

Title: *A comparison of productivity growth and its main factors in the twentieth century for France, the United Kingdom and the United States*

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What distinguishes this study from the numerous other analyses of economic growth and productivity is the fact that we conducted a comparison of France, the United Kingdom and the United States both over the very long run (i.e. since 1890) and over the recent period (i.e. the past 25 years). During the past century, the United States has replaced the United Kingdom as the leading world power and during the past 25 years, productivity growth has posted contrasting patterns across the three countries, in particular due to the unequal development of information and communication technologies.

The past 120 years have been characterised by significant economic growth and productivity gains in the three countries under review and the remarkable catching-up of the United States by France. At present, total factor productivity is very close in all three countries, hourly labour productivity is slightly higher in France than in the United States, and significantly lower in the United Kingdom. Productivity per employee is slightly lower in France than in the United States and considerably lower in the United Kingdom. These mixed performances can be attributed to the varying contributions of capital deepening, the downward trend in working hours and other growth factors, depending on the period under review.