Catholic voice and ART: revising the French bioethics law

Séverine Mathieu

Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris, France

Abstract In France, assisted reproductive technology (ART) is regulated by a ‘law relative to bioethics’ voted by the French Parliament in 1994. This law undergoes regular parliamentary revision (in 2004 and 2011) and is currently under review (2019–2020). The most controversial issue at present is access to ART by lesbian couples and single women. The Catholic Church has taken an active part in these debates, despite the fact that France is a secular state, and religion is barred from interference in government policy. Nonetheless, the Church justifies its participation by presenting itself as a guardian of moral values and as an authority on issues related to the family. The Church’s discourse combines religious and secular arguments that foster what I call an ‘anxious rhetoric’, sometimes shared by other segments of the population. Drawing on an ethnographic survey of public debates that preceded and accompanied the present revision of the bioethics law, this article analyses Catholic arguments regarding the specific controversy of ART for lesbian couples and single women.

Introduction

On 25 September 2018, the French National Consultative Ethics Committee for Health and the Life Sciences (designated in France through its acronym 'CCNE') published Opinion 129, ‘Contribution of the CCNE to the revision of bioethics law’ (CCNE, 2018). Among the suggested revisions, CCNE declared itself in favour of opening assisted reproductive technology (ART) to lesbian couples and single women. Actors who disagreed with this opinion immediately expressed their discontent. That same evening, an association called ‘La Manif pour Tous’ (Demonstration for All), created in 2012 to oppose legislation that would open marriage to same sex couples (which they saw as ‘marriage for all’), protested this new legislative project in front of CCNE’s headquarters. On the following Sunday, 30 September 2018, Monseigneur Michel Aupetit, Archbishop...
of Paris, was interviewed by the newspaper *Le Parisien*. He invited Catholics to ‘mobilize with words’ against this extension of the use of ART, based on the respect of ‘human dignity’. It is important to note that opposition comes mainly from the Catholic religious hierarchy, its representatives and some conservative groups, and not necessarily from all Catholics as individuals practising their religion.

Let us begin by recalling that the Roman Catholic Church has not only condemned contraception (*Humanae vitae*, 1968) and abortion, but has also officially expressed its opposition to all forms of ART, particularly in the 1987 *Donum Vitae Instruction*, the 1995 encyclical letter *Evangelium Vitae* and the Instruction *Dignitas personae* of 2008. Its doctrine invokes the respect of natural law, which forbids dissociating the union of the two sexes from procreation.

This article analyses the discourse of the French Catholic Church and of the two main associations that claim to be secular, but whose positions have always been aligned with those of the Catholic hierarchy. The first association, mentioned above, is *La Manif pour Tous*. Despite its claim to secularity, this association is understood by Yann Raison du Cleuziou (*Raison du Cleuziou*, 2019) as a reaffirmation of the presence of Catholicism in the political arena during the parliamentary debates on the opening of civil marriage to same sex couples in 2012. The second association is *Alliance Vita*, the new name chosen in 2011 for the former *Alliance pour les droits de la vie*, an association founded by Christine Boutin, a right wing politician and leader in the fight against opening civil union to same sex couples, both during the legislative debates and even after the law was successfully passed in 1999. At present, Tugdual Derville is its general delegate; that is, he occupies a strategic and operational position at *Alliance Vita*. Although he is Catholic, he considers his association as secular and thus open to anyone with similar positions.

This article argues that Catholic mobilization during the ongoing revision of the bioethics law (2018–2020) manifests their wish to influence lawmakers by bringing Catholic religious norms to bear on secular debate. It draws on two types of material: (i) an ethnographic survey and observations of the *États généraux de la bioéthique* (The Estates-General of Bioethics, based on a classic French practice of organizing a public forum), held in 2018; and (ii) an analysis of positions presented by the Catholic hierarchy in the media and in documents produced by its own institutions, from 2018 to the present time. This article will focus on Catholic arguments against access to ART, studying the texts produced by the Catholic magisterium, observations made during public meetings held by the *États généraux de la bioéthique* to generate debate in the population, and proposals contributed to the website set up for these public events.

France is not the only country where Catholic authorities are opposed to progressive legislation on ART. However, in this article, I would like to highlight the specific way in which the French Catholic Church and Catholic conservatives manage to weigh in on the debate. It is important to remember that France is a secular state, meaning that religion is barred from interference in government policy and that, in principle, religious norms cannot be imposed on a secular state. However, as we will see, by naming this law ‘relative to bioethics’, the moral debate overlaps with the legislative debate, opening a breach in the secular state that separates religious norms and law, thus offering religion a pulpit in the political arena.

Bioethics as policy in France and the USA

Although this article will focus on the French case, I would like to briefly compare how France handles policy decisions on bioethical issues with the way that the USA handles the same problem in order to highlight the peculiar characteristics of the French approach. Under the presidency of François Mitterrand, CCNE was created in 1983 ‘to stimulate reflection on bioethics’. Its mission is to clarify what is at stake in recent advances in the life sciences and to stimulate social debate on these issues. According to the founding decree, the task of CCNE is to ‘give its opinion on moral problems raised by research in the fields of biology, medicine and health, whether these problems concern man, social groups or society as a whole’. The mission of CCNE was reformulated in the revised law on bioethics (No. 2004-800 of 6 August 2004) as follows: ‘to present opinions on the ethical problems and social issues raised by advances in knowledge in the fields of biology, medicine and health’ (Art. L. 1412-1). CCNE is an ‘independent authority’ with 39 members, five of whom, who represent the ‘principal philosophical and spiritual communities’, are appointed by the President of the French Republic. The President of CCNE is also appointed by the French President for a 2-year term (renewable once). The other members of CCNE are appointed by the different French ministries and French research institutions for 4 years (renewable once).

France promulgated its first bioethics law in 1994, mandating that certain ethically controversial medical and biological activities (such as ART, stem cell research, organ donation, etc.) required specific regulation not covered by general public health regulation. At the beginning, there were three laws, but only one of them — Law No. 94-654 of 29 July 1994 ‘on the donation and use of elements and products of the human body, on medically assisted procreation and on prenatal diagnosis’ renamed ‘law relative to bioethics’ in 2004 — is revised regularly as specified in Article 21 of this law (*Bateman, 2012*). Concerning ART, the law restricts access as follows:

The objective of medically assisted procreation is to remedy a couple’s infertility or to avoid the transmission of a severe disease to the child or to a member of the family. The pathological origin of the infertility must be medically established. Both the man and woman of the couple must be alive, of reproductive age and must give their consent to embryo transfer or to insemination (Article L2141-2 of the Public Health Code of 1994, modified by Law 2011-814 of 7 July 2011 relative to bioethics, my translation).

This law is revised — in principle — every 5 years in compliance with the National Assembly’s initial 1994 version of the law of 2004. The law of 2011 extended this delay to 7 years, and stated that every revision should be preceded by *États généraux* (Estates General or Public Forum). This expression is a reference to the French Revolution’s *États généraux*, organized to let the people express their views
about how they wanted the country to be governed. The last public hearings and debates took place between 18 January 2018 and 30 April 2018. CCNE organized and presided over these debates, with the help of regional ethical committee websites and hearings. These hearings included testimony from 154 associations, representatives of lobbies, scientific societies, physicians, institutions and representatives from religious institutions (such as Catholics, Protestants, Jews and Muslims), as well as philosophical schools of thought such as Freethinkers and Freemasons.

A website with several sections (one for each bioethics subject, such as artificial intelligence, end of life, prenatal diagnosis, ART, etc.) was also set up to allow the French public to participate in these debates; in each section, they are invited to comment on propositions made by CCNE or by other participants.

France thus regulates ART in a way that is quite distinct from the USA. France’s national bioethics law, elaborated as a revisable code that structures public conversation around issues of bioethical importance, is a distinct characteristic of its approach to morally controversial legislation. The USA does not deal with bioethical issues through national legislation – a state of affairs perhaps best understood as the commitment to two US principles: first, the separation of church and state, making all reproductive questions too controversial for national legislation; and second, the states’ rights to regulate (or not) free markets in research, public health and biomedical services.

I shall now briefly examine how these issues are handled in the USA. Let us recall that, in the USA, there used to be a ‘Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues’, established as an ‘advisory committee’. It prepared reports that were sent directly to the US President, and it had no role in drafting legislation (i.e. writing bills that would be debated and possibly passed in Congress) (https://bioethicarchive.georgetown.edu/pcsbi/history.html, accessed on 18 July 2020). Before the presidency of Donald Trump, the previous three presidents had established bioethics commissions to explore ethical issues in science, medicine and technology. The National Bioethics Advisory Commission (1996–2001), created by President Bill Clinton, examined topics including cloning, human stem cell research, and research involving human subjects. President George W. Bush established the President’s Council on Bioethics (2001–2009), which issued reports on stem cell research, human enhancement and reproductive technologies, among other subjects. In November 2009, President Barack Obama created the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues (the Bioethics Commission) by Executive Order. President Trump did not reappoint this commission, nor did he create a new one, and the last bioethical advisory board was held in January 2017.

As opposed to CCNE in France, an advisory committee instituted by law, in the USA, presidential commissions come and go according to the desires of the particular executive in power. Moreover, some presidents have used their executive power to promulgate policies that, in France, would normally be regulated by legislative power. For example, in 2001 and again in 2006, President Bush, during his second presidential mandate, declared that embryonic stem cell research could not be financed with federal funds except if cell lines were already in existence before his executive order (https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2006/07/20060719-6.html). This was understood to be an anti-abortion measure, given that the right-to-life movement was arguing at the time that the miracle cures promised by embryonic stem cell research would lead to more abortions as a way to capture and commercialize fetal cells to establish new stem cell lines. This argument influenced national science policy as there was no federal funding of embryonic stem cell research, and therefore sparked a ‘states’ rights’ response in 2001 as an answer to the second principle in liberal states such as California, Connecticut and Massachusetts, all of which put aside funds to invest in biomedical research using stem cells from embryos (Thompson, 2013). In France, such a debate would ultimately have been held and decided in Parliament.

**ART: a moral issue in France**

The way in which French laws deal with the question of access to ART reflects a concern to maintain the practice of ART within familiar moral boundaries. The recent adoption by the French National Assembly of the first draft of the revised law (15 October 2019), which, among other things, makes ART accessible to lesbian couples and single women, is contested by some moral actors. Among these is the Catholic Church, which considers itself and its teachings as providing moral guardianship.

This mobilization of the Catholic Church may seem surprising in the French secular context. However, historian Denis Pelletier notes that, in the past, matters such as contraception, abortion, and now ART belonged to ‘an area long governed by one’s conscience, parental authority and the teachings of the Church’ (Pelletier, 2019: 42, my translation). He mentions the concern expressed by Catholics that they are becoming a minority in French contemporary society, that their values and norms are less and less shared by other citizens, and that practising Catholics are also declining in number. He then goes on to explain how the state has developed a ‘politics of intimacy’ that blurs the boundaries between intimate life and politics, thus building the basis for a ‘republic of intimacy’ that organizes in the public sphere what used to be regulated in the private sphere. In producing a ‘politics of intimacy’, secular authorities are bringing religion into bioethical debates and giving it a voice in democratic space.

Besides the *États généraux*, CCNE also held hearings before the revision of the bioethics law; all the monotheistic religions were represented. They all expressed their opposition to opening ART to single women and lesbian couples. The French Protestant Federation was more moderate, expressing its reticence, articulating the multiple voices in the Protestant Federation, and acknowledging that, among French Evangelicals, some are indeed strongly opposed to open access to ART. However, it is mainly the Catholic hierarchy, together with groups of conservative Catholics, who mobilized into a strong public opposition to this particular article of the law. This strong religious opposition can be understood in the context of what sociologist Danièle Hervieu-Léger calls the French context of ‘exculturation’ – that is, a significant part of the French population continues to identify with Catholicism, although the French
cultural universe in its present religious and cultural diversity no longer adheres to its references and values. Thus, family issues remain the object of everyone’s attention.

The French bioethics law organizes a partial transfer from Christian moral authority to state-regulated bioethics. At the heart of this moral domain lies the question of the family. With the individualization and affirmation of an autonomous subject, the family can be seen as something other than a model produced from a natural and sacred order. Danièle Hervieu-Léger has shown that this model of a family rooted in its ‘naturality’ can be traced:

to two inseparable sources: a reference to ‘natural law’, by which the eternal (divine) is inscribed in human and social reality, and a foundation on ‘natural laws’ which prescribes, in physical and biological order, the life and survival conditions of the human species (Hervieu-Léger, 2003: 89).

As a consequence, a ‘natural family’ and a ‘biological family’ merge, at least implicitly. Scientific progress, continues Danièle Hervieu-Léger, questions these ‘natural laws’. In reaction, a new mechanism that ‘sacralises the biological order’ is being put in place. Opening ART to single women and lesbian couples is proof of this upheaval of the natural order of things. It also shows the multiple resistances at stake in all matters that concern the family. Indeed, Catholic norms concerning the family are still strongly supported in a context where secularization and individualization have progressed. Thus, we can better comprehend the sources of opposition to the revision of the French bioethics law (Mathieu, 2020).

The same arguments used by Catholic teachings in France are also used elsewhere around the globe. However, it is vital to understand that in France, appeals are being made to a specific historic and cultural context, comprised of both a 20th century law (1905) that separates the Catholic Church and the state (whose principles are embodied in a French term ‘laïcité’) and a centuries-old presence of Catholic Church: whereas the President of the French Bishops’ Conference considered that it was the duty of Catholics to participate in this demonstration, another eminent member of the Catholic hierarchy, Thierry Magnin, said that the Catholic Church would not call on its members to join the demonstration, another eminent member of the Catholic hierarchy, Thierry Magnin, said that the Catholic Church would not call on its members to join the demonstration. Each person should decide, according to his/her conscience, whether he/she should or should not participate.

A French rhetoric of anxiety

In 2018, during the États généraux de la bioéthique, conservative Catholics were present in large numbers and their rhetoric permeated this debate. Catholic participation was also very high in public debates held at CCNE, the National Assembly and in different media. By looking more closely at examples of their discourse, we can better understand the forms of their rhetoric.

In 2018, during the États généraux de la bioéthique, conservative Catholics were present in large numbers and their rhetoric permeated this debate. Catholic participation was also very high in public debates held at CCNE, the National Assembly and in different media. By looking more closely at examples of their discourse, we can better understand the forms of their rhetoric.

Indeed, on 3 January 2018, La Croix, a French Catholic newspaper, devoted a special issue to bioethics in which several representatives of the Catholic Church expressed their point of view. The Bishop of Le Havre, Jean-Luc Brunin, wrote that:

the bishops who have been appointed by the Conference will participate in the debate and engage in discussion with other experts or elected representatives: they will insist on the fact that what the Church defends on these issues is reasonable, important to the future of our humanity.
These religious representatives were elaborating a discourse of moral consciousness. Thus, Pierre d’Ornellas, Archbishop of Rennes and Head of the French Bishops’ Conference Bioethics Working Group, addressed a letter to the Catholics of Ille-et-Villaine on 17 January 2018. He concluded:

It is time for us to awaken our sleepy consciences and those of our contemporaries, so that together we may be amazed at the beauty of life in every human being, from their conception to their natural death. (...). Dear friends, find your own means to say that every human life is a priceless treasure!

This discourse aims to mobilize Catholics and beyond. In June 2017, before the beginning of the États généraux de la bioéthique, CCNE had published an opinion (Opinion 126) in favour of extending access to donor insemination and in-vitro fertilization (IVF) to single women and lesbian couples. In response, the French Bishops’ Conference expressed strong worries that such a change in the law might ultimately lead to the authorization of surrogacy. The risk of legalizing surrogacy was quickly included among the arguments used by Catholics in debates — a ‘slippery slope’ argument that also suggests the ‘domino theory’ of Cold War policy. Given that surrogacy was not at issue in the opinion or even in proposed legislation, CCNE saw no reason to issue a call for its prohibition (CCNE, 2018).

As early as March 2017, well ahead of the États généraux, a working group was created within the French Bishops’ conference to offer tools to Catholics, including a booklet of ‘bioethics’ presentations.

The page on ART explains that:

To extend ART to single women and lesbian couples completes the dissociation between biological fertilization and social kinship. Thus, if the human being is a social animal, he/she is also a living body. To divide a human being in two, separating the relation of filiation from its biological root, is an act of violence against the unity of the human person. This person is a ‘unified whole’, at the same time biological, psychic, spiritual and social (my translation).

This booklet also states that extending ART to all women is an open door to the selection of individuals or a legal eugenics’. This discourse follows the path set by Jurgen Habermas (2002) and his expressed fear of a ‘slippery slope’.

Once again, the Catholic Church is presenting itself as an authority in these bioethical fields. These concerns about the human person and the risk of eugenics can be linked with the Pope’s concern about the future of mankind, already prefigured in 1991 by John Paul II, who had elaborated a concept of ‘human ecology’ focused on the defence of familial values. Thus, the purpose of the Catholic magisterium is to show that the rules concerning the family are not founded on faith, but on a correct and moral understanding of nature’s mechanisms.

During the public debates organized around the États généraux de la bioéthique, opponents of the extension of ART to single women and lesbian couples mobilized energetically. Associations such as La Manif pour Tous and Alliance Vita disseminated information: their websites were the first to publish the calendar of public events and they also provided links to register for these events. During the debates, it was difficult to identify the persons who were talking as Catholics because they often introduced themselves by a simple first name such as ‘Luc’ or ‘Alice’; a profession such as ‘bookkeeper’, ‘nurse’ or ‘retired engineer’; or a familial status such as ‘simple citizen’, ‘mother of three children’ or ‘family patriarch and grandfather’. However, in their discourses, one would usually find themes developed by the Catholic magisterium.

At the end of the opening session of the États généraux organized in Paris by the Espace éthique Île-de-France, the floor was given to the public after scientists had spoken: a man who presented himself as ‘a father of a large family’ insisted on the question of commodification. He referred to the ‘slave market in Libya’ and ‘egg freezing by Google’. He deplored the ‘terrible excesses to come’. For him, ‘through the debates on surrogacy and ART, the main question is the question of the commodification of men, women and children’. He never addressed the scientists’ statements, turning instead to his prepared response.

In Nantes, a participant claimed, ‘ART for all is a first step towards eugenics (…). It is in the nature of man to always want more: one must be vigilant’. This ‘rhetoric of anxiety’ is therefore part of a ‘moral crusade’, aimed at warning contemporaries about the dangers that threaten them. In Paris, during the sessions organized by the Association of Medical Students of France, a secular and professional organization, several persons, spread throughout the room, intervened to denounce the risk of eugenics. They also protested against ‘fatherless ART’. Their numerous questions, interventions and remarks astonished the organizers of the event, who did not expect this type of audience. There were only approximately 30 people in the room, but very clearly many were activists opposed to the extension of access to ART. Their interventions were based on figures and they quoted scientific references, but were above all virulent calls on the supposedly inevitable abuses of an eventual change in the law. In Rouen, a person evoked the movie Gattaca, which he described as the unavoidable horizon of our society if ART is extended to all. In Lille, some fear the ‘slippery slope’ towards ‘a fanatic egalitarianism’ which suppresses ‘natural laws’. Those who express these opinions believe in the universality of the values they defend; a belief that ultimately results in the impossibility of real discussion in these debates. Their language closely mirrors the materials prepared and distributed by the Catholic magisterium.

These same themes, embedded in a ‘rhetoric of anxiety’, can be found in the propositions made on the website of the États généraux de la bioéthique (see also Rapport de synthèse, 2018). In the section devoted to ‘Procreation and society’, among the proposals submitted to the vote of participants, we can read one written by someone enrolled under the name ‘Tof’ who invokes ‘invariants’:

Like man, ethics does not change every 5 years. It should be an invariant based on universal and indisputable principles (…). We must give up modifying a multi-millennial anthropology.
During his testimony at the National Assembly, on 24 October 2018, Tugdual Derville, representing both Alliance Vita and a ‘school of thought on human ecology’, of which he is a co-founder, explained that:

The challenge is to transform the battle against infertility and against eugénics into two major national causes that should unite the French. (…). In France, we hold the world record for the detection of neonatal disability.

These narrative elements are embedded in a ‘rhetoric of anxiety’ that draws on a discourse of moral authority and on references shared beyond Catholic circles. These narratives replace religious references with secular, philosophical, historical and scientific references. They thus inscribe these fears in a claim of secular universality and an ethics that can be understood and shared by others – conservative Catholics or not.

This rhetoric also evokes a positive response in secular society, as exemplified in the views expressed by José Bové, a French ecology leader, or by Jacques Testart, the biologist who, with René Frydman, was responsible for the birth of the first IVF baby in France in 1982. José Bové, for example, accepted an interview with Limite, a journal founded in 2015 by representatives of a Catholic conservative right, defending an ‘integral ecology’. In this interview, José Bové explained that ‘ART is a Pandora’s box for eugénics and transhumanism’ (http://revuelimite.fr/jose-bove-faucheur-de-robots, N° 6, April 2017). Jacques Testart has expressed similar concerns but always insisting that he is an atheist, as, for example, in 2018 in the newspaper Le Monde, where he is presented as a whistleblower (https://www.lemonde.fr/bioethique/article/2018/04/08/jacques-testart-nous-alons-vers-une-humanite-a-deux-vitesses_5282382_5243590.html). His last book, co-written with Agnès Rousseau, Au péril de l’humain. Les promesses suicidaires des transhumanistes (Rousseau and Testart, 2018) raises concerns about recent advances in ART. This convergence of points of view shows the porosity of the boundary between the religious and the secular on these issues. This phenomenon sometimes produces strange political alliances known in English as ‘strange bedfellows’. Both of these opponents to ‘ART for all’ have declared that they have no religion. It is important to note that if religious conservatives do not hesitate to refer to historical and scientific references shared beyond Catholic circles. These narratives replace religious references with secular, philosophical, historical and scientific references. They thus inscribe these fears in a claim of secular universality and an ethics that can be understood and shared by others – conservative Catholics or not.

In this context, Catholic religious discourse denounces potential excesses that are founded not only on religious values but also on values that concern the secular world: vulnerability, respect and dignity. What differs is the emphasis put on the sacred character of life. Referring to ecology is also a way of integrating contemporary concerns in their discourse, especially attractive to young people. Indeed, one also finds a rhetoric of anxiety in scholarly and ordinary public discourses that goes well beyond conservative Catholic circles.

Conclusion

Catholics, together with other opponents of extended access to ART, have elaborated narratives founded on a rhetoric of anxiety that attempt to warn their fellow citizens against the dramatic social consequences of these legislative changes. Through their Church and its representatives, as well as through all the persons (religious representatives, institutional organizations and scientists) who spoke at the États généraux de la bioéthique, they have expressed the wish to be an integral part of the process of elaborating the bioethical norms of French society. Moreover, the French Catholic hierarchy has emphasized its legitimacy to intervene in this field, considering that they remain a moral authority in family matters. Despite Catholic opposition to bioethical issues elsewhere in the world, the strategy that bases its claims on France’s Catholic roots is publicly assumed and peculiar to the French context of ‘ex-culturation’ and laïcité (secularism).

The Catholic Church feels all the more justified in intervening in the public sphere when the French Parliament is legislating on practices that were once regulated exclusively by the Catholic magisterium. From the Church’s point of view, by choosing to legislate on intimate matters (contraception, abortion, ART, etc.), French authorities have de facto given religion a place in the bioethics debates and a voice in democratic space. But will its influence be felt as deeply in public space and society today? Discussions and debates during the revision of the bioethics law show that there is no consensus regarding the place of religion in the public arena and in the ‘politics of intimacy’. Thus, the place of religious discourse in a secular state where democratic public culture allows the expression of diverse opinions remains a problem to be solved.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank the Wenner Gren Foundation, NYU Paris, NYU, EPHE, GSRL-CNRS, for its generous support of the symposium held in Paris in June 2019, ‘Interpreting assisted reproductive technologies in France and the USA: cultural, religious and ethical values from a comparative perspective’. I am also grateful to Simone Bateman for her help in revising the final version of this paper.

References

Bateman, S., 2012, La bioéthique, une notion à géométrie variable. In Rayonnement du CNRS, N° 58, Printemps 2012, p. 13–19.
Becker, H., 1997 (1963), Outsiders. Studies in sociology of deviance. Free Press.
Béraud, C., 2015, Des catholiques favorables au mariage pour tous? Retour sur la mobilisation de 2012-2013 en France. In: Patternotte, D., Piette, V., Van der Dussen, S., Habermus gender! Déconstruction d’une riposte religieuse in Sextant, Volume 31, Editions de l’Université de Bruxelles, pp. 131–144.
Béraud, C., Portier, P.h., 2015. Métamorphoses catholiques. FMSH, Paris.
CCNE, Avis 129 Contribution du Comité consultatif national d’éthique à la révision de la loi de bioéthique 2018-2019, https://www.ccne-ethique.fr/sites/default/files/avis_129_vf.pdf.
Chateaureynaud, F., Torny, D., 1999. Les sombres précurseurs. Une sociologie pragmatique de l’alerte et du risque, Paris, Editions de l’EHESS.

Dignitas personæ, 2008. Instruction sur certaines questions de bioéthique, n°12, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20081208_dignitas-personae_fr.html.

Donum Vitae, 1987, Instruction sur le respect de la vie humaine naissante et la dignité de la procréation, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19870222_respect-for-human-life_fr.html.

Evangelium vitae, 1995, Lettre encyclique sur la valeur et l’inviolabilité de la vie humaine. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/fr/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031995_evangelium-vitae.html.

Habermas, J., 2002. L’avenir de la nature humaine. Vers un eugénisme libéral? Paris, Gallimard.

Hervieu-Léger, D., 2003. Catholicisme, la fin d’un monde? Bayard, Paris.

Humanae vitae, 1968, Lettre encyclique sur le mariage et la régulation des naissances, https://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/fr/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html.

Mathieu, L., 2005. Repères pour une sociologie des croisades morales. Médecine et hygiène 1 (29), 3–12.

Mathieu, S., 2019. Mobilisation catholique et recherche sur l’embryon. Médecine/sciences 35, 353–355.

Mathieu, S., 2020. Faire famille aujourd’hui. PMA, bioéthique et religion, Paris, Le Cavalier bleu.

Ogien, R., 2004. La panique morale. Grasset, Paris.

Pelletier, D., 2019. Les catholiques en France de 1789 à nos jours. Albin Michel, Paris.

Raison du Cleuziou, Y., 2019. Une contre-révolution catholique. Aux origines de La Manif pour Tous, Paris, Seuil.

Rapport de synthèse des États généraux de la bioéthique, Juin 2018, https://etatsgenerauxdelabioethique.fr/media/default/0001/01/cd55c2a6be2d25e9646bc0df928ca25e412ee3d4.pdf.

Rousseau, A., Testart, J., 2018. Au péril de l’humain. Les promesses suicidaires des transhumanistes, Paris, Le Seuil.

Thompson, C., 2013. Good Science. The Ethical Choreography of Stem Cell Research. MIT Press, Cambridge.

Received 14 January 2020; refereed 5 November 2020; accepted 12 November 2020.