



Contested Paternity: Constructing Families in Modern France

Rachel G. Fuchs

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This groundbreaking study examines complex notions of paternity and fatherhood in modern France through the lens of contested paternity. Drawing from archival judicial records on paternity suits, paternity denials, deprivation of paternity, and adoption, from the end of the eighteenth century through the twentieth, Rachel G. Fuchs reveals how paternity was defined and how it functioned in the culture and experiences of individual men and women. She addresses the competing definitions of paternity and of families, how public policy toward paternity and the family shifted, and what individuals did to facilitate their personal and familial ideals and goals. Issues of paternity and the family have broad implications for an understanding of how private acts were governed by laws of the state. Focusing on paternity as a category of family history, *Contested Paternity* emphasizes the importance of fatherhood, the family, and the law within the greater context of changing attitudes toward parental responsibility.

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