Call for Papers

**Socio-Economics of Medically Assisted Reproduction: New Perspectives**

Special Issue of the *Revue Française de Socio-Économie*

According to the World Health Organization, one couple in six is now affected by medical infertility. For those who wish to become parents, various forms of Medically Assisted Reproduction (MAR) are available to overcome this "medical" infertility: artificial insemination, in vitro fertilization (IVF) with or without donors, and surrogacy. These techniques are also available to people with “social” infertility (same-sex couples, people who are not in couples).

As a result, MAR is increasingly central to family formation. In France, it was estimated in 2018 that one in 30 children was conceived via MAR, a proportion that has steadily risen since the 1980s. This trend is driven by advances in medical techniques as well as legal changes, such as in France in 2021, where access to MAR was extended to populations previously ineligible, including “unmarried women” and couples of women. In contrast, some countries have restricted access to these technologies, excluding same-sex or non-national couples, as was the case with surrogacy in India in 2018.

This diversity of regulatory frameworks leads to various models for funding MAR, with costs covered either by public health systems or through market mechanisms. Additionally, the commercialization of MAR services often triggers transnational flows of people seeking solutions abroad when they cannot obtain in their home countries, or when costs or waiting lists are deemed too high.

While MAR has given rise to a great deal of research in the social sciences, its socio-economic aspects remain underexplored. These aspects are crucial to understanding the functioning of these rapidly growing bio-economies. Beyond the variable estimates of the sector’s size, the expansion of this "global fertility market" has sparked numerous debates about the purpose of the exchanges (gametes, children, services, labour?) and their forms (market, donation, redistribution?). Furthermore, the roles of professionals, particularly intermediaries, are poorly documented, and on a more micro scale, the costs borne by individuals who resort to MAR can be significant, regardless of the local health care system. These financial and professional arrangements warrant detailed analysis.

This special issue of the *Revue Française de Socio-Économie* invites contributions that analyse the socio-economic dimensions of MAR. By varying the scales of analysis—ranging from individuals (intended parents, professionals, donors) to national policies, and including intermediaries or analyses of financial or human flows—this issue aims to offer new insights into a critical issue in reproductive justice. It will, in particular, highlight socio-economic inequalities observed at different scales, depending on the political choices made by countries in matters of infertility and reproductive rights.

Several, non-exhaustive avenues for reflection could be explored in the articles:

**Law and Organization of MAR Financing**: a first strand of research could document the various modes of financing across different regions of the world. Between the two poles of fully mutualized funding (reimbursement for services) and the sole reliance on market-driven logic, various hybrid organizational models exist. Articles could analyse local legislation to raise issues related to social protection in MAR (who pays or should pay?), the public considered legitimate to enter the programmes and the moral and political issues that this economic organisation suggests. Articles could also explore tensions between national regulations and the circumventions they provoke (such as crossing borders to access MAR).

**Actors in the MAR Economy**: How have medical centres, agencies, law firms, and associations or foundations developed within this market, and what roles do they play? How is the provision of these services distributed among the private, public, and non-profit private sectors? What types of actors, driven by what logics, position themselves in this rapidly growing activity? How do service providers and intermediaries' market and advertise their services, and through which channels (online/offline)? How do they justify their pricing? More broadly, how does money circulate within the ART economy, both between countries and among intermediaries, intended parents, donors, and medical institutions?

**Prices and costs of MAR**: the articles could examine the role of cost in decisions regarding MAR destinations, medical centres, or complementary services. The focus would be on examining the costs of MAR for those who seek it, the financial and/or professional arrangements made, and the strategies employed to fund the process, such as economic support considered and obtained (bank loans, savings, intra-family donations, etc.). The articles could also explore how the prices of techniques, donations, or matchmaking services are determined, and investigate the inequalities and power dynamics at play between intermediaries, intended parents, and donors. Finally, the analysis could focus on the decisions made by intended parents between different techniques, as well as between MAR and adoption

**Challenges in Measurement**: The cost of reproductive services is difficult to assess due to numerous hidden costs for individuals, particularly when services are provided within public health systems. However, even in systems where market-driven logic is predominant, estimating the costs of MAR processes and the scale of business involved remains a challenge. Articles could address issues related to calculation and quantification methods that are essential for measuring the size of these sectors, and for understanding what they collectively cost or generate.

Articles, written in French or English, with a maximum length of 60,000 characters (including spaces, footnotes, and bibliography), are expected by **september 5, 2025**.

They should be submitted by email to rf-socioeconomie@univ-lille.fr and to the editors of the special issue:

Elodie Bertrand, CNRS/ISJPS elodie.bertrand@univ-paris1.fr
Virginie Rozée, Ined virginie.rozee@ined.fr
Marie Trespeuch, Sorbonne université/Gemass marie.trespeuch@sorbonne-universite.fr

They must be presented according to the editorial guidelines of the journal: https://rfse.univ-lille.fr/soumettre/un-article

Accepted articles will be published at the end of 2026/ beginning of 2027 in a special online issue with open access.