It is constant that the greatness of kings is measured by the number of their subjects; in this consists their welfare, their happiness, their wealth, their strength, their fortune, and all the consideration that they have in the world.

--Vauban, Dîme Royale (1707).

What were the political implications of the equation of population with the greatness of monarchs in seventeenth-century France? To answer this question, one could do no better than to begin with the writings of Louis XIV’s great military architect, the Marshall Vauban. Announced in majuscule in his 1686 Easy and General Method for Doing the Census, the principle that “THE GRANDEUR OF KINGS IS MEASURED BY THE NUMBER OF THEIR SUBJECTS” is a ubiquitous feature of Vauban’s political memoranda. In a 1693 piece advocating the recall of the Huguenots, Vauban wrote that

It’s less by the extent of their Estates or by the revenue of Kings that their greatness is measured than by the great number of subjects, united and affectionate.

In his 1695 proposal for a capitation tax, which he saw as a potential stepping stone to his Dîme Royale, Vauban begged the King to remind himself that “the grandeur of Kings is
never measured except by the number of their subjects,” and that “without that, they have but vain titles.”3 This maxim also closely informed Vauban’s writings on the “reestablishment” of the French colonies and on military conscription before it did its most memorable work in Vauban’s controversial tax reform project, the Dîme Royale. This proposal for a radical simplification of the fiscal system through the institution of a proportional “tithe” on individual revenue was condemned in the last year of Vauban’s life, earning him the status of a martyred hero for critics of Louis XIV’s government.4

Although Vauban clearly felt that the government of Louis XIV needed reminding, in principle there appears to be nothing more in step with the political economy of royal absolutism than this “maxime supposée veritable.”5 In the seventeenth century, Eli Heckscher has argued, the goal of a large population joined the pursuit of precious metals in a “true mercantilist combination” of the two principal sinews of power.6 In France, the notion that “there is neither strength nor wealth but from men” was enshrined in Jean Bodin’s definition of absolute sovereignty, and animated Jean-Baptiste Colbert’s stewardship of the celebrated pronatalist legislation of

3 Vauban, “Projet de Capitation,” in Écrits divers sur l’économie, ed. Jean-François Pernot (Saint-Léger-Vauban: Les Amis de la Maison Vauban, 1996), 208. Some other instances of Vauban’s identification of population as the “primordial” source of strength are as follows. In a manuscript on the census, he wrote that “cette revue ou recensement doit être circonstancié comme le fondement primordial de toute la grandeur des forces et la richesse d’un état.” BN ms. fr. 7758, marginal note, cited in Vilquin, “Vauban inventeur,” 223; for another formulation of this principle, see the lengthy letter of 9 March 1698 from Vauban to Hue de Caligny on how to compose a statistical memorandum (Rochas d’Aiglun, Vauban, 592-3). The concern with repeopling the country also features prominently in Vauban’s 1697 “Réorganisation de l’armée,” as I will argue further along.

4 This mythology of Vauban’s “martyrdom” at the hands of the a cabale of financiers and the Minister Pontchartrain has been convincingly dismantled by Michel Morineau, “Tombeau pour un maréchal de France,” in Vauban, réformateur

5 These are Vauban’s words. See note one for the citation.

1666. It is true, as Lionel Rothkrug has shown, that aristocratic opponents of mercantilism inspired by Fénelon wielded the populationist maxim as a critique of the monarchy’s prioritization of commerce and conquest over agriculture. Generally speaking, however, historians have maintained that Vauban’s populationism was of the orthodox variety. According to Rothkrug, the military engineer, embittered against the commercial warfare of the English and the Dutch, was “one of the most ardent supporters of mercantilist theory and practice.” The militant connotations of Vauban’s populationism seem to place him firmly in the camp of “the Colbertists.” As Louise Dechêne explains in her edition of his colonial correspondence, there is a natural affinity between the simplistic equation of population with strength and the “static economy” of mercantilism. Aptly summing up the iconoclastic trend in recent Vauban scholarship, she concludes that Vauban’s is a mind whose “humanity should not be allowed to obscure its rigidity.”

How can we reconcile Vauban’s allusion to the depopulating effects of a variety of royal policies with the supposed “rigidity” and “orthodoxy” of his political-economy? Was the equation of population with wealth simply a pious platitude—a naive expression of “humanity” with no real substance? I intend to answer this question by exploring the history of the mercantilist theme of population and by demonstrating how Vauban

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9 Rothkrug, Opposition, 355-6, note. Also see these other authors who emphasize the orthodox character of Vauban’s political economy. Michel Morineau, “Tombeau pour un maréchal de France,” in Vauban Réformateur, edited by Catherine Brisac and Nicolas Faucher (Paris: Association Vauban, 1985); Jean-Pierre Guicciardi, “Vauban ... ou l’antireformateur” in the same volume.
10 Louise Dechêne, La correspondance de Vauban relative au Canada, 7. Dechêne seems not to be bothered by the fact that Vauban specifically rebuts the argument that colonial emigration is a zero-sum game in his correspondance with Maurepas.
transformed it into an original political-economy strongly influenced by his institutional situation as a military engineer. The key to understanding Vauban’s distinctive approach to population, I would suggest, lies in appreciating the strongly quantitative nature of his formulation of the equation of population with greatness. It is one thing to claim, as did Jean Bodin, that “there is neither strength nor wealth but from men.” It is something else to maintain that the greatness of kings is measured by, and consists in, the number of their subjects. As Jean-Claude Perrot has written, the precision of this concept of population as “the arithmetical sum of the King’s subjects” strongly implies the “interchangeability of each unit.”

As a principle of political-economy, it seems to be premised upon the idea that each person deploys an identical amount of power—a sort of “labor theory of value” that in Perrot’s estimation is common to overwhelmingly agrarian societies.

Vauban did, in fact, peg the level of population to agricultural capacity, but he possessed an even more fundamental ideal of the interchangeable subject: the soldier. Vauban’s career as military engineer gave him extensive practice at the application of forms quantification normally reserved for professional troops to the deployment of civilian labor in time of siege. As Jean-François Pernot has suggested, the enlistment and enumeration of civilians on the military frontier was a template for Vauban’s

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12 Ibid. Perrot’s notion of the Cartesian rationale of certain 17th century evocations of population is particularly appropriate to Vauban, whose celebrated census method is known to historians of statistics as a “discours de la méthode démographique.” See Vilquin, “Vauban inventeur,” 207.
13 Michèle Virol, *Vauban: de la gloire du roi au service de l’état* (Paris: Champ Vallon, 2003) 185. Virol sets the new standard for Vauban scholarship, especially for those interested as much in his political and economic ideas as in his military oeuvre. As an example of the military origins of his mathematical spirit, Virol cites Vauban’s calculation of the average amount of work that a man can do in a day in order to serve his construction of fortifications.
application of mathematical reason to the broader financial problems of the realm.\textsuperscript{14} Over the course of his career, moreover, Vauban began to demonstrate an interest not only in the technical aspects of the mixture of civilian and military capacities, but in the ideological roots of this liaison in the classical ideal of the citizen-militia. I think that Vauban’s growing interest in the idea of the “soldier-inhabitant” as a kind of universal subject during the general crisis of the 1690’s indicates that there was indeed a critical element to this quantitative focus on population. While rejecting the republican implications of the citizen-soldier, Vauban theorized the “soldier-inhabitant” as an ideal object of rational statecraft in two parallel contexts in this period. In France, he used the idea of the militia to criticize the institutional incapacity of the fiscal administration and to suggest the regimentation of the parish structure as a solution to the agricultural and fiscal impasse of the mid 1690’s. At the same time, in his colonial writings, Vauban was experimenting with the optimal conditions of \textit{peuplement} through the founding of planned settlements of married soldier-workers. As Vauban became more acutely aware of the gap between the possibilities of quantification in France and in the colonies, I would suggest, he combined these two lines of inquiry in a coherent critique of French mercantile policy. Whereas Colbert had once hinged his populationist policy on the need for colonists in France’s quest for maritime dominance, Vauban returned the theme of the soldier-inhabitant to the motherland, where it described the essential unit of government in an agrarian, populous “war-state.”\textsuperscript{15}


\textsuperscript{15} This term is Jean-François Pernot’s. See note 14.
Mercantilism, Population, and the Problem of the Citizen-Soldier.

When Jean-Baptiste Colbert oversaw the creation of the royal edict promoting childbirth in 1666, there was no question that the imperative to grow the population was part of the effort to extend the commercial power of France. There were a number of capacities in which an abundance of subjects could contribute to this project – agricultural laborers, artisans, and soldiers were often mentioned. In the legal memoranda written for the Edict, however, there is one sort of person – the colonist – that stands out as an especially poignant example of the need for a large population. In a 1665 memorandum on “the privileges of those who have numerous children,” one of Colbert’s counselors wrote that

The King has even more reason to avail himself to this [law] than any other prince because of the great commerce that he has established by land and by sea, and in view the colonies that he sends to the most distant lands, which obliges this great Monarch to render his Kingdom capable of conquering and supporting them.

This characterization of the value of a large population in terms of the need to send people overseas established an important liaison between the contemporary mercantilist project and the classical image of the Roman Empire spreading its influence by establishing colonies. The 1666 legislation itself was prepared in explicit reference to laws of the Roman emperors, who “were persuaded,” as another memorandum explained, “that for the conquest of the world they needed Romans – and that they needed a great

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16 Hanley, “Engendering the State,” 4-27. Essentially, this law aimed to increase the number of inhabitants by establishing privileges (tax breaks) for fathers who had numerous children (12 or more). The most controversial portion of the proposed edict concerned the effort to discourage people from entering celibate professions – this aspect of the edict was suppressed due to opposition from devout parlementaires.

17 [Le Vayer de Boutigny] Réflexions sur l’Édit touchant la réformation des monasteres (Paris, 1667), 1. The reformation of the monastaries was the most controversial component of Colbert’s natalist edict. In this pamphlet, Boutigny supported Colbert’s effort to decrease the number of celibates by explaining that the King would have “un peuple abondant pour son estat capable d’estre utilement employé au Commerce, à la Agriculture, aux Colonies, et à la Guerre.”

Indeed, given the important role that the colonies played in France’s mercantilist ambitions, no one would have missed the implications of the allusion to the Roman Empire in the text of the Edict itself.

In fact we can only approve of the Romans, those wise *Politiques*, who gave the law to the whole world and reigned throughout the universe more surely by the Wisdom and the justice of their Government, than by the terror of their arms, having accorded compensation to fathers who gave children to the State, and furnished Colonies to the Empire, to spread throughout the world the grandeur of their name, their glory and the reputation of their arms.20

To the degree that the ideological legitimacy of Colbert’s pronatalist policy relied on a reference to classical Rome, then, the mercantilist theme of population tended to portray the “children of the state” as units of force whose contribution to the greatness of the Kingdom was understood most directly in terms of their deployment to the colonies.21

The relationship of the mercantilist theme of population to the classical ideal of collective belligerence is not as straightforward as it at first appears, however. The complications emerge when one considers the pre-history of the mercantilist idea of population in civic humanistic evocations of the greatness of classical Rome.22 When Machiavelli penned his famous axiom “soldiers, not gold, make victories,” he not only advanced the republican position that native combatants were superior to the mercenaries, he expressed in a particularly clear way the martial imagery that always lay beneath

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19 Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, Ms. 674 (Le Camus Papers), fol. 380. “Mémoire sure l’edit des mariages.”
21 Perhaps we can say that this effort to legitimize commerce in belligerent terms corresponded with Colbert’s effort to attract the nobility – the order of the sword – to commerce. In the colonies, the prohibition on nobles engaging in commerce was lifted during Colbert’s tenure.
precise equations of strength with the number of inhabitants.\textsuperscript{23} It followed from
Machiavelli’s identification of political virtue with universal military participation that
the strength of a city consisted in the number of armed citizens it could marshal. “It is
necessary to employ all possible means to augment the Republic,” he wrote, “for a city
will never become powerful without an extreme population.” The classic example of this
maxim was Rome, which, “having grown its population, could put 290,000 men under
arms, where Sparta and Athens never passed 20,000.”\textsuperscript{24} According to the republican
political ideal of the armed-citizenry, people counted, literally, as units of military force.

Classical republicans were not the only authors to praise the “numerous and well-
armed” citizens of Rome.\textsuperscript{25} However, because the first mercantilist arguments for
population emerged in more or less conscious repudiation of Machiavellian politics
during the French Wars of Religion,\textsuperscript{26} it is important to consider the relationship of the
ideal of collective belligerence with the specifically republican imagery of the citizen-
soldier. Machiavelli believed that republics would be more populous than other polities,
for marriage is “freer and more attractive” when people know that “by means of their
abilities they can become prominent men.”\textsuperscript{27} But if liberty was a condition of population
growth, it also possessed connotations of political ambition and turbulence with which a
republic would have to cope. This was because Machiavelli understood liberty in terms

\textsuperscript{23} For Machiavelli’s preference of native militias over hired mercenaries, see The Prince, Chapters 12 and
13. My understanding of the centrality of the idea of the citizen militia to the classical republicanism of
Machiavelli and his contemporaries in the Italian Renaissance depends greatly on the analysis advanced by
\textsuperscript{24} Machiavelli quoted in Jean Thevenet. Les Idées Economiques d’un Homme d’Etat dans la Florence des
\textsuperscript{25} See note 28 for the full quote.
\textsuperscript{26} For a general description of the relationship between the new “economic nationalism” and the anti-
Machiavellian politics of the period of the Wars of Religion, see Denis Crouzet, Les Guerriers de Dieu
(Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 1990), 596-8.
\textsuperscript{27} Machiavelli, Discourses on the First Decade of Titus Livius in Allen Gilbert, translator, Machiavelli: The
of political participation in the life of the republic, and conceived of political participation most fundamentally in terms of the duty to defend the city in an armed militia. The military aspect of republican virtue was thus a double-edged sword. Consonant with liberty and ambition, the armed citizenry necessarily implied civil turbulence. On the other hand, military discipline, associated by Machiavelli with the stoic simplicity of the agrarian life, also acted to palliate the problems created by an empowered citizenry. The moral virtue of the agrarian family facilitated the military discipline necessary for civic order, and provided the numbers necessary to defend the republic against foreign invasion.\footnote{Machiavelli explains the military virtue of rural people as follows: “It is better to select those from the country [for military service], since they are men used to hardship, raised amidst toils, accustomed to being in the sun, fleeing the shade, knowing how to work with a tool, carrying a load, and being without astuteness or malice.” Machiavelli, \textit{Art of War}, translated by Christopher Lynch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 22. This conception of the stoic virtue of agrarian life also informed Justus Lupsius’ conception of the “perfect soldier,” and Pierre Charron’s advice on the recruitment of soldiers in his \textit{Traicté de la sagesse} (1601). See Joel Cornette, \textit{Le roi de guerre: Essai sur la souveraineté dans la France du Grand Siècle} (Paris: Payot, 1993), 51-53.} To choose the Roman road of a large, armed population, was thus to elect the lesser of two evils.

Hence, if Rome had planned to take away the causes of riot, it would have taken away the causes of growth. [...] So then, if you try to make a people so numerous and so well-armed that it can produce a great empire, you make it such that you cannot manage it as you wish. If you keep it either small or unarmed, so that you can manage it, when you gain your territory you cannot hold it.\footnote{Machiavelli, \textit{Discourses}, 209.}

For Machiavelli, then, fecundity, belligerence, and civic strife went hand in hand: one could not unite a people in the struggle against foreign enemies without, to some degree, planting the causes of tumult at home.

The most notable French author to articulate a political economy in conversation with the Italian civic humanists was Jean Bodin. Bodin, writing in the context of the Wars of Religion, was attracted to the idea that a polity could avoid civil war by imitating...
the Roman practice of “forging or searching out enemies … for the health of the Republic.”

Provided that it was carried out outside of the Kingdom, Bodin saw war as a “purgative medicine” capable of ridding the body politic of “cheats and vagabonds.”

Like Machiavelli, moreover, Bodin recognized that, in the context of the ancient Rome, this translation of belligerence into a domestic political virtue depended on the concept of the armed citizenry. The mixture of civilian and military capacities in ancient Rome was appropriate to “a war-like and conquering people,” he writes. However, and here he departs from Machiavelli, Bodin adds that “the wisest Politiques separated the military art from other vocations, for it was almost impossible to arm all the subjects of a republic, and still maintain them in obedience to the laws of the magistrates.”

Here Bodin hits on Machiavelli’s paradox—that the causes of power are also the seeds of trouble—but escapes it by denying that the unification of a kingdom in struggle against foreign powers implies the republican ideal of the armed citizenry. Thus, while Bodin agreed with the Florentine statesman that “there is neither wealth nor strength but from men,” there was no longer any question of a conflict between soldiers and wealth as the measurement of strength.

“The multitude of citizens always prevents seditions and factions,” he maintains, “especially as there are many between the poor and the rich, the good and the bad, the sane and the insane.”

The force of the King’s subjects, shorn of its exclusive relationship to martial virtue, was now a source of political harmony.

Bodin’s reconciliation of prosperity and strength is an early example of a selective appropriation of the classical-military theme of population that involved a deliberate

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31 Ibid., Book V, 139-40.
32 Ibid., p. 157.
33 Bodin, Les Six Livres, Book V, 64.
substitution of wealth for soldiers as the essential index of strength. In his 1576
Discourse Against Machiavelli, for example, the Protestant critic of everything Italian,
Innocent Gentillet, dismantled the Florentine statesman’s infamous preference for
soldiers over gold. In a passage dedicated to Machiavelli’s assertion that the way to keep
the people virtuous is to keep them poor, Gentillet responds that, in fact, “the grandeur
and the strength of kingdoms consists in the number of their subjects.” Recognizing the
affinity between this maxim and Machiavelli’s own equation of native soldiers with
strength, however, the author rebuts the ideal of agrarian, stoic privation that Machiavelli
believed would produce virtuous citizen-soldiers. “What then,” he responds, “should the
King be poor? Not at all, but on the contrary he should be very rich and opulent, for
otherwise he will be feeble, and unable to face his enemies. But the wealth and treasures
must be in the purses and in the houses of his subjects.”34  In this critique of
Machiavelli’s ideal martial virtue we have what can fairly be called a mercantilist theme
of population. In essence, population is what separates mercantilism from Spanish
bullionism – money is the key to strength not when it’s lying in the King’s war chest, but
when it animates the industry, the agriculture, and ultimately the reproduction of the
King’s subjects. French mercantilism appropriated an existing equation of population
with belligerence for largely political reasons, replacing the idea that the King’s subjects
would literally fight with the idea of their vigorous activity in an external “war of money
between nations.”

The ideals of mutual defense, agricultural virtue, and martial discipline
associated with the republican citizen-soldier remain latent in the mercantilist theme of

34Innocent Gentillet [1576], Discours contre Machiavel, edited by A. D'Andrea and P. D. Stewart (Firenze:
population even during the reign of Louis XIV. In his *Traité de la politique de France* (1669), for example, Paul Hay du Chastelet asserts that “a people that isn’t armed falls into baseness” and that, in the national temperament of the French, “there is always some moderate agitation, [some] clashing of arms that produces an effect similar to that of the wind on the sea.”

At the moment that he uses the imagery of belligerence and tumult to describe the natural vigor of the French, however, Hay du Chastelet is also obliged to disavow the republican legacy of this position. Of course I’m not saying that we should “distribute arms indifferently to the King’s subjects,” he writes, for then “one should not know the difference between a Bourgeois and a Gentleman, between a soldier and a laborer.” Thus, as Hay du Chastelet’s use of the metaphor of the ocean wind to describe the “agitation” of the French suggests, the martial vigor of the people should be channeled into an *external* contest of trade and money, a struggle that requires farmers, artisans, and merchants as much as it demands soldiers. “The fundamental wealth of a Republic is the great number of subjects,” he writes, “for it is men who cultivate the land, who manufacture, who exercise commerce, who go to war, who people the colonies, and, in a word, who attract money.”

This reversal of Machiavelli’s equation of soldiers and gold makes it clear that the political legacy of the citizen-soldier continued to haunt French political economy even a century after Bodin had rejected it as the basic element of a belligerent population. Despite mercantilism’s attempt to substitute one quantifiable – money – for the arithmetical unit of the citizen-soldier, the politics of numerical

35 Paul Hay du Chastelet, *Traité de la politique de France* (Cologne, 1669), 177, 182.
36 Ibid., 183.
37 Ibid., 133.
grandeur would never lose the implications of collective belligerence that accompanied the classical ideal of the armed citizenry.\(^{38}\)

From the perspective of Vauban’s entry into this debate, it is important to note that the exile of the theme of the citizen-soldier contributed to an enormous gap between the statistical culture of French administration in the colonies and in the motherland. In New France and the West Indian islands, where the “soldier-inhabitant” was a concrete reality, the censuses doubled as military reviews. They were primarily concerned with the number of people, the compact distribution of land for purposes of security and political coherence, and, frequently, with the amount of firearms and ammunition for the defense of the settlements.\(^{39}\) Beginning with the tenure of Colbert, the nominative census was conducted annually, and, after 1686, it conformed to the rigorous standards of Vauban’s *Easy and General Method for doing a Census*.\(^{40}\) It is likely because the colonial census was concerned primarily with military defense and population growth, rather than with taxation, that Vauban’s *Method* found such an easy reception in the colonial sphere.

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\(^{38}\) Although there is evidence that Colbert believed population to be a measure of the prosperity of a region, his formulations of the equation between maritime commerce and the greatness of kingdoms are much more definitive. In the *Memorandum on Trade*, for example, he wrote that “that only the abundance of money in a State makes the difference in its greatness and power.” Arguably, the elision between naval and merchant vessels in Colbert’s mercantilism replaced the admixture of civilian and military capacities that had informed the classical-military theme of population. “The almost infinite increase in the number of [French] ships will multiply to the same degree the greatness and power of the State.”

\(^{39}\) I treat this subject at length in Chapter Two of my forthcoming Ph. D. Dissertation. Here is one example of a summary of the census data for Canada in 1681: “9710 personnes de tous ages et sexes; 1810 fusils; 6936 Bestes a cornes; 78 chevaux; 600 moutons et brebis; 24497 arpens de terre en valeur.” DPPC G1 460, fol. 153, “Recensement du Canada fait par M. du Chesneau le 14. Novembre 1681.”

\(^{40}\) The Secretary of the Navy Seignelay forwarded Vauban’s *Method* to Canada and to the West Indian colonies in 1686. From that point on, the majority of the censuses sent France from the colonies were organized as spreadsheet tables of comparative data – the telltale sign that Vauban’s instructions were being followed. Although he was also in charge of several French Generalities by virtue of his status as a Secretary of State, Seignelay did not signal any intention to forward Vauban’s method to the Intendants, as the text of the Méthode itself suggested. Dechêne, *La correspondance*, 13.
In France, by contrast, no nominative census was attempted until the institution of the capitation tax in 1695—and this was an abject failure. Although Colbert was in some respects an enthusiast for numerical information, he was remarkably tentative when it came to any kind of official endorsement of the enumeration of the King’s subjects. But if the success of the colonial census may be attributed, in some degree, to the integration of military and civilian affairs, is it reasonable to blame the relative spottiness of royal statistical efforts in France on the extraction of the ideal of the citizen-soldier from the mercantilist theme of population? This, I maintain, is precisely the position that Vauban arrived at by the end of the 1690’s. As a result of his bitter disappointment at the monarchy’s response to the general crisis of the mid-1690’s, and of his simultaneous research into the colonial settlements of “soldier-inhabitants,” Vauban began to explore the mixture of civilian and military capacities that Bodin had been so careful to excise from his admiration of the Romans. Let us examine each of these developments in turn.

The Capitation and The Moral-Economy of Mutual Defense.

The institution of the Capitation Tax in 1695 brought the classical equation of political membership with military service back into the center of French military discourse. As a fiscal abstraction, of course, the universal obligation to contribute to the

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41 In a chapter of my forthcoming Ph. D. Dissertation, The Politics of Population under Louis XIV, I describe the culture of statistical dissimulation under Colbert as one of “administrative curiosity.” Colbert frequently tried to disguise his statistical inquiries beneath the veil of unofficial humanistic curiosity. In the 1682 census of French Huguenots and Catholics, for example, he instructed the Intendants to "make it seem that you have no other aim but to satisfy your curiosity, and to gain a perfect knowledge of the detail of your department." In the much-vaunted “census” of 1664, Colbert instructed the commissaires départis dans les provinces that the instruction contained “many things that pertain more to curiosity than to [the Commissaires’] official duties.” Letter of Colbert to Chancellor Pierre Séguier, 17 March 1664, published in Vladimir Malov, “Letters from Colbert to Séguier in the Dubrovski collection in the St. Petersburg State Library” Srednie Veka (Russian) 56 (1993): 191 – 205 The instruction itself subsumed Colbert’s requests for quantitative data on the provincial institutions within the narrative form of the humanistic geographies of the period.
defense of the state already underlay impositions such as the *taille*. It was upon this principle, for example, that the wholesale exemption of the order of the sword from the *taille personnelle* was justified. During the general crisis of the mid-1690’s, however, some men within the military apparatus began to feel that the logic of universal military service should invest fiscal policy more literally than it had in the past. This group, which included Vauban and the Marquis de Chamlay, associated the principles of universality and proportionality that originally inspired the head-tax with a specifically military ethos of mutual defense. “All the members of the state contributing equally to this tax,” reads an unsigned memorandum in Chamlay’s papers,

> they will not be burdened individually, as occurs when the parts fall successively on a small number of people, there being in this a perfect conformity between a Civil Corps, and a military one, which is to say an army that, as invincible as it is in itself, is easily defeated if it is attacked separately in several corps.\(^42\)

The capitation tax, with its allusion to the Roman fiscal doctrine *quot capita, tot census*, brought the ancient equivalence between fiscal and military contribution to bear on modern French taxation. This allowed military administrators to extend a quantitative ethos that was normally limited to the management of professional troops to the broader problem of fiscal proportionality and, by extension, to the question of the management of the economic sources of revenue.

The Marquis de Chamlay’s guiding role in the institution of the capitation tax shows that the general crisis of 1693-4 created an opening for military men to enter the debate on the fiscal impasse. The combined agrarian and military nature of the crisis lent

\(^{42}\) Ibid

\(^{43}\) Boislisle, Arthur de. *Mémoires de Saint-Simon* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1879), Vol 2, appendix IV, “La capitation en 1695”: 458-9. The Capitation was instituted by the Emperor Augustus along with his revitalization of the census. This may have been part of his appeal the republican values, especially to the notion that military service was en equal obligation of each citizen.
itself to the expertise of a Maréchal de logis familiar with the problems of supplying and billeting troops in the field. As Chamlay explained in a revealingly titled “Memorandum on how to get money when there is none,” the inability of the fiscal machinery to supply the funds for war meant that, in this crisis, taxation should be considered a direct problem of military supply. The series of proposals advanced by Chamlay in this memorandum illustrate the dependence of his understanding of fiscal proportionality on the idea of universal military contribution. The first idea was that the King should take a certain percentage, a twentieth, for example, from the goods of each particular, “as they do in Holland and England.” This was basically the capitation proposal in germ form: that is, a proportional tax on wealth that would fall on each person, and would thus require a nominative census to verify individual revenue. The second proposal was to “take from each particular, ecclesiastic and laic, who possesses a fief, a sum to support a soldier for each 1000 l[ivres] or 2000 l[ivres] of rent.” The equivalence of fiscal and military contribution implied in this proposal is underscored in Chamlay’s third means of getting money, which actually emerges after he switches topics from taxation to recruitment. “The invention of establishing a militia,” he writes, “with the stipulation that those who don’t want to serve, can free themselves of the obligation with a certain sum, is very good, and is more liable than any other means to promptly reestablish the troops.”

Chamlay’s revival of the idea of a universal militia highlights the ideological valence of tax schemes such as the capitation. By pegging the amount of individual contribution to the sum required to support a single soldier, he founded the legitimacy of the capitation

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44 Ibid.
tax squarely on the moral economy of mutual defense. People will voluntarily\textsuperscript{45} pay their taxes, Chamlay believed, when they understand their contribution as a substitute for the universal and inherently equitable obligation to run to the defense of the state.\textsuperscript{46}

The circumstances surrounding the census of 1694 reveal the political stakes of the encroachment of certain members of the military apparatus on the financial administration of the Controller-General. For Chamlay and Vauban, whose proposals for the Capitation tax were substantially the same, the fate of the reform depended vitally on the successful institution of a census of the Kingdom. Because their proposals envisioned a strictly proportional imposition on individual revenue, they required a nominative enumeration to identify the income of each contributor. In a personal interview, however, Pontchartrain rejected Chamlay’s revenue-based imposition on the grounds that “[the capitation] would have to forced and general on all the subjects, even on women, children, servants, \textit{taillables}, and military men,” and that for such an imposition “it would require an infinite amount of time to do exactly the enumeration of the people.”\textsuperscript{47} The difficulty of achieving a census such as this was an important factor in the defeat of proposals such as Chamlay’s and Vauban’s. The capitation that was actually instituted

\begin{footnotes}
\item[	extsuperscript{45}] Chamlay was quite concerned that the capitation should cut a middle course between “absolute force, which can be odious, and which can provoke rebellious spirits [cabrer les esprits],” and “pure voluntarism, which would throw them into formal indecision.” His proposal was designed to find “the middle between the two, which should be mixed, which is to say that it appears to the public a complete liberty, and nevertheless it cannot ultimately fail to contribute.” A.M.G. A1 2469, Réflexions sur la manière proposée cy dessus, comme la seule, don’t on presume qu’on puisse se servir pour establir la Capitation.
\item[	extsuperscript{46}] In fact, the Capitation proposal that Chamlay eventually defended in front of the Controller-General Pontchartrain was guided by the principle of proportionality rather than by that of equality. As the above-cited anonymous memorandum comparing the Civil Corps to a military body suggests, however, the notion of “all the members of the state contributing equally” to defense was not incompatible with a strict notion of proportional contribution. Perhaps the concept that best describes this elision between equality and proportionality is “equity.”
\item[	extsuperscript{47}] A.M.G. , A1 2469, pièce 54: [Objections and responses to Chamlay’s proposal for the Capitation Tax. This is Chamlay’s transcript of a meeting he had just had with Pontchartrain.]
\end{footnotes}
was based not on real revenue, but on the twenty-two “classes” of people grouped according to their “faculties.”

In light of this disagreement about the viability of a nominative enumeration, the fate of the census of 1694 takes on a distinctly political aspect. Although Pontchartrain agreed to use the fiscal apparatus to carry out a census of the Kingdom in 1694, it is arguable that his instruction to the Intendants on this matter doomed it to failure. On the one hand, he presented them with a rigorous census form that was most likely adapted from Vauban’s 1686 *Méthode*. The instruction required the Intendants to achieve a true head-count, separating men, women and children, valets, servants, and beggars. On the other hand, Pontchartrain gave the Intendants the option of substitution some existing enumeration for this time-consuming execution of a true head count. The result was predictable. As one colleague of Chamlay’s complained, only half of the censuses had been received, and those that arrived were, “by the testimony of the Intendants themselves, so inexact and so unfaithful ... that one can derive no utility from them.”

The lesson, claims the anonymous author, is not so much that such a census is undesirable, but rather that modern France does not possess the discipline and

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49 In a co-authored piece on statistics during the reign of Louis XIV, Eric Vilquin and Jacques Dupâquier engaged in an amicable dispute over whether Pontchartrain’s circular was indebted to Vauban or to an official tradition of nominative census-taking in the colonies. Given that the colonial censuses were clearly done according to Vauban’s method after Seignelay forwarded it to colonial administrators in 1687, it seems to me that this is a largely a false controversy. Either way, it was Vauban’s method, and, given his involvement in the debate concerning the capitation, it is probable that it would have been recognized as such. Dupâquier, Jacques and Vilquin, Eric. “Le Pouvoir royale et la statistique démographique” in *Pour une histoire de la statistique* (Paris: INSEE, 1976).

50 This part of the instruction is reproduced in Vilquin, “Vauban inventeur,” 229.

51 A.M.G. A1 2469, pièce 56: *Mémoire touchant une nouvelle forme que l’on pourroit donner au recouvrement de la Capitation*.
institutional capability of classical Rome. “Under the Roman Empire,” the memorandum explains

where the cens, or enumeration, was so well established that it was regarded as a certain rule for both personal and real forms of taxation, it’s true that the punishments were very severe against those who failed to supply sincere declarations, being nothing less that the loss of one’s goods, the loss of the rights of citizenship and even of one’s liberty… The impossibility of achieving, at least in a short time, reliable enumerations [thus] compels us to search out other means of creating forms of taxation that are certain and easy to recover.52

As this citation makes clear, the issue of the census brought into focus the classical referent of the capitation tax. Instituted by the Emperor Augustus in concert with the revitalization of the census, the Roman capitation characterized the early Empire’s effort to claim the martial legacy of republican virtue. For Chamlay, and, as we shall see, for Vauban, the capitation brought the classical ideal of the militia into relief. If the capitation failed due the lack of “Roman” discipline in French institutions, perhaps the answer to the Kingdom’s fiscal problems lay in the inherent proportionality of the universal obligation to contribute to defense.

In the wake of his disappointment with the outcome of the capitation tax, Vauban devoted himself to understanding and overcoming the unwillingness of the financial administration to achieve a census of population. In 1697, he wrote a memorandum on the “reorganization of the army” that argued for the institution of the census in a circumstance that avoided the fiscal machinery entirely. The section of the project that deals with conscription advances the census not simply as a technique to be deployed by existing institutions, but as a means of creating an entirely new layer of royal administration. The institution of the census through a system of “cantons” that would

52 Ibid.
roughly overlap with the existing parish structure had implications that extended well beyond the immediate issue of recruitment. It was the template, for example, for the “Parish Captains” that Vauban entrusted with the oversight of the census in the Dîme Royale. Because it is confined to the issue of the extraction of military manpower from civilian families, however, Vauban’s proposal on recruitment is a particularly clear example of the way in which the moral economy of mutual defense invests the classical equation of population with strength.

The memorandum on the reorganization of the army begins by suggesting that, in addition to reforming France’s existing regular troops, the King should apply himself to “the establishment of a new militia” once the arrival of peace made such a reform practical. Unfortunately, Vauban does not elaborate on this more thoroughgoing military reform, but his proposal for the replenishment of existing regiments hinges on an acute awareness of the relationship between the prosperity of families and military force. Evoking the relationship between marriage and desertion that he would later cite in his colonial correspondence, Vauban claimed that the “frequent conscription of the men most capable of supporting their families and providing their subsistence with the work of their hands” was to blame for the “loss of a considerable part of the best subjects of the

53 Vauban, Dîme Royale, 229. “Pour cet effet, il me paroit que le meilleur qu’on puisse mettre en usage, est celuy de diviser tout le Peuple par Décuries comme les Chinois, ou par Compagnies comme nos Régimens; et de créer des Capitaines de Paroisses pourvus du Roy…”

54 In his analysis of this memorandum, Jean Chagniot argues that Vauban may have been the inventor of the French militia, which was instituted in 1689. Vauban sent a preliminary version of the 1697 “reformation of the army” to the Secretary of State for War in 1691. Although the institution of the militia predates this initial memorandum, Chagniot points out that the recruits were not levied by lottery, as per Vauban’s method, until December of 1692. Jean Chagniot, “L’encadrement et la formation de l’armée d’après Vauban,” in Catherine Brisac and Nicolas Faucherre, eds., Vauban réformateur (Paris: Association Vauban, 1985), 28-9.
In direct contradiction of the current trend in French military administration, however, Vauban claims that prohibiting the marriage of soldiers is not the answer to the problem of desertion. Indeed, although Vauban claimed not to completely approve of the marriage of soldiers on moral grounds, he advanced several arguments why the practice would benefit both the state and the families themselves. For one, married soldiers are “infinitely more docile,” for their children back home are “so many hostages who ensure the fidelity of their fathers.” Contrary to the common belief, moreover, the wives of soldiers are neither a burden nor a distraction, Vauban claimed. In fact, in his experience, the women who traveled to meet their husbands in their winter quarters helped them, “for they worked even on the largest projects, and the return of their husbands, who always brought them a little something, contributed no small bit to the harmony of the couple’s relationship [la bonne intelligence du ménage.]” Thus, while Vauban did not argue for “indifferently” arming the King’s subjects, he was clearly interested in harvesting the political and economic benefits of the mixture of civilian and military capacities.

Legitimating the marriage of soldiers permitted Vauban to apply the quantitative ethos of military administration to the general government of families. In order to establish order and proportionality in the recruitment of troops, Vauban writes, the King needs to establish a general census of the households of the Kingdom. The census would

56 A 1686 ordinance severely limited the ability soldiers to marry. Soldiers had to receive a special dispensation from their colonels to marry, certain classes were prohibited from marrying altogether, and others lost their seniority on the date that they were wed. See André Corvisier, L’armée française de la fin du XVII siècle au ministère de Choiseul, vol. 15 of Publications de la faculté des lettres et sciences humaines de Paris, série “recherches” (PUF: Paris, 1964), 758.
57 Ibid, 342.
58 Ibid, 341.
permit the monarchy to establish “cantons” of 100 families eligible for military service, new administrative units that would correspond roughly to the existing parish structure. These new cantons were to be real institutions that would extend the rationality and discipline of the military cadre to the governance of families at the parish level. To begin with, the census rolls would permit military commissioners to take into consideration the needs of individual families as they conscripted troops from the localities. Among the regulations prescribed by Vauban were instructions “not to enlist new husbands the first year of their marriage, in imitation of the Romans,” to avoid levying brothers in the same year, and to take unmarried “garçons” before husbands.⁵⁹ Paradoxically, then, the effect of Vauban’s defense of the concept of the married soldier was to establish procedures that would minimize the military burden on reproduction by avoiding the recruitment of married men. The point, however, seem to be this: in times of war, conscription will extend to married men; in order to rationalize this process, we must, in a sense, enlist the entire population in the regimental apparatus of the canton system.

Vauban intended the canton system to cement the continuity between the ethic of voluntary mutual defense at the local level and the practice of administrative quantification more generally. In order to guarantee the proportionality of the military levies, he envisioned a kind of local social security system by which the canton would compensate families for the burden of sending a member to the front. Once the lottery was done and the conscripts chosen, “the other boys of the canton will embrace and gift them on that day, and all the households of the canton, exempt and otherwise, without exception, will give them a gift of five sous each as a gratification.”⁶₀ Not only would

⁵⁹ Ibid, 275.
⁶₀ Ibid, 278.
they be supported at the expense of the canton as they prepared to march, the families of the recruits could be exempted from a quarter of their taille while their son is in service, “considering that they will deprived of their services during this time.”

As in Chamlay’s early memorandum on the capitation tax, then, the regimentation of the civilian population would preserve the goodwill of the inhabitants by guaranteeing the equity and universality of the contribution toward defense. “Because war is made for the defense of the state,” explained Vauban “all the subjects, as members of it, are obliged to contribute to its defense.”

When the families of recruits witnessed everyone—even the ecclesiastics and noblemen exempt from recruitment—counted by the census and substituting the “gratification” for direct military service, they would become better subjects. The moral economy of mutual defense would ensure the voluntary contribution of families, the loyalty and productivity of their troops, and the optimal increase in the number of inhabitants.

After the experience of the capitation tax, then, Vauban theorized the census in a way that, avoiding finances altogether, articulated an immediate relationship between military virtue and the unity and fecundity of the population. This was a brief hiatus, however. In 1698-1699, Vauban applied the institutional reform that he had worked out in the specialized context of conscription to his own effort to achieve fiscal proportionality—the Dîme Royale. This project was much more than a recipe for fiscal efficiency. Animated by the principles that the number of inhabitants was the source of wealth, and that this number was determined by the vitality of agriculture, the Dîme

61 Ibid, 279.
63 Vauban calculated the optimal population of France by multiplying the amount of arable land by the number of inhabitants that a piece of land of average fertility could support. At the ration of 7-800 people
Royale was as much about reestablishing the moral and economic vitality of the agrarian parish as it was about increasing the King’s revenue. Toward this end, Vauban included a revised version of his 1686 census method as a chapter in his reform proposal. The comparison of these two versions of the argument for the “Utility of the Census” reveals that Vauban’s disappointment at the census of 1694 had directed his attention toward the moral conditions of quantification in the military context.

The major revision of the new version of Vauban’s census method was the institution of “Parish Captains” as a new layer of local officialdom responsible for census of families. This addition, which was clearly modeled on the earlier “canton” system, was Vauban’s response to the debacle of the capitation tax.\textsuperscript{64} Whereas he had once been convinced of the “ease” of transferring his census method from its home on the military frontier to the “oeconomy” of the internal regions,\textsuperscript{65} the \textit{Dîme Royale} acknowledged the “difficulty that we have had in doing the census in certain provinces.”\textsuperscript{66} In order to achieve an annual, nominative census of the people and their qualities, then, it would be necessary to “divide the people by Décuries like the Chinese, or by Companies like our Regiments; and to create Parish Captains who will have beneath them as many Lieutenants as there are multiples of fifty houses” in the district.\textsuperscript{67} In case the reader missed the critical valence of this establishment of the census by military officers,

\footnotesize{per liue, with approximately 30,000 “lieues quarrées” in the Kingdom, France should have been able to support 21-24 million people—several million in excess of his estimate of the current population. Vauban, \textit{Dîme Royale}, 69-70.  
\textsuperscript{64} I am representing Vauban’s view here, not my own. Despite his original hopes for the 1695 project, the capitation tax makes Vauban’s list of fiscal abuses in the \textit{Dîme Royale}. Vauban, \textit{Dîme Royale}, 58.  
\textsuperscript{65} Vauban, \textit{Méthode}, 254. Although the Méthode makes it clear that the census is primarily useful “for all those who have command over the people, and notably for the Governors of Frontier Places,” it also suggests that “All this knowledge is are … necessary for the oeconomy of the country which should be the principle application of the Intendants.”  
\textsuperscript{66} Vauban, \textit{Dîme Royale}, marginal note, 230.  
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid, 229.}
Vauban adds a marginal note specifying the superiority of military administrators over the financial officialdom. The ordinary officers are “not naturally disposed” to this task, he claims, “be it because they lack the Divisions of the People by Companies, or because they have no taste for jobs that profit them nothing.” Military men, by contrast, have an inherent understanding of the proper relationship between the growth of the people and the institutional proportionality of the regimental structure. “This creation of Officers or Commissioners for the census of the people,” he explains

is no more extraordinary than that of the Commissioners of War; for the King has no less interest in the conservation and good conduct of his people, who furnish and pay the Men of War, than those same Men of War, who, as necessary as they are for the service of the State, are only a small part of these people.  

In other words, whereas the men of finances are prone to corruption and favoritism, men of war, because they understand that military power comes directly from the people, are naturally suited to supervise the census and, by implication, to govern according to the principle of fiscal proportionality. The institution of the census by “Parish Captains” was simply a way of eliminating the middleman in the transfer of force from its source in the agrarian family to its sole legitimate fiscal end—the defense of the state.

Vauban’s notion of the regimentation of the parish structure illustrates the vital importance of the imagery of the militia to his articulation of a quantitative analysis of population. In the “canton” system of conscription, the married soldier had acted as a

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68 Ibid.
69 Under the “Maximes fondamentales de ce Systéme,” Vauban includes the following: “Que tous les Sujets d’un Etat ont besoin de sa Protection,” and that “le Prince, Chef et Souverain de cet Etat ne peut donner cette protection, si ses Sujets ne luy en fournisissent.” Ibid, 73.
70 I hesitate to use the word “population” in this sense – as an object of analysis – when writing about a period in which the term was not used as a substantive. In a sense, it is precisely the emergence of a category of “population” that I am trying to explain. To be more precise, I would say that the political imagery of the militia was important to Vauban’s articulation of a quantitative analysis of the primarily agrarian and reproductive conditions of the growth or decrease of the number of inhabitants. For purposes
kind of ideal subject, encapsulating in his combination of family loyalty and martial
discipline the moral conditions of military-style quantification at the level of the parish.
In the *Dîme Royale*, the Parish Captain serves this same liminal function. Selected from
among local *Seigneurs*, and supported by the community itself, the Parish Captains acted
as a stand-in for the concept of the universal enlistment of the civilian population. This is
the meaning of Vauban’s above-cited comment that, although the men of war are
disinterested and very necessary for the service of the state, they “are only a small part of
the people.” The superior loyalty and quality of service provided by men of war should
no longer be confined to professional military apparatus, he is saying, but should be
generalized by means of the institution of the military census. Even the most “paltry”
battalions are subject to continual reviews and inspections, Vauban explains, and yet “this
battalion is only destined to very limited tasks, and forms but a small part of the People of
which this great Kingdom is composed, and of which one never does the review.” The
census, conflated in this manner with the military review, solidifies the quantitative
precision of the equation of population with force. The people deserve “review” even
more than the Battalion, “for it’s by it and from it that [the Kingdom] derives all of its
Greatness, its Wealth, and its consideration; and it’s by its people that the Kingdom
becomes feared and respected by its neighbors.” The Parish Captain, by guaranteeing
the natural proportionality between the conservation of the people and the optimization of
military force, gave institutional substance to the notion of collective belligerence.

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of economy, however, I prefer to stick with “population” and hope that my analysis of the political and
epistemological obstacles to the enumeration of families in this period is sufficient warning of the
anachronistic dangers of the vocabulary of demography.

71 Ibid, 244.
The primordial equation of objects of enumeration with units of military force did not exclude the question of wealth, but it did privilege agriculture over precious metals as the moral and strategic foundation of power. It is true that Vauban claims, consistent with the “mercantilist ideal of complete economic autarky,” that agricultural self-sufficiency allows France to attract money from other countries without letting it leave. Never, however, does he suggest, as Hay du Chastelet had so elegantly put it, that the utility of the large number of people may be summed up, “in a word,” by their ability to “attract money.” To the contrary, Vauban’s understanding of population growth proceeded quite clearly from the moral and material complex of the agrarian family. Once the *menu peuple* are no longer oppressed by the arbitrary levy of taxation, he claims they will marry more readily; they will clothe and nourish themselves better; their children will be more robust and better-raised; they will take better care of their business. Finally, they will work with more strength, when they see that the principal part of the profit will stay with them.

From the perspective of population, the chain of prosperity and power begins with subsistence farming and its immediate manufacturing derivatives.

Now, this identification of the process of population with agriculture does not constitute a critique of mercantile policy in and of itself. For the moment, I would simply like to show how it dovetails with a specifically military understanding of the moral-economy of proportional contribution. The ideal of mutual defense that Vauban had described in his writing on conscription invested the populationist political economy of the *Dîme Royale* as an answer to the moral roots of the country’s agricultural malaise.

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72 Rothkrug, Opposition, 356n; Vauban, *Dîme Royale*, 78: “Now we can say that France possesses this abundance to the supreme degree, when from her surplus she can greatly assist her neighbors, who are obliged to satisfy their needs here, in exchange for their gold or their silver…”


The devastating economic impact of the taille, Vauban had explained, was attributable above all else to the “envy, support, favor, and animosity” that it injected into life of the agrarian parish. Even if a peasant manages to improve his fortune, “he must hide the little ease that he has achieved so well, that his neighbors cannot have the slightest knowledge of it.” The result of this poisoned atmosphere was that farmers were unwilling to invest in agricultural capital for fear of the “jealousy of their neighbors.”

Vauban hoped to combat the roots of economic stagnation at the parish level by promoting “a certain uniformity between subjects that attaches them more strongly to the Prince.” As in Chamlay’s early proposal for the capitation tax, this spirit of voluntarism would be guaranteed, in part, by the strict proportionality of the imposition itself. Unlike the capitation tax, however, the Dîme Royale also provided for the direct, unmediated supervision of the moral-economy of mutual defense at the local level. The Parish Captains’ natural ability to maintain the principle of fairness through the census proceeded directly from their disinterested status as military men. In an echo of the proposal on conscription, Vauban stipulated that the Captains would be supported by “a chicken each year per household,” with these gratifications being shared amongst the Captains and Lieutenants “with the same proportion that is observed in our troops.” As local notables, their job was to translate this moral principle of proportionality into a harmonious and mutually supportive environment in the parish. “They can even be charged with appeasing the quarrels that occur in these fifty houses or households,” Vauban explains, adding that in the future the King “might judge it appropriate to give

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75 Ibid, 105.
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid, 82.
78 Ibid, 230.
them [even] more authority.” It is in this juncture of the census as a vehicle of military proportionality and la censure as a paternalistic mode of moral governance that the fecund roots of Vauban’s populationist thought lies.

It seems clear, then, that Vauban’s obsession with population was not politically neutral, and that it developed into a wholesale critique of the financial administration of the Kingdom over the course of the 1690’s. Much more than a technical tool of fiscal efficiency, his population census was an argument for the superiority of a regimental mode of rationality over the incurable corruption of ordinary financial officers. What is more, it struck at the roots of population decline by advancing the moral economy of mutual defense as the essential condition of the rational governance of the agrarian sources of wealth. Should we suspect that this critique of the fiscal regime also entailed a critique of French mercantile policy? The answer to this question lies in the other major consequence of the exile of the citizen soldier in the mercantilist theme of population. At the same time that Vauban was experimenting with ideas of the militia and the married soldier in France, he was engaged in a decade-long investigation into the status of the peuplement of the French colonies. Although, much to his disappointment, he was never able to visit New France, he discovered in his correspondence with colonial governors a place where the “soldier-inhabitant” was at the center of administrative discourse. This figure permitted him to pursue the possibilities of the application of the strategic mode of rationality to the economic government of families in a more direct way than he had in France itself. More importantly, because it took place in the colonial arena, this research

79 Ibid.
80 Vauban describes his “idée curieuse” concerning the colonies in a letter to Maurepas, January 7, 1699, in Dechêne, La correspondance, 23; the October 1698 letter of Duplessy Faber to Vauban is an excellent example of the prominence of the issue of the marriage of soldiers and the militia in colonial administration: Ibid, 15-21.
encouraged Vauban to clarify the relationship between the classical-military theme of population and his geopolitical critique of the maritime policies of Colbert and his successors.

**Vauban and the Colonial Soldier-Inhabitant.**

Vauban, in his capacity as director of fortifications, was in close correspondence with colonial administrators from the mid-1680’s. From approximately 1685 on, he regularly requested that the colonial governors or engineers that he had recommended send him censuses and other information on the state of the colonies. Such was his expertise on matters of colonial development that Maurepas, the son of the Minister Pontchartrain, consulted him for advice before he became Minister of the Navy in 1699. His contact with the suppressed ideal of the soldier-inhabitant in the colonial context allowed Vauban to clarify the critical potential of his existing interest in population statistics. On one level, the colonial soldier-inhabitant afforded Vauban the possibility of extending the discipline and strategic rationality normally reserved for professional soldiers to a comprehensive institutional reform of a state.\(^1\) On another level, Vauban’s rethinking of the dependent relationship between France and the colonies allowed him to relate his vision of an agrarian war-state with a critique of models of growth dependent upon overseas commerce.

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\(^1\) Jean-François Pernot has shown that Vauban also derived his concept of the war-state from writers on fortification such as Antoine de Ville. The effort to fortify and defend frontier spaces involved Vauban and his fellow military engineers in the rational deployment of labor, both military and civilian, and brought aspects of economic life normally outside of the competence the administration under their direct supervision. For me, the question is how Vauban transformed this specialized competence, limited territorially to the contested frontiers of France, into a general vision for an agrarian, rationalized, fortified state. As I am arguing in this essay, it was Vauban’s thinking on the colonies that brought out the ideological implications of his practice as a military engineer. Jean-François Pernot “Aux origines du concept guerre-État dans la pensée du maréchal de Vauban,” in Vauban, réformateur: Actes du colloque de l’Association Vauban. Paris, 1983: 15-23.
Vauban began his advice to the young Maurepas by evoking their “great shame” that French Canada, which “should have produced fifteen hundred thousand souls” in its 160 years of existence, was “still in its childhood, and cannot subsist by herself and without the aid of Old France.”\textsuperscript{82} His proposal for setting in motion the process of self-population in Canada clearly derives from his extensive experience fortifying and governing frontier territories in France. In essence, his idea is to start from the ground up, using engineers to scope out locations proper for defense as well as for subsistence, and then sending five or six battalions of “soldier-workers” to be the seed inhabitants of these new “peuplades.”\textsuperscript{83} Unlike the regular soldiers in France, the colonists should be allowed to marry, and their wives should have both pay and bread to encourage them to stay in the houses built by the battalion. As soon as these “peuplades” reach the size of 100 to 200 families, they should establish new settlements, “always fortified,” and taking care that the inhabitants “are only occupied with the cultivation of the land, the raising of animals, and, at the most, fishing and hunting.”\textsuperscript{84} This limitation of the settlers to subsistence agriculture had both a strategic and a demographic rationale. On the one hand, compact settlements would increase their collective security from the attacks of the Iroquois or of the English by keeping them close to the fortified town. On the other hand, the soldier-inhabitants would make the entire colony “better managed, better disciplined, and more content than in the past, and will produce two times as many [children].”\textsuperscript{85} The simplicity and reliability of subsistence agriculture thus paralleled the moral discipline of

\textsuperscript{82} Vauban to Maurepas, January 7 1699, in Dechêne, \textit{La correspondance}, 26.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., 27.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid.
military service. The married farmer, gun in hand, was the essential unit of loyal, secure, and fecund colonial settlements.

Vauban’s project for the creation of vital, self-sufficient colonies illustrates more clearly than in any other aspect of his work the relationship between his quantitative method of analysis and the political imaginary of the armed citizenry. Once the criteria of mutual defense, the marriage of soldiers, and subsistence agriculture were in place there was nothing left to impede the progression of the colonial population at the rate of four children per demobilized soldier every twenty-five years. In this short time, he computed, the several thousand inhabitants of New France would multiply to 100 or 120 thousand souls. This calculation of the progression of the population based on the multiple of four children per family is based upon the predictability of a homogenized population engaged in reliable agricultural labor and secure in compact, fortified settlements. The soldier-inhabitant supplied this essential unit of rational government in Vauban’s colonial thought because it referred to the established relationship between agricultural simplicity, populousness, and martial virtue in the classical-military conception of the citizen-soldier. “If there are men proper to the establishment of Colonies,” he wrote,

without a doubt it would be regular troops accustomed to a discipline that renders them naturally obedient. These are for the most part of an age proper to work and to reproduce themselves [produire leurs semblable], easy to keep happy and furthermore battle-hardened [...]. Indeed all of the considerable colonies in the world have been formed by men of war who almost always had their arms in hand in the beginning of their establishments, and when they

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86 The actual calculation is more complex than this: it includes the base growth in the number of soldiers based on the estimation that 2000 would chose to stay in Canada at each five year troop rotation (10,000); the number of children that the marriage of these soldiers will produce (40,000 over 25 years); and the increased fecundity of the existing inhabitants due to the improved discipline of the colony.

87 Ibid.
became inhabitants, served in the garrisons.\textsuperscript{88}

In France, the rational government of professional troops was premised upon their separation from civilian occupations, rendering the military census an inherently specialized affair.\textsuperscript{89} In the colonies, by contrast, the marriage of soldiers legitimized the extension of forms of quantitative rationality appropriate to disciplined troops to the general government of the economic sphere of the family.

How far does this concept of fortified, self-sufficient settlements of married soldiers take us from Colbert’s vision for the American colonies? Not necessarily very far at all. Colbert’s strategy for the initial development of the colonies has been dubbed the “compact colonial policy.” Like Vauban’s plan for peopling the colonies with demobilized battalions from the motherland, Colbert’s plan emphasized the necessity of coherent agricultural settlements both for the purposes of population growth and for mutual defense.\textsuperscript{90} Although he resisted the massive importation of soldier-workers suggested by some of the more ambitious colonial administrators, he did establish incentives to keep demobilized soldiers in New France, including an organized program of feminine immigration.\textsuperscript{91} At least in the early stages, then, Colbert would not have

\textsuperscript{88} Vauban to Maurepas, January 21 1699, Ibid, 38.
\textsuperscript{89} Vauban’s 1686 Easy and General Method for Doing a Census was intended for general use, but still bore the mark of it’s appropriateness to the exceptional situation of the contested military frontiers. For example, the subtitle of Vauban’s section on “The Utility of the Census” was “for all those who have some command over people, and notably for the Governors of Frontier Places.”
\textsuperscript{90} Letter of Colbert to the Intendant of New France, Gaudais, in 1663. Archives Coloniales B1- B2: “The principal thing that needs to be examined for the maintenance and growth of the colonies is to clear the greatest quantity of land possible, and to do it such that the French inhabitants are united in their dwellings, and that they aren’t spread out one from the other by a great distance because not only will the not be able to assist one another in all things concerning agriculture, they will also be exposed to the insults of the savages and particularly of the Iroquois.”
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disapproved of the Intendant of Canada’s promise of planned communities in which the “king will have not only inhabitants, but soldier-inhabitants.”

Beyond the initial stages of development, however, Vauban’s vision for the American colonies could not differ more from the place of the overseas settlements in mercantilism. Whereas for Colbert the settlements of soldier-inhabitants were a temporary step toward establishing the colonies as dependent partners in trade with the Kingdom of France, Vauban hoped that these self-sufficient communities would become, as he put it, “very great monarchies” in their own right. In his letters to Maurepas, Vauban strongly implies that Colbert abandoned the principles of agrarianism, fortification, and population too soon.

The failure of the Canadian Colonies derives from the unnatural effort to harvest before planting; that it was particulars, lacking [les Reins assez forts] the strong sides and the determined will to people the country, but rather interested in their own business, who made the discovery and the first establishments.

Vauban’s equation of the colonies to “a planting of men” evokes the primordial relationship between military force, agriculture, and populousness that we noted in Machiavelli’s concept of the citizen-soldier as the “cause of power.” His use of this agrarian metaphor underscores the permanence of the priority of agriculture over

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92 RAPQ, p. 18.
93 Dechêne, La correspondance, 40. Vauban’s allusion to the prospect of founding “new monarchies” suggests the affinity between his colonial thought and the ambitious projects of the first major Intendant of Canada, Jean Talon (1665-1668 and 1670-1672). Talon, who envisioned the demobilization of regular regiments producing “not just inhabitants, but soldier-inhabitants,” sent Colbert an idea to “found a monarchy or at least a very considerable state” through the massive, planned peopling of the American continent from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. Colbert’s response to the project was to remind Talon that it would “not be prudent to depopulate [his Majesty’s] kingdom as one would have to in order to people Canada” through immigration. Trudel, La Nouvelle-France, 234.
94 Ibid, 38. Elsewhere, Vauban wrote concerning St. Dominique that “Feu Mr Colbert la ruinée par un Impost qu’il y mit mal a propos.” This suggests that he implicated Colbert in the effort to “harvest” the colonies too soon.
95 Ibid, 28.
commerce in Vauban’s vision for the colonies. The strict limitation to agriculture and animal husbandry should last “not just for one year,” he explained, “but for several.” Indeed, the strategic focus on agrarian self-sufficiency renders commerce desirable, but expendable. “With respect to the King’s vessels,” he writes

the more Canada peoples itself the more voyages there will be to make, that is certain. But with respect to the glory of the His Majesty, I see no place in which it should be better placed than in the growth and establishment of these colonies, which in time will become very great monarchies of which he will be reputed the founder. 96

The commercial relationship between France and Canada would emerge in time, but ultimately it is secondary to the establishment of self-sufficient “monarchies.”

The critical valence of Vauban’s elevation of population to the essence of the force of the colonies was not lost on Maurepas. Vauban’s notion of military and agrarian self-sufficiency violated two of the cardinal principles established by Colbert for the relationship between the colonies and the mother country. In the first place, noted Maurepas, the goal of agricultural self-sufficiency was “contrary to the principle that says that the Colonies should always depend on the State.” 97 Not only would the creation of “new monarchies” encourage the rebellious tendencies of the settlers, it defeated the subservient role of the colonies within the grand scheme of the mercantilist project. As Maurepas noted in his response to Vauban’s first letter,

If these soldiers, by marrying in the country, multiply as much as you believe they will, wouldn’t this in some fashion strip this great number of subjects from France which, as you know, is already considerably depopulated because of the War, the famine, and the departure of the Huguenots? 98

96 Ibid, 40.
97 Ibid, 25, 35. Maurepas wrote this in a marginal note on Vauban’s first letter. He reiterated this “principle” in his response to Vauban, where he asserted that “one should always try to keep [the colonies] in dependence by means of the help that they can receive from France.”
98 Ibid, 32.
The creation of populous colonies, in other words, was not an end in itself, such that it would justify a proportional decrease in the population of France. The political and the economic arguments against self-sufficiency converged at this point for Maurepas. We must “try to keep [the colonies] dependent on the aid they can receive from France,” that is, “the merchandise that we bring them, and which takes the place of money that otherwise we would have to take out of the kingdom and give to them.”

Closely following the doctrine established by Colbert, Maurepas saw the initial phase of population as a step toward the creation of commercial outposts and markets for the manufactured goods of France.

Vauban’s response to these objections is a critical juncture in his articulation of the domestic political implications of the colonial ideal of the soldier-inhabitant. Rejecting Maurepas’ assertion that colonial emigration was a zero-sum affair, Vauban strongly implied that the monarchy had a lesson to learn from the reproductive dynamism that the marriage of soldiers would make possible.

The soldiers in France hardly make more families than monks because we do not permit them to marry and because there are many more women in the Kingdom than men. Thus those of our soldiers who remain [in Canada] will match approximately the number that desertion deprives us of and in this manner the Colonies will cost the Kingdom nothing.

The primary argument here is that the soldiers who are deserting in France because they are unable to marry or to take care of their families will not do so in Canada, because the marriage of soldiers was encouraged there. The secondary implication, however, is

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99 Ibid, 35.
100 Vauban to Maurepas, January 21, 1699, in Dechêne, La correspondance, 39.
101 Vauban’s claim that French soldiers were not allowed to marry is corroborated by a 1686 ordinance that severely limited the ability soldiers to marry. Soldiers had to receive a special dispensation from their colonels to marry, certain classes were prohibited from marrying altogether, and others lost their seniority
that, if French soldiers were allowed to marry, their loyalty would increase, as would the population of the Kingdom. As we have seen, Vauban had already made the case for the marriage of soldiers in his 1697 memorandum on “The Reorganization of the Army.” His association of this idea with the colonial “soldier-inhabitant” thus illustrates the degree to which Vauban’s domestic thought on population relied on the identification of the armed inhabitant as an ideal type of subjecthood.

Were it restricted to the issue of colonial development, we might be able to pass off Vauban’s advocacy of colonial self-sufficiency as a matter of emphasis alone. Whereas Colbert wanted to rapidly convert the military-agrarian settlements into trading partners for France, Vauban wanted to make commerce the secondary effect of a permanent focus on population, security, and subsistence. However, the radical significance of Vauban’s break with Colbert’s colonial policy has less to do with the colonies per se than it does with its implications for the geopolitical orientation of the Kingdom of France itself. During the War of the League of Augsburg (1689-1697), Vauban, Chamlay, and others concerned with territorial defense had advanced the idea that the official sponsorship of corsairs could disrupt the shipping of England and Holland while saving France the expense of competing with their superior navies.102 This policy was the maritime corollary of the military architect’s idea of the “pré-carré,” or an impenetrable line of fortifications on the frontier of the Kingdom. In his colonial

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102 On Chamlay’s adherence to this position, see Rothkrug, Opposition, ; Michèle Virol, Vauban, de la gloire du roi au service de l’état (Champ Vallon, 2003), 216-20. This position, which is premised upon the idea that the commerce of enemy nations is “the sinews of war,” has been cited as evidence of Vauban’s “mercantilism.” So be it. But it this is so, then we must reconcile our definition of mercantilism with a political economy that is willing to abandon the security of shipping lanes, and the entire commercial purpose of the colonies, for the defense of the territory of the Kingdom.
correspondance, however, it becomes clear that this strategy also dovetailed with a
general rejection of Colbert’s prioritization of overseas trade as the key to national
prosperity. By rejecting the claim that the colonies must depend on French manufactures,
Vauban was arguing that France itself should all but abandon the goal of maritime
dominance, at least as Colbert had understood it. His rejection of privileged trading
companies, for example, extended beyond the self-interested “particulars” who had
ruined the American colonies. “I abhor the company of the east Indies,” he proclaimed,
for they bring nothing but “baubles” to the Kingdom in exchange for the money that
drain from it. I am sure that some authors would cite this concern for money as proof of
Vauban’s “mercantilism,” but in the context of his geo-political orientation toward
territorial defense it takes on a different aspect. The broader issue for Vauban is the
subordination of overseas commerce and naval dominance to the goals of domestic
population and defense. “Let us value the goods that are grown in our own land,” he
explains,

having little overseas commerce and only enough to support our colonies in the
Antilles, St. Domingue, and Canada. [...] Have some commerce in the Levant, in
barbarie, and on the coast of Guinea, but without a considerable establishment,
more to exercise our navy than with grand plans for Commerce, in order that,
should war arrive, our enemies, who are incomparably stronger than us in distant
lands, will have little to take from us at the same time that we will find a great
deal to take from them by means of piracy.\textsuperscript{103}

This formulation of the commercial relationship between France and the colonies
entirely reversed Colbert’s colonial policy. The colonies were to be natural allies in the
war against France’s maritime enemies, but their success now implied the clear priority
of agricultural self-sufficiency over commercial dominance.

\textsuperscript{103} Dechène, La correspondance, 29.
The self-sufficiency of the American colonies broke the conceptual distinction between the colonial and metropolitan spheres that was inherent in the mercantilist promise of internal pacification through the externalization of belligerence. These territorial outposts of France’s mercantile ambition no longer promised to solve France’s fiscal problems from the outside. They no longer promised to receive her “cheats” and “vagabonds,” transforming them with the “purgative medicine” of war.¹⁰⁴ Now that they were understood as self-sufficient “monarchies,” the agonistic situation of the colonies was conceptually equivalent to the situation of the French monarchy itself. In the context of Vauban’s growing conviction that the financial administration was incapable of dealing with the demands of war, this equivalence of the colonial and the metropolitan spheres reveals the vital subtext of his colonial thought: what worked for the colonial soldier-inhabitant might also work for the King’s subjects. Vauban’s critique of French financial administration was thus inherently related to his agrarian critique of the orientation toward maritime dominance.