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**NEW WESTERN FAMILIES:  
GENDER DYNAMICS AND PATTERNS OF FILIATION  
IN CONTEMPORARY FRANCE**

*Abstract*

The transformation of families is a social, political and legislative issue in a globalised society. In this context, the aim of this article is to shed light on the characteristics of the 'new families' from a sociological point of view, based on the specific features of the Western context and France in particular. At the same time, we will seek to identify the laws that have accompanied these processes, paying particular attention to the principle of equality.

According to a consensus between historians and demographers, 1960 has been chosen as a pivotal date in the transformation of family structures in this geographical area. In the first part, we will briefly present the pre-1960 family model and the erosion of the gender contract on which it is based. We will then look at the characteristics of two 'new families': blended families based on nuclear families, and families resulting from non-marital medically assisted procreation, often homoparental families, based on the author's own research. In conclusion, we will look at some of the public policies that have accompanied these transformations, as well as the prospects for research in this field at the level of Central Asia, and indeed of global society as a whole.

**Keywords:** sociology of the family, sociology of gender, male breadwinner model, new families, France, blended families, same-sex families.

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**ЖАҢА БАТЫС ОТБАСЫ: ҚАЗІРГІ ФРАНЦИЯДАҒЫ  
ГЕНДЕРДІК ДИНАМИКА ЖӘНЕ ФИЛИАЦИЯЛЫҚ  
ҮЛГІЛЕР**

*Аңдатпа*

Жаһанданған қоғамда отбасылардың трансформациясы әлеуметтік, саяси және заңнамалық мәселеге айналып отыр. Осыған байланысты мақаланың басты мақсаты – батыс елдерінің, әсіресе Франциядағы, «жаңа отбасыларының» пайда болу үрдісін әлеуметтанулық тұрғыдан зерттеу. Сонымен қатар, осы үрдістерге сүйемел болған заңдарды теңдік қағидатының жүзеге асуы тұрғысынан талдау.

Тарихшылар мен демографтардың ортақ пікіріне сай 1960 жыл тиесілі географиялық аймақтағы отбасы трансформациялары тұрғысынан бетбұрысты кезең. Мақаланың бірінші бөлімінде біз 1960 жылға дейінгі отбасы үлгісі мен оған негіз болған гендерлік контрактінің өзгеруін сипаттаймыз. Келесі кезекте біз екі түрлі «жаңа отбасыларының» – нукреарлық

моделге негізделген аралас отбасылар мен медициналық көмек нәтижесінде нәрестелі болған, көбіне бір ата-аналық отбасылардың негізгі сипаттамаларына автордың жеке зерттеулеріне негізделе отырып тоқталатын боламыз. Соңында, осы отбасылардың қалыптасуын сүйемелдеген мемлекеттік саясатты талдай келе, осы бағыттағы зерттеулердің Орталық Азия мен әлем қауымдастығы деңгейіндегі болашағын талқыға аламыз.

**Түйін сөздер:** отбасы әлеуметтануы, гендерлік социология, асыраушы ер моделі, жаңа отбасылар, Франция, аралас отбасылар, бір жынысты отбасылар

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## **НОВЫЕ ЗАПАДНЫЕ СЕМЬИ: ГЕНДЕРНАЯ ДИНАМИКА И МОДЕЛИ ФИЛИАЦИИ В СОВРЕМЕННОЙ ФРАНЦИИ**

### *Аннотация*

Трансформация семей является социальной, политической и законодательной проблемой в глобализованном обществе. В связи с этим цель данной статьи – пролить свет на характеристики "новых семей" с социологической точки зрения, исходя из особенностей западного контекста и Франции, в частности. Кроме того, мы попытаемся проанализировать законы, которые сопровождали эти процессы, уделяя особое внимание реализации принципа равенства.

По общему мнению, историков и демографов, 1960 год стал поворотным в трансформации семейных структур в этом географическом регионе. В первой части мы кратко опишем модель семьи, существовавшую до 1960 года, и эрозию гендерного контракта, на которой она основана. Затем мы рассмотрим характеристики двух "новых семей": смешанных семей, основанных на нуклеарных семьях, и семей, возникших в результате внебрачного деторождения с медицинским вспоможением, часто однородительских семей, основанных на собственных исследованиях автора. В заключение мы рассмотрим некоторые аспекты государственной политики, сопровождавшей эти трансформации, а также перспективы исследований в этой области на уровне Центральной Азии и всего мирового сообщества.

**Ключевые слова:** социология семьи, социология гендера, модель мужчины-кормильца, новые семьи, Франция, смешанные семьи, однополые семьи.

### **MAIN PART**

The aim of this article is to analyze the characteristics of "new families" in Western societies, with a focus on the French context, from a sociological perspective. The objectives encompass examining pre-1960 reference families, understanding the hegemonic male breadwinner model, analyzing the erosion of the gender contract, and exploring the implications of these changes for contemporary family structures.

Adopting a gender perspective, the article delves into family structures, drawing on definitions proposed by Barry (2000) and Déchaux (2009). It describes the hegemonic male breadwinner model, emphasizing its characteristics and societal implications. Gender is conceptualized as a system comprising gender difference, hierarchy, and heteronormativity, which form the foundation of the pre-1960 family model.

The study relies on existing literature in demography, sociology, and gender studies, particularly works by Shorter (1977), De Singly (1993), and Déchaux (2009). Additionally, primary research conducted by the author is integrated, focusing on new families resulting from non-marital medically assisted reproduction, including homoparental families.

The results of the study highlight the transformation of family structures in Western societies before and after 1960, influenced by contraceptive revolutions and shifts in societal norms. The erosion of the gender contract is observed, leading to the emergence of diverse family forms beyond the traditional nuclear model.

In the discussion, the article explores the implications of these changes for contemporary family dynamics, addressing issues of gender equality, reproductive rights, and societal norms. Public policies and legislative frameworks are considered in relation to their impact on new family structures and the principle of equality.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The transformation of families is a social, political and legislative issue in a globalised society. In this context, the aim of this article is to shed light on the characteristics of the 'new families' from a sociological point of view, based on the specific features of the Western context and France in particular. At the same time, it seeks to identify the laws that have accompanied these processes, paying particular attention to the principle of equality.

But what do we call the "new family" in the Western world? Because, as Jean-Hughes Déchaux (2009) notes, we can observe a "variety of family structures throughout history and civilisations: the family is constantly being invented before our eyes, and its definition is always a social and political issue". As far as Western Europe is concerned, demographic historians (Shorter, 1977) and family sociologists (De Singly, 1993) and (Déchaux, 2009) seem to agree on the pivotal date of 1960 as marking a major transformation in family structures for this geographical area. I will therefore use the family prior to this period as a model for comparison.

Moreover, the family, like any social process, is played out within a well-defined framework involving players with distinct logics. All social relationships play a part in this theatre. And it would be essential to study the complexity of their interweaving in order to deepen the analysis. However, according to many authors, the gender order and models of filiation are decisive in understanding changes in the family. This is noted, for example, by Wilfried Rault and Arnaud Régnier-Loilier (2019) in their introduction to the double issue of the journal *Population*, published by INED, devoted to the study of individual and marital life courses (EPIC survey), the third major French survey on this theme. It is from this dual perspective that I shall confine myself here to observing the transformations of the family.

In the first part, I will briefly present the pre-1960 reference family model, based on a gender approach. I will then focus on two 'new families': blended families, based on nuclear families, and families resulting from non-marital medically assisted procreation, often homoparental families, based on my own research.

## **METHODS**

The results of this study are based first and foremost on the scientific consensus of demographers and sociologists regarding the dominant family model in Western populations before 1960. I will refer in particular to the work of demographic historians (Shorter, 1977) and family sociologists (De Singly, 1993 ; Déchaux, 2009). This article is then based on more recent surveys in the sociology of the family in France, like the study of individual and marital life courses (EPIC survey) directed by Wilfried Rault and Arnaud Régnier-Loilier (2019) or surveys focusing in particular on reconstituted families. (Déchaux, 2014; Le Pape, 2012 ; Le Pape and Virot, 2019).

I will also draw on my own research into new families, often homoparental, resulting from new reproductive techniques. The qualitative analysis I present here is based on an analysis of the semi-directive question in the open-ended questionnaires of the DAIFI project (developed after the start of IVF), led by Élise de La Rochebrochard, allowed an exploratory look at the logics of the actors. This study brings together more than 2,000 questionnaires sent in 2008-2010 to couples who have undergone at least one in vitro fertilisation in one of the eight hospitals selected for the survey.

The interviews I conducted made it possible to complete the exploratory approach resulting from the qualitative analysis of questionnaires. In order to obtain the widest possible diversity of profiles, I varied the following characteristics: the period of the medical resource, the age of the woman at the time of the medical resource, current age, professional activity or inactivity, medical career, experience of parenthood, forms of sexuality. In order to overcome the obstacles due to the intimate and sensitive nature of the subject, contacts were made through the entourage, Internet forums or associations. Finally, this article is based on an analysis of the chronology and content of family-related legislation in France over the last few decades.

## RESULTS

### **The pre-1960 reference families from a gender perspective**

So how do we define a family? I'll use here the definition proposed by Barry (2000) and quoted by Déchaux (2009): "all persons related by consanguinity and/or alliance". In its sobriety and precision, this proposal seems to me to be convincing because it encompasses the entire family structure without being limited to its nuclear core.

#### ***The hegemonic male breadwinner model***

The notion of the "new family" is to be understood in comparison with the so-called (abusively) "traditional" family, i.e. a married couple with children brought up by a non-working wife. This family model has also been described as the "male breadwinner/female caregiver" model. As Nicky Le Feuvre (2001) notes, this family model is characterised by the requirement of indissoluble bonds for marriage (Théry, 1998), the prohibition of abortion and contraception (Tahon, 1995), and the retention of women in the domestic sphere, effectively excluding them from the most prestigious places of education (Le Feuvre et al., 1999), employment (Maruani, 1998; Silvera et al., 1996) and political power (Martin, 1998). It was this model that accompanied the transition to industrial modernity in nineteenth-century Western societies, thereby anchoring a gender contract (Le Feuvre, 19). However, it should be pointed out that this is a dominant model, and other modalities can be identified, as discussed by Rosemary Crompton (1999): 'male breadwinner/female part-time earner', 'dual earner/state caregiver', 'dual earner/state marketing caregiver', 'dual earner/dual caregiver'.

It is this hegemonic gender contract structuring Western society before 1960 that needs to be analysed to highlight the specific features of the new families. Gender has been considered in different ways. My preferred approach (Tain, 2013) sees gender as a system in which I distinguish a social construct along three axes: gender difference, gender hierarchy and heteronormativity.

The hegemonic gender contract at the start of the industrial revolution rests on these three pillars. The first component of gender led to a sex-differentiated distribution of skills and spaces. Women are assigned the domestic sphere and men the public sphere. The second consists of supplementing this gendered distribution with a hierarchy of values between masculine and feminine. Finally, the third component is the social injunction to form a fertile heterosexual couple. The "classical model of parenthood based on the exclusivity of bilateral filiation" (Déchaux, 2009), which confers legitimacy on the children of a male/female couple, is the institutional translation of this injunction.

#### ***The erosion of the gender contract***

Nevertheless, this gender order has been shaken up. I would tend to agree with Shorter (1977) that the two contraceptive revolutions identified by demographers played a fundamental role in the transformation of the Western family. These two periods mark the essential stages in the dissociation between sexuality and procreation, and thus give rise to the ingredients of the 'new families'.

In France, the "first contraceptive revolution" dates from around 1750, when new practices were developed in the privacy of couples. The decline in fertility in France around the time of the French Revolution has been discussed and interpreted many times (Leridon, 1995; Aries, 1998; Bergues et al., 1960). The impact of the 1789 revolution and the philosophy of the Enlightenment has been highlighted (Binion, 2000). In any case, birth control, often attributed to the widespread practice of withdrawal and sometimes to marital onanism, was a private matter. At the same time as the first

contraceptive revolution, new practices were emerging to regulate reproduction upwards (Tain, 2003, 2013). In fact, the first human artificial inseminations took place at the same time. The first known successful attempt dates back to 1776 in England, and the first book on these reproductive techniques was published in France in 1802 by the doctor Thouret. These practices of sexuality without procreation and procreation without sexuality illustrate a profound transformation in the forms and institutions of control over heteronormativity. While in the Middle Ages the biological reproductive body was under the influence of the Church, it was gradually the medical establishment that came to play a dominant role.

Indeed, the context of the second contraceptive revolution, followed by the generalisation of artificial insemination in the second half of the twentieth century, was very different, extending the areas of dissociation between sexuality and reproduction. (Tain, 2003, 2013). The medical establishment played a major role here. The contraceptive pill was the result of an initiative in the 1950s by Margaret Sanger, a campaigner for birth control who, understanding the significance of the research into hormones by the renowned endocrinologist Gregory Pincus, convinced the feminist Katherine Mac Kormik to fund his research (Sohn, 2006). Its use was legalised in France at the end of the 1960s. Artificial insemination techniques developed in France at the same time as the first contraceptive revolution, with the creation of the first three sperm banks in 1973 (Novaes, 1994). Thus, with the second contraceptive revolution, other forms of regulating the association/dissociation between sexuality and reproduction appeared. They are more visible than during the first contraceptive revolution. Whereas, with the emergence of modernity and the decline in the influence of the Church, negotiations tended to take place in the private sphere, today normative control over sexuality and reproduction is also explicitly in the public domain, with the medical establishment playing a major role.

#### **The « new » blended families**

The loopholes opened up by the two contraceptive revolutions went hand in hand with a process of autonomy claimed firstly by men, who thus escaped the control of the king, and then by women, whose social movements from the second half of the twentieth century onwards helped to change the situation. As a result, the gender contract was shaken up, leading to the reorganisation of families that had been labelled traditional.

#### ***The gender contract under attack***

There are cracks in the three pillars of the gender contract. This is reflected in demographic indicators and the passing of new laws.

The first pillar, gender differentiation, has been affected by major developments such as the rise in female employment and women's educational attainment. The legal provisions reflect these changes: from 1965 onwards, following Law 65-570, women have been able to work without their husbands' permission. However, the distribution of domestic tasks remains highly gendered. In 2010, women still performed the majority of household and parental tasks - 71% and 65% respectively (Champagne, Pailhé, Solaz, 2015).

The second pillar, relating to the hierarchy between the sexes, has also been shaken up, as shown by numerous laws. As early as 1965, with the reform of matrimonial property regimes (Act 65-570), married women were no longer considered as minors. In 1970, paternal authority was replaced by parental authority, and the law abolished the concept of head of the family (Act 70-459). Parental authority over a child born out of wedlock was henceforth exercised by the mother alone, even if the father had recognised the child. In 1992, penalties were increased for spouses guilty of violence (Act 92-684). Finally, in 2000, Law 2000-493 helped to implement the principle of parity between men and women in the political arena.

The third pillar of heteronormativity has also undergone a number of changes in recent decades. Marriage is no longer a prerequisite for marriage as it was in the 1960s. For example, according to data from the Epic survey, 15% of people married between 1964 and 1973 had cohabited before getting married, and only 1% of these unions had had a child; this figure had risen to 84% by 1994.

2003 and 2004-2013, and a quarter of these couples had had children before marriage (Maillochon, 2019). Separations are becoming more frequent and earlier: 12% of first unions formed between 1970 and 1978 broke up within the first 8 years, compared with 29% of those formed between 1997 and 2005 (Costemalle, 2015). At the same time, we are seeing an increase in the number of relationships that count over the course of a lifetime (Rault and Régnier-Laulier, 2015). The number of children is falling significantly. If we measure fertility using the total fertility rate (TFR), we see an overall drop from 2.9 children per woman in 1964 to 1.87 in 2019, with some fluctuations (1.66 in 1993 and 1994; 2.02 in 2008, 1.89 in 2017) (Déchaux, 2009), (Breton et al., 2019). A number of laws have accompanied these developments. Among the most significant were the Neuwirth law on contraception in 1967 (law 67-1176), the law on divorce and the decriminalisation of adultery in 1975 (law 75-617) and finally the Veil law, passed in 1975, decriminalising abortion for five years (law 75-617), which was finally adopted in 1979.

### ***The recomposition of families between continuities and ruptures***

The undermining of the hegemonic gender contract with the advent of modernity will have essential effects on the shape of families. New families are emerging and coexisting with so-called traditional families. In addition to the recent configurations linked to medically assisted procreation, which I will discuss later, we are seeing the existence of single-parent families and blended families becoming commonplace. Qualitative surveys are shedding light on these new families, and here I summarise a few aspects of stepfamilies, which show that new places are still being created, between ruptures and continuities.

The first specificity relates to the place of the child, which appears to be central according to several authors (Déchaux, 2014; Le Pape, 2012). One consequence of the importance attached to children is the emergence of the term "parenthood" and the crystallisation of standards of good parenting. For example, a study of changes of residence after separation shows that one of the normative expectations is to maintain harmonious co-parenting after separation (Le Pape and Viro, 2019).

Nevertheless, social injunctions differ according to gender, in line with the gender contract of modernity. Surveys seem to show that it is up to mothers to adapt their organisation, and in particular their place of residence, to facilitate fathers' visiting rights and accommodation (Le Pape and Viro, 2019). Similarly, maternity and paternity remain very distinct positions. In particular, mothers are criticised for not being able to exercise authority like fathers and for not being able to provide for the household. Fathers are often criticised for failing to meet expectations in terms of providing resources and controlling the family (Martin, 2004).

Another specific feature is the emergence of new family figures whose role and place are still being defined: step-parents and step-children. As we shall also see with families resulting from medically assisted procreation, these figures are challenging the two-parent model of filiation. How do step-parents relate to parents? Stepchildren in relation to children?

Observations show that the stepmother's place is not equivalent to that of the mother (Vincent, 2019). In accordance with the requirement of good co-parenting, the mother-in-law will take the place that her partner wishes to give her, provided that the mother's place is respected. Similarly, women in stepfamilies will invest differently in their children and stepchildren.

### **The "new" same-sex families**

Other 'new families' have become visible in recent decades with the legitimisation of homosexuality and the spread of new reproductive technologies. In this 3rd part, I will focus on same-sex families, based in particular on my own research in this area, which is based more specifically on an analysis of a thousand hospital files and a hundred or so interviews (Tain, 2013).

The legislation has undergone profound changes. In 1960, the law stipulated that discrimination against homosexuals was to be made worse, but since then the opposite has been the case: in 1973, homosexuality was no longer considered a pathology; in 1982, with law 82-683, homosexuality was decriminalised and the homosexual majority was brought into line with the heterosexual majority (15

years); in 1985, discrimination against homosexuals became an offence (law 85-772) and finally in 2013 marriage was authorised between two people of the same sex (law 2013-404).

At the same time, the first "test-tube" baby was born in 1978 in Great Britain and in 1982 in France. Since then, a number of bioethics laws in France have governed the parent-child relationships of children born as a result of medically assisted procreation (in particular laws n°94-653 and 94-654 in 1994 and law 2004-800 in 2004) and access to medically assisted procreation extended in 2021 to all women regardless of their marital status (law 2021-1017).

According to my research, two ways of adapting the Western model of filiation are competing in the empirical material, and are at odds either with the binarity of the couple or with male/female complementarity.

#### ***An arrangement centred on the couple***

The first type of arrangement focuses on the couple. It is based on the principle of bilateral kinship, but shifts the heteronormative framework. The model emphasises the two individuals behind the reproductive project, one or both of whom are also involved from a biological point of view. The priority of the intention, of the social, is thus affirmed independently of the expected sexual complementarity.

In this arrangement, the third party is seen as accessory or even a threat by one of the partners. What counts is the child's history, the people who bring him up, not his parents, as these remarks by women in a couple with another woman show:

*(The decision to donate anonymously) was taken by both of us. [...] Perhaps it reassured her more that it was anonymous. I don't know. Was it a threat? Sandrine G.*

*For the child, it would be his story. He wouldn't know who had fathered him. Somehow, it doesn't matter. Aphrodite F.*

The third party is experienced as a momentary biological assistance, external to the child's project. It's this way of living and giving meaning to the experience that drives several lesbian couples who have opted for anonymous gamete donation.

*We wanted anonymous donation so that there would never be a third person interfering in our relationship and our child (...) perhaps it's a bit our upbringing, our culture (...) we wanted to be two with our child. Sylvie T*

*We chose an anonymous donor. [...] we didn't want a known donor because that would then raise the problem of parenthood, the possible claims of that man [...] we wanted a child for two. Clotilde M.*

Several social dynamics contribute to the affirmation of this model. On the one hand, the majority of heterosexual couples subscribe to this two-centred vision. Secondly, this model corresponds to changes in the practices of homosexual couples. (Gross, 2009). This point of view is clearly asserted by Victoire M.

*I told myself that a child was the fruit of a love between two people, not three or four [...] well, in any case, for Aurore, it was that or nothing. For Aurore, it was anonymous donor or not. Because if we became a family, she wanted even more of a place in it. Victoire M.*

#### ***A plural configuration integrating women and men***

A second form of planning breaks down the binary context of reproduction by valuing multiple parenthood and giving social recognition to all the individuals involved in the reproductive project. Sperm donors, oocyte donors and gestational mothers are all part of the reproductive configuration

and are destined to be known by the child. The stories therefore evoke the integration of the third party, illustrated by the concern that the child should have access to the donor, or know the surrogate mother. This is illustrated by the accounts of Sylvia A. in a couple with a woman and Pierre B. in a couple with a man.

*Why the Netherlands? Because we chose a donation with access to origins and free of charge. [...] We looked at the reports on births under X to see how important this access is. We saw that not all children born under X necessarily want access to their origins, but for those who do and can't, it can be a real handicap.* Sylvia A.

*I opted for a surrogate mother in France. The idea behind this solution, apart from the financial aspect, is that our agreement with my partner stipulates that we'll stay in touch, that she'll have news of our child, her child, from time to time. So, in X years' time, if the child [...] wants to know her, he'll be able to know her.* Pierre B.

The links with third parties are then established on a one-off or more regular basis, as illustrated by the interview extracts from François T. and Franck C., who are in couples with men and have had surrogate pregnancies.

*I didn't want total anonymity. On the other hand, I didn't want a mutual commitment to adore each other, to love each other and to play at being a fake mum ... "An annual contact by email, photo, telephone suits me fine and of course when the child is 18 and wants to see me, I'll be perfectly happy to meet him" [...] So that's what she said and that's exactly what I thought.* François T.

*With the surrogate mother, I'm generous and kind. I call her once a week or once a fortnight. I send emails regularly. I think she wants to hear from me. I like to give her news. I think it's important for my child too, because the day we might need her, she'll be there. I don't want to call her after ten years and say: "By the way, Jenny, I've got a problem, my son's not well, can we see you? I did the same with the egg donor.* Franck C.

Sometimes, this co-parenting is much more deeply rooted in everyday life, leading to innovative configurations: two mothers and a father (Sybille K.); two mothers and two fathers (Noëlle K.), two mothers and their two brothers as sperm donors (Charlotte T.).

*We looked for a father [...] we read classified ads for boys who wanted to have children through co-parenting. We came across the rare father!* Sybille K.

*I immediately opted for the co-parenting project, because I liked the idea of having a mum and dad for my unborn child or children. And I find it very reassuring to share parental responsibility [...] so I asked a friend... and this friend is also in a relationship. So there you have it, two men, two women, four adults saying "yes, let's have a baby".* Noëlle K.

*This project seems a bit crazy to me now that the uncle would also be the dad and vice versa, that I would be an auntie but also [...] well, mum and also an auntie biologically speaking. I mean, it's a whole re-inscription of things [...]* Charlotte T.

This other shaping of experience is also at the crossroads of several social dynamics. One argument relates to the necessary gender difference in parenthood. For example, René Frydman (2013) raises the question of "male referents" in the case of sperm donation to a lesbian couple. On the other hand, the right to origin is demanded by associations, highlighted by social science research (Delaisi de Parseval, 2001) (Fine, 2006) and partially achieved with the 2021 bioethics law. Furthermore,



proposals and legislation in other countries are moving in the direction of recognising all partners (Fine, 2006), for example by attributing "shares of paternity", a legal share and an emotional share for the social father, and a share of heredity for the donor. Finally, part of the homosexual world wants to be the bearer of innovations. It seems, however, that this group has become a minority, with the majority of lesbians and gays fearing that recognition of donors would run counter to the legitimacy of their relationship by renaturalising the model of reproduction.

## **DISCUSSION**

In France, for example, the emergence of new families has gone hand in hand with the undermining of the three pillars of the gender system: differentiation and hierarchy between the sexes, and the principle of heteronormativity. These transformations have led to legislative changes aimed at equality between women and men and equality between different types of family. However, the protests in 2013-2014 against the introduction of ABCD equality programmes aimed at teaching children about gender equality, and against the opening up of marriage to same-sex couples, demonstrate the resistance of a section of the population. I would tend to think that this turbulence highlights the cross-cutting nature of the principle of equality in all areas of life. The changes in the family that the world is facing are taking place simultaneously in the family, but also at school and at work. The public policies that accompany these processes are therefore called upon to take account of these different areas.

Moreover, the transformation of families is taking place on the scale of a globalised society and, like any transnational process, can therefore be analysed as a combination of the national and the global (Sassen, 2009). In France, the philosophy of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution played a decisive role in giving individuals, first men and then women, access to autonomy, and were thus at the origin of the transformations of the family. These dynamics play out differently in Central Asia (Karimova, 2022), (Chakirova, 2007). Nevertheless, the observations made above raise new questions for Central Asia and, more generally, for society as a whole: can we also identify a joint transformation of gender and the family model? Can we identify decisive periods in national histories for these processes?

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, it is necessary to emphasize that the dynamics of family structures in Western societies, particularly in France, have undergone significant changes in recent decades. The concept of the "new family" encompasses a variety of forms, including blended families arising from remarriage and families resulting from non-marital medically assisted reproduction, often characterized by same-sex parenting arrangements. These transformations have been influenced by social, political, and legislative factors, reflecting changes in societal norms and values.

The pre-1960 family model, based on traditional gender roles and marital norms, has gradually evolved, giving way to more diverse and flexible family structures. The changing gender contract has played a central role in this transformation, allowing for greater flexibility and experimentation in family relationships. As a result, the traditional nuclear family is no longer the sole or dominant form of family organization.

Public policy has also influenced the shaping of new families, with legislation reflecting changing attitudes towards marriage, parenthood, and reproductive technologies. The principle of equality has been at the forefront of family law, aiming to ensure the rights and recognition of diverse family structures.

Moving forward, further research is needed to examine the implications of these changes for individuals, families, and society as a whole. This includes studying the impact of new family structures on social cohesion, intergenerational relationships, and resource distribution. Additionally, comparative studies across different cultural contexts, including Central Asia, may provide valuable insights into the universality and variability of family dynamics in a globalized world.

In conclusion, the study of new families offers a rich and complex area for sociological inquiry, illuminating the changing nature of intimate relationships and the intersections of gender, kinship, and law in contemporary society.

#### **Annex: list of persons quoted**

**Aphrodite F.**, 39, secondary school teacher, in a couple with Christiane S. since 1997. They have a 2-year-old baby. Aphrodite is three months pregnant again thanks to an IAD in Belgium.

**Charlotte T.**, 23 years old, student; she had a project for artificial insemination using sperm donated by her ex-partner's brother and for artificial insemination of her ex-partner using sperm donated by her brother. Project not carried out. Currently separated.

**Clotilde M.**, aged 31, distance worker; in a couple with Nicole A.; the couple began reproductive medicalisation in 2008 with two inseminations using donor sperm for Nicole. At the time of the interview, a third insemination was planned.

**Franck C.**, 47, veterinary surgeon, in a couple with Gilles R., had a child through surrogate motherhood in the United States and after several unsuccessful attempts at co-parenthood. They are planning a second surrogate pregnancy in India using the embryos they still have

**François T.**, over 40, manager of a bank branch, single, surrogate pregnancy in progress in the United States.

**Noëlle K.**, aged 42, works in an architecture firm. She is in a relationship with a woman who has a co-parent child from a previous relationship. They are considering a co-parenting project with a male couple. After unsuccessful insemination and IVF in Belgium, they have successfully undergone donor IVF in Spain. The baby is three months old.

**Pierre B.**, a company director who has been in a couple with Olivier M. for six years; they began with inseminations at home, then three unsuccessful inseminations in Spain with a Franco-Portuguese surrogate mother; they were planning in vitro fertilisation at the time of the interview.

**Sandrine G** has been in a couple for ten years. She has three children, aged between 2 and 5, two of whom were born twins thanks to an IAD in Belgium for which she was responsible for the gestation.

**Sybille K.**, 43, a child psychiatry nurse, has been in a relationship with Anaïs B. for seven years; when insemination in Spain failed, they underwent IVF in Greece and had twins (one year old).

**Sylvia A.**, 37, works in the private sector; partner of Brigitte L.; medical history since 2001; five donor inseminations for Brigitte and one for Sylvia A. in the Netherlands. A boy was born during the fourth insemination (2006). At the time of the interview, Sylvia was pregnant with a girl.

**Sylvie T.**, teacher-researcher, in a relationship with Lina G., researcher; they began a medicalisation process in Belgium; at the time of the interview, they had a 20-month-old baby boy from IVF and were in the process of a second IVF.

**Victoire M.**, 34, librarian. She has been living with Aurore, a curator, for four years. Thanks to artificial insemination in Barcelona, their 10-month-old daughter was born.

#### **Chronology of laws cited:**

**13 July 1965**, law 65-570 reforming matrimonial property regimes, which changed the legal marriage regime for couples marrying without a contract. Women could manage their own property and work without their husband's consent.

**28 December 1967**, law 67-1176, known as the Neuwirth Act, authorising contraception. The implementing decrees were not published until 1971.

**4 June 1970**: law 70-459 on parental authority, which amended the Civil Code and replaced paternal authority with joint parental authority: "The two spouses jointly ensure the moral and material direction of the family".

**17 January 1975**, law 75-17 authorising voluntary interruption of pregnancy (abortion), known as the "Veil law", adopted for a period of 5 years.

**11 July 1975**: law 75-61 reforming divorce, authorising divorce by mutual consent.

**4 August 1982**: law 82-683, known as the Forni law, decriminalises homosexuality in France, putting an end to the criminal discrimination against homosexuals that had existed for 40 years.

**25 July 1985**: law 85-772 makes discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation an offence.

**22 July 1992**: law 92-684, which introduces the concept of sexual harassment into French law.

**29 July 1994**: law 94-653 on respect for the human body and law no. 94-654 of 29 July 1994 on the donation and use of elements and products of the human body, medically assisted procreation and prenatal diagnosis. 6 June 2000: law no. 2000-493 designed to promote equal access for women and men to electoral mandates and elective offices.

**6 June 2004**: law 2004-800 on bioethics.

**17 May 2013**: law 2013-404 opening marriage to same-sex couples.

**2 August 2021**: law 2021-1017 on bioethics. It extends medically assisted procreation (MAP) to female couples and single women,

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