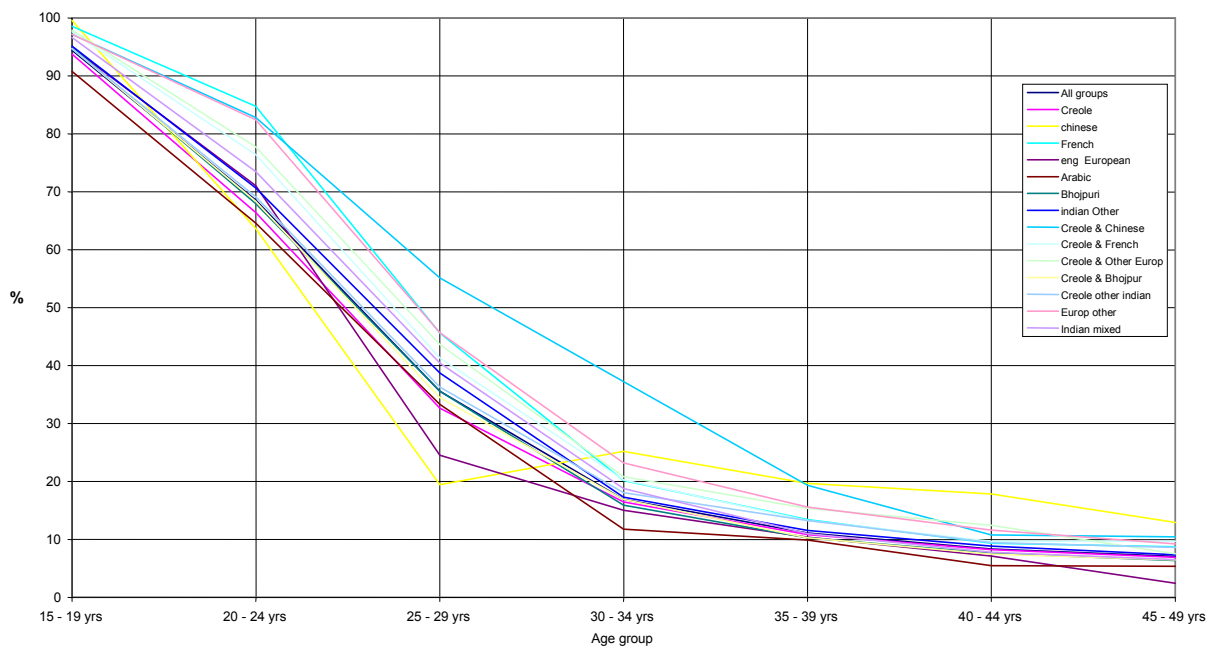
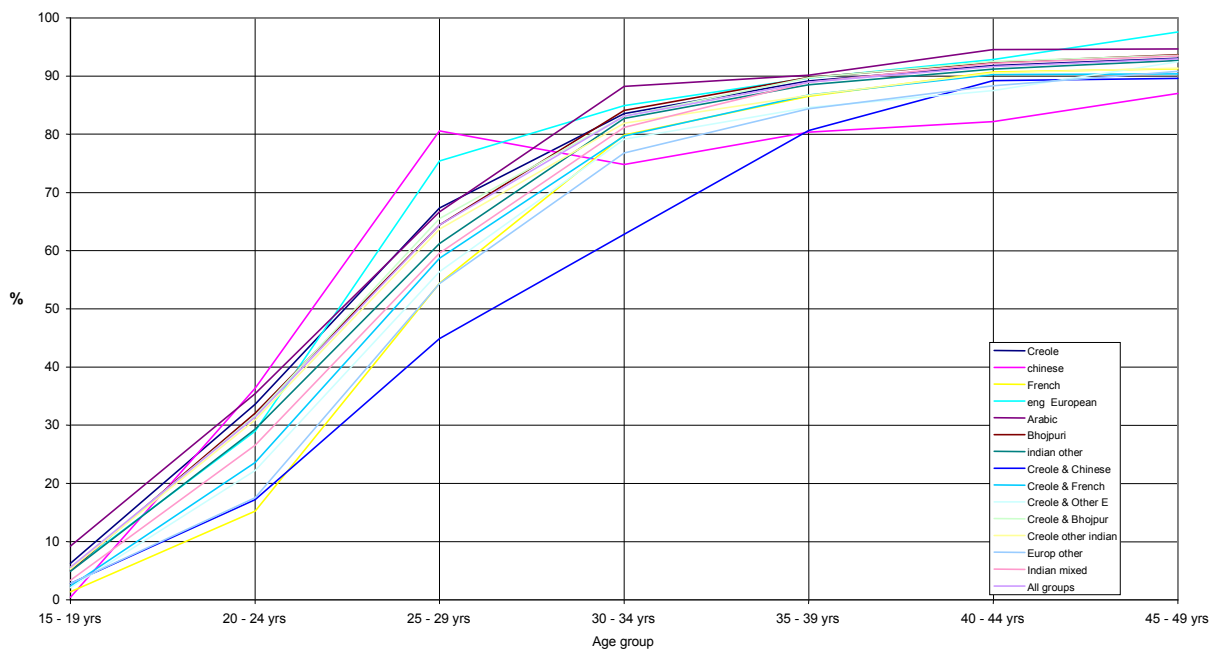


Figure 4 . Proportion of married by age





## Fertility

The fertility is probably one of the best indicator which shows different potential demographic behaviour.

Table 10. Total Fertility Rate in 2000 by linguistic group

Group	Total Fertility Rate
Creole	1.99
Chinese	1.92
French	1.88
Eng other Europ	1.76
Arabic	1.9
Bhojpuri	1.98
Indian other	1.97
Creole & Chinese	1.97
Creole & French	1.97
Creole & Other Europ	1.88
Creole & Bhojpur	1.97
Creole other lang	1.96
Europ other	1.86
indian mixed	1.97
All groups	1.98

By Calculating the Total Fertility Rate (number of children born in a specific year over the total of women of childbearing age in the same specific year) in 2000 by linguistic groups one can see that no major difference are noticeable.

The French and the European have the smallest TFR, explained by a lower fertility but also by, as we could see previously, a later age at first marriage.

The Creole population as well as the Bhojpuri and the other Indian languages groups have almost the same TFR, ranging from 1.97 to 1.99.

The TFR, is not only very homogenous across the sub-populations, but it is also for all groups below the level of generations' replacement.

However, one needs to bear in mind that the TFR is only the indication of a transversal indicator. The TFR might be low not only because of a decline in fertility but might also reflect the effect of a retardation of marriage. If so, at the end of the reproductive life, and by calculating the final descendency (total number of children per woman), the longitudinal indicator may show a total number of 2 children per women.

## Calendar of childbearing

Table 11. Calendar of childbearing by linguistic group per age group

	12 - 14 yrs	15 - 19 yrs	20 - 24 yrs	25 - 29 yrs	30 - 34 yrs	35 - 39 yrs	40 - 44 yrs	45 - 49 yrs
Creole	0.03	2.41	13.93	29.14	47.54	68.16	85.73	100.00
Chinese	0.00	0.00	3.88	27.34	53.78	70.93	85.59	100.00
French	0.03	0.54	5.07	17.82	34.86	56.64	80.16	100.00
Eng other Europ	0.00	0.40	5.24	19.35	40.93	60.28	80.04	100.00
Arabic	0.00	0.00	7.75	23.94	40.85	61.97	83.80	100.00
Bhojpuri	0.00	1.73	14.19	30.59	49.31	67.78	84.48	100.00
Indian other	0.00	1.41	11.42	25.75	44.41	64.35	83.22	100.00
Creole & Chinese	0.00	1.19	6.61	19.49	32.71	56.27	80.00	100.00
Creole & French	0.00	0.89	9.17	23.93	41.00	61.73	82.34	100.00
Creole & Other Europ	0.00	0.76	10.52	28.26	45.88	66.67	83.14	100.00
Creole & Bhojpur	0.00	1.50	13.15	30.25	49.59	67.93	84.62	100.00
Creole other lang	0.00	1.27	10.86	25.27	43.65	63.56	83.24	100.00
Europ other	0.00	1.23	9.18	23.70	43.01	64.11	84.52	100.00
indian mixed	0.00	1.41	11.42	25.75	44.41	64.35	83.22	100.00
<b>All groups</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>1.83</b>	<b>13.03</b>	<b>28.75</b>	<b>47.45</b>	<b>67.09</b>	<b>84.66</b>	<b>100.00</b>

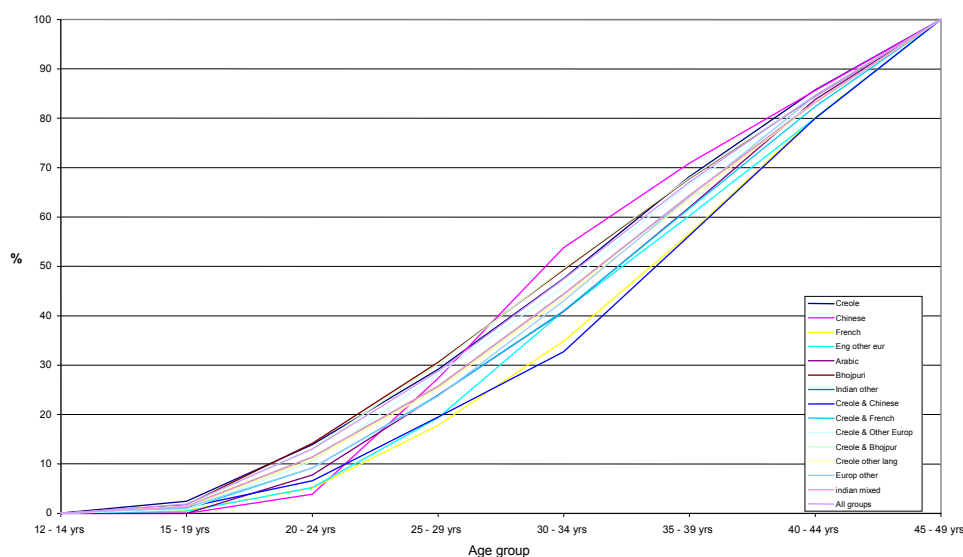
50% of the children are born while the mother is in age group 30 to 34 years old.

The Creole group and the Bhojpuri group follow the same trends to reach at 35 to 39 years old 68% of the children born.

Chinese starts later than the Creole and the Bhojpuri but concentrate the pregnancies in the age group 25 to 29 years old, to arrive to more than 27% of the children born compare to 29 % for the Creoles.

French, English and other Europeans have a later calendar, as they reach around 18 % of the live-born children in the age group 25 to 29 years old against 30% for the Creoles and Bhojpuri.

Figure 5 . Calendar of Childbearing by linguistic group



### **Is there a “Creole demography?”**

At the light of these results one can clearly see that Mauritius is composed by different linguistic groups. These groups, even though they are living on the same territory for centuries, share the same recent history, but keep to their origins, different cultures. One, then, could legitimately think that each sub-population has not only a different way of life socially and traditionally wise, but demographically as well. Indeed, when we compare the several indicators we could obtain, we see that the results are usually very close one to another.

When we consider, the language usually spoken in the country, we clearly see that even though many languages coexist on the island, Creole is the common language for communication. Not only Creoles express themselves in Creole, but all the other linguistic groups as well.

One can however note that the population issued from the former colonialist powers, as France and England, are the sub-populations which do not commonly express themselves in Creole but in French or English.

Nevertheless, Creole is definitively the common and widely used language.

The structure of the population by gender is correctly balanced across all linguistic groups. An exception exists, though. Amongst the Chinese population, the gender balance is evidently in favour of females. Except for this specific sub-population the balance at all ages is around 50% males for 50% females.

The French and English sub-populations show a slight difference with a balance in favour of females. This corresponds to the demographic characteristics of European populations where the life expectancy is high and in particular for women. The difference in the gender balance all ages, between the European linguistic group and the rest of the Creole and Indian populations of the island is due, before all, to this life span difference between genders. Here again the Creole linguistic group does not differentiate itself from the rest of the Mauritian population.

If we consider the structure by gender and by age for the main linguistic groups, we can see that the Creole group has the same type of population pyramid as the Bhojpuri one. Evidences of modern societies can be notified. The pyramids show that both of these sub-populations have finished their demographic transition, but are still at the early stage of the end of the transition. The pyramid is still quite triangular, but we can see that the base of the pyramid tends to shrink especially for the Indian populations.

These two linguistic groups reach a stage where the fertility will just insure the generation replacement level, but one can foresee that if the pyramid tends to shrink more, then, the natural population growth of the island might become negative.

Evidences of emigration at the active ages for males and females can be seen in the Creole and Bhojpuri populations.

The two populations are still young, but will age quickly as we consider the small base of the pyramid.

The population pyramid of the French linguistic group is even more alarming with a box shaped pyramid, where one clearly see that the youngest generations are lower than the adult generations. The level of replacement of generation is no more reached amongst the French speaking community.

The population is quite old and will continue to age, with an evident higher life expectancy for females than males.

Religion wise, many different religions coexist in Mauritius. The religious appurtenance is closely linked to the linguistic group. Therefore there is no homogeneity of religion in Mauritius as such, but a stronger homogeneity exists anyway when we consider religion as a whole: faith and affiliation to a congregation is universal in the Island. 99.6% of Mauritians belong to a religion.

Creoles are mainly Catholic, but also Protestant, Hindu or Muslim. The Indian linguistic group is distributed between Hindu religions and in a much smaller proportion, Islam. French are essentially Catholic or Protestant as are English and other Europeans.

The composition of the households is also quite homogenous across all groups. Creole and Bhojpuri have the exact same patterns, with an average of 4 households members structured in one nucleus family.

Except for the Chinese population where 1.4 households' member is a non-relative, the nucleus family is the Mauritian model.

French and English households are of a smaller size with an average of 3 members. The lower fertility and the early departure of the children from the parental household can explain this average difference of 1 household member.

Regarding the marital status, once again no big difference in the Mauritian society is noticeable. Consensual unions are not widely used, only a small 4% amongst Creoles, and 2% amongst French and English.

Marriage is therefore the quasi universal mode of union in Mauritius. Divorces are also very rare, less than 1% for the Creole and Indian populations. Amongst the French community it reaches a very small 2%.

Mauritians tend to marry late regardless of the population group. 50% of the Creole and Bhojpuri are still single at 27 years old.

French and English get married even later but at 35-39 years old, all the Mauritian sub-populations reach an average of 90% of unions.

The fertility is also quite alike for all the Mauritian linguistic groups, with an average Total Fertility Rate of 1.98. One can see the same homogeneity when considering the calendar of childbearing which shows that by age 30-34, Mauritian women have almost completed half of their fertility.

The family planning played a huge role in this quick and short demographic transition and fertility control. Since the 1965-1966 contraception campaigns were implemented in Mauritius and accessibility to contraceptives favorised, with the help of the United Nation Population Funds and a strong governmental policies. The traditional methods lost and keep on loosing importance to the benefit of modern method.

But especially for younger generation modern methods are not always the best answer against unwanted pregnancies. This is also the case for rural or uneducated population. One has to understand that modern methods are difficult to manage. Firstly, it might be costly, it is not always easy to get, and it requires the method to be perfectly used. Without saying that traditional methods are the perfect answer, we should consider that they can be very effective methods against unwanted pregnancies if they are correctly handled, as they are natural and do not request heavy and expensive medical treatment.

But whatever the efficiency of the methods, it is not only a matter of birth control now but it is also a matter of public health with epidemic of STDs and of course with the HIV-AIDS. Once again Mauritius acted a pioneer in the public management of the HIV-AIDS. Even though the infection rate in Mauritius (1.8%) is higher than the world average (1%), the Island can be congratulated for its huge efforts to reduce the number of HIV-AIDS cases and especially to try to control the passage from HIV positive to AIDS by distributing for free antiretroviral treatments to its infected population. Upstream, the Ministry of Health gives away free syringes to drug addicts which constitute 80% of the HIV positive population of the island as well as implemented methadone programs to help reducing the number of cases by drug absorption.

It seems that the family planning in Mauritius is a success, and that the country is very responsible facing major issue of public health. The country has managed to control fertility to decrease mortality and to work effectively with that new challenge that is HIV-AIDS. Now, the new challenge might be to stabilize fertility for it not to drop below an unreasonable level, where the island would face a situation of negative population growth. The answer to the challenge of maintaining fertility without spreading HIV, might reside in what Mauritius is: a modern society with traditional values.

In conclusion, at the light of these results we can say that the demography of Mauritius is modern and homogeneous across the different linguistic groups.

No big difference can be notable between Creoles and the rest of the population.

French and other Europeans tend to have a lower fertility and a lower mortality, but not in huge proportions.

If we cannot say that there is a Creole demography we could maybe say that there are European specificities, which reflects a lower assimilation of French, English and other Europeans, to the Mauritian society compare to the rest of the other sub-populations of the Island.

Mauritius has undertaken very early the demographic transition. The Mauritian population reflects the coexistence of a modern fertility and mortality with traditional values of society as the marriage or the religion.

Even if the country is made of different sub-populations we could see that the demography is very homogenous.

So, one can say that there is no strong particular Creole demographic characteristics, but there is surely one unique "Mauritian Demography".

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