A New Nomenclature for French Statistics: The Household PCS

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Abstract – The Household PCS (PCS being a French nomenclature of socio-professional categories) enables the social position of a household to be analysed by the cross-referenced situation of the main adults in the household rather than on the basis of the profession of a single individual (reference person, dominant position, etc.). This new nomenclature reflects the multiplicity of resources (economic, educational, etc.) in the form of a hierarchical and modular grid, specifically distinguishing households according to social homogamy and mono- or bi-activity. Compared to approaches that categorise households on the basis of a single individual, it enables social phenomena to be described at household level and is accompanied by an explanatory gain in statistical models. It is made available in official statistics sources from 2022 onwards and is likely to be implemented retrospectively. After describing the Household PCS and its groups, the article illustrates its empirical contribution from three themes (place of residence and housing conditions, standard of living and wealth, educational trajectories of children). Finally, it presents the profound changes in family and professional categories that transformed the household structure between 1982 and 2019.

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In many areas of social sciences research, being able to define and analyse the social position not of an individual but of a household is a key issue. This is notably the case in order to understand the situation of children or adolescents according to their social background, for example in terms of health, development, educational choices or educational outcomes and, more broadly, when dealing with family events (relationship, marriage, birth, separation), place of residence, housing conditions or economic situations (standard of living and wealth, consumption and savings, etc.).[1] The household, whether in the sense of a family and parental unit, a living unit or a fiscal home, is a crucible where the first relationships between individuals are built, where basic socialisation develops, and where decisions are made (between spouses, between parents and children). It is the place of arrangements, negotiations, sometimes tensions, in the determination of both personal and family orientations. In this respect, the analysis of individual professional developments (cessation or resumption of work, change in position or working hours, continuation of training, etc.) would benefit from integrating the household dimension,[2] as well as the analysis of time uses, particularly the distribution of domestic tasks between spouses, lifestyles (sociability, holidays, cultural practices) or health behaviours.[3] The social mobility analysis, which has more often than not been conducted individually based on the father's profession, and more rarely on the mother's (or her qualifications), completes the spectrum of themes for which a definition of social position of the parental couple would enable the renewal of knowledge.

Surprisingly, the official statistical response to this challenge has remained relatively limited: the definition of household reference person was certainly clarified during the 2000s (Saint Pol et al., 2004), but it continues to leave their possible spouse, most often a woman,[4] in the shade. To quote Baudelot & Establet (2005), if households have a class, it still only walks on one leg (male) [*si les ménages ont une classe, elle ne marche toujours que sur une jambe (masculine)*]. In the academic community, no definition of the social position of households that accounts for several adults is imposed, unlike, for example, the EGP classification – for Erikson, Goldthorpe, Portocarero (Erikson et al., 1979) – that was imposed on individual social stratification. In Anglo-Saxon literature, after a heated debate in British sociology in the early 1980s about the relevance and manner in which the situation of women is taken into account in analyses of social stratification and mobility (see Vallet, 2001 for an abstract of this controversy), use of the "dominant position" has spread, although it does not always have the strongest explanatory power (Thaning & Hällsten, 2020).[5] In France, while statisticians and social scientists have made several attempts to combine the work situations of individuals in the household – in the form of a categorical nomenclature (Baudelot & Establet, 2005; Villac, 1983), a continuous index (Lebart et al., 1977; Rocher, 2016) or modular method of construction according to the objects (Cayouette-Remblière & Ichou, 2019) – none have resulted in a widely followed use.

Three main uses co-exist in France today for understanding the socio-professional position of households from individual PCS: reducing the household to the position of one individual (the reference person or dominant position); jointly using the individual socio-professional categories of men and women who comprise the household in econometric models; or systematically cross-referencing them. In the latter case, what is statistically gained in explanatory power is lost in parsimony and legibility of the results, and the cross-referencing constructed often differs between research. The construction of a nomenclature of household social positions therefore responds at least as much to descriptive issues as to analytical ambition: beyond work on particular social or family situations (couples, single-parent families, etc.), or the estimation of models where social position only has a role as a control variable, the aim is to provide a stable, limited, organised and exhaustive categorisation of social household configurations, enabling comparisons and cumulative work.

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1. All of these subjects have recently been studied from the perspective of the social position of households in quantitative work in social sciences (e.g. Berthomier & Octobre, 2018; Brinbaum et al., 2018; Cayouette-Remblière & Moulin, 2019; Gaini et al., 2020; van Zanten, 2009).
2. In economics, an analysis in terms of the labour supply of households, and not just the individuals that comprise them, could help to reform the non-unified scope of work focusing on women's labour supply (Briard, 2017).
3. Goffette (2016) highlights, for example, that tobacco consumption is partly determined at household level.
4. The reference person is now most often defined by the economic contribution to household resources – so the main contributor of resources defines the reference person – or, in the absence of that information, by age (this is particularly the case in the population census). Given the persistent differences in income and age between women and men within couples, these definitions remain indirectly androcentric.
5. For a recent literature review of international debates around the dominance approach, see Cayouette-Remblière & Ichou (2019, pp. 388–390). Incidentally, applying it to the French situation requires prioritising a nomenclature that does not take this approach (Desrosières & Thévenot, 2002).

This article presents such a categorisation. It was produced by a working group[6] composed of researchers specialising in social stratification, statisticians and users of official statistics within the framework of the reform of the nomenclature of professions and socio-professional categories (PCS) undertaken in 2018 (Amossé *et al.*, 2019). Synthetically taking into account the cross-referenced situation of the main adults in the household, both readable and standardised, the Household PCS is made available in a wide range of official statistics sources from 2022 onwards and can be implemented retrospectively. As with the nomenclature of PCS for analyses conducted at individual level, it enables a statistical basis to be given to analyses of classes conducted at household level using various theoretical frameworks.

1. A Social Position Taking Into Account Household Composition

1.1. Overview

The Household PCS is a new nomenclature that combines information on the composition of the household and on the socio-professional situation of its members. Classifying all households into 7 groups and 16 sub-groups, it refers in its headings to the most aggregated level of the individual PCS (Table 1). More specifically, it combines this information for the two main adults in the household (usually the reference person and their spouse). At sub-group level, it distinguishes households with only one economically active (or retired)[7] adult from those with a couple of economically active people, who themselves are distinguished according to the criterion of social homogamy.

This nomenclature was developed using a hierarchical ascending classification constructed around the 48 household configurations obtained by cross-referencing the socio-professional groups[8] of the two potential adults in the household (Table 2), based on the analysis of different forms of resources available to them (standard of living, qualifications, social background, employment situation, occupancy status and size of the dwelling, geographical situation). These analyses were carried out based on two sources (the INSEE 2013 Survey on tax and social income – ERSF – and the DEPP[9] 2007 panel of second-degree students) that cover two populations (all households and all parents) and have confirmed the stability of the groupings ultimately retained. In order to promote the legibility and use of the nomenclature, and reading of the empirical results, it

was decided not to take into account the gender of the two potential spouses and thus to retain a symmetric and nested nomenclature, following the classification tree study (for details on construction of the nomenclature, see Online Appendix C1 – link at the end of the article).

1.2. Group Portraits

Composed of couples of executives who are strictly (I-A) or partly (I-B) socially homogamous, the households of group I accumulate the resources of bi-activity and the highest socio-professional positions. In every other case,[10] the man is an engineer or company manager (CS 37 and 38), the positions occupied by women being more varied (between middle management or administrative executive and company sales representative, CS 46 or 37, and teacher or higher scientific profession, CS 34). Among couples that are not strictly homogamous (I-B), men's position is higher than women's in 70% of cases. Predominantly executive households are distinguished both by their high level of economic resources (68% in the top quintile of standard of living) and educational resources (79% of couples have at least one spouse with an undergraduate university degree or higher) – these values are even higher in the sub-group I-A, which is also the most concentrated in the Paris urban area.

Essentially composed of socially heterogamous executives or those with no spouse and homogamous couples of people in the middle-management category, group II is below group I in terms of economic resources (41%

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6. This is one of the sub-groups of the CNIS (the French National council for statistical information) working group on the reform of the 2020 PCS. Named the "Aggregates" sub-group and coordinated by the authors of this article, it was composed (in alphabetical order) of: Sarah Abdelnour (Université Paris 10), Michel Amar (formerly INSEE), Thomas Amossé (Cnam), Milan Bouchet-Valat (Ined), Fanny Bugeja (Université Paris 10), Joanie Cayouette-Remblière (Ined), Jean Flamand (France Stratégie), Céline Goffette (Ensae), Pauline Grégoire-Marchand (France Stratégie), Julien Gros (CNRS), Julie Landour (CEET), Pierre Mercklé (Université de Grenoble Alpes), Monique Meron (formerly INSEE), Christophe Michel (Dares), Olivier Monso (DEPP), Tiaray Razafindranovona (INSEE), Louis-André Vallet (CNRS) and Loup Wolff (Deps).
7. With income related to their (past) professional activity, retirees are considered in the same way as the economically active in the Household PCS. Thereafter, unless otherwise stated, the concept of economically active people will thus include retirees in the text, as opposed to other economically inactive and unemployed people who have never worked.
8. Online Appendix C1 explains why prototypes developed from socio-professional groups were preferred to those based on socio-professional categories.
9. The statistical services of the ministry of Education.
10. The numerical data indicated in this section refers to analyses carried out based on the 2019 Employment survey for family and socio-professional configurations and, for the description in terms of resources, based on the 2013 Tax and Social Incomes survey used to draft the nomenclature (see Online Appendix C2). These analyses were carried out on ordinary households with no retirees or economically inactive people aged 60 and over, which gives a more faithful picture of working households and parental couples (used for analyses in terms of social background, for example).

	Ordinary households		Ordinary households with no retirees or economically inactive people aged 60 years and over	
	Number of people (thousands)	Proportion (%)	Number of people (thousands)	Proportion (%)
I. Predominantly executive households	2,550	8.7	1,787	10.5
I-A Executive with executive	1,117	3.8	829	4.9
I-B Executive with middle-management profession	1,433	4.9	957	5.7
II. Predominantly middle-management (or executive) households	5,198	17.8	3,290	19.4
II-A Executive with white or blue-collar worker	1,124	3.9	600	3.5
II-B Executive with economically inactive* or no spouse	2,224	7.6	1,505	8.9
II-C Middle-management or executive profession with self-employed small business owner	722	2.5	435	2.6
II-D Middle-management profession with middle-management profession	1,128	3.9	750	4.4
III. Predominantly white-collar (or middle-management) households	6,315	21.7	3,793	22.4
III-A Middle-management profession with white- or blue-collar worker	2,563	8.8	1,507	8.9
III-B Middle-management profession with economically inactive* or no spouse	3,012	10.3	1,859	11.0
III-C White-collar worker with white-collar worker	740	2.5	426	2.5
IV. Predominantly self-employed small business owner households	2,487	8.5	1,137	6.7
IV-A Self-employed small business owner living with another self-employed/economically inactive adult or lives alone	1,625	5.6	687	4.1
IV-B Self-employed small business owner with white- or blue-collar worker	862	3.0	450	2.7
V. Predominantly blue-collar worker households	3,099	10.6	1,615	9.5
V-A Blue-collar worker with white-collar worker	2,288	7.8	1,264	7.5
V-B Blue-collar worker with blue-collar worker	811	2.8	351	2.1
VI. Households with a white- or blue-collar worker	7,603	26.1	4,086	24.1
VI-A White-collar worker with economically inactive* or no spouse	4,264	14.6	2,273	13.4
VI-B Blue-collar worker with economically inactive* or no spouse	3,340	11.5	1,813	10.7
VII. Economically inactive households*	1,922	6.6	1,249	7.4
VII-A Economically inactive with economically inactive or no spouse	1,922	6.6	1,249	7.4

Notes: *"economically inactive" excludes retirees; the wording "executive" refers to the group of executives and higher intellectual professions and, where possible to distinguish them, to the category of company managers of companies with more than ten people. All the headings of the socio-professional groups and categories cited in the article refer to the headings chosen during the updating of the 2020 PCS, as specified in the nomenclature presentation guide.
Sources and coverage: INSEE, *enquête Emploi* (Labour Force Survey) 2019; ordinary households (France, excluding Mayotte).

Table 2 – **The structural matrix of the Household PCS**

Adult 1 / Adult 2	Executive and company manager	Middle-management profession	Self-employed small business owner	White-collar worker	Blue-collar worker	Economically inactive or missing status	No adult 1
Executive and company manager	I-A	I-B	II-C	II-A	II-A	II-B	II-B
Middle-management profession	I-B	II-D	II-C	III-A	III-A	III-B	III-B
Self-employed small business owner	II-C	II-C	IV-A	IV-B	IV-B	IV-A	IV-A
White-collar worker	II-A	III-A	IV-B	III-C	V-A	VI-A	VI-A
Blue-collar worker	II-A	III-A	IV-B	V-A	V-B	VI-B	VI-B
Economically inactive or missing status	II-B	III-B	IV-A	VI-A	VI-B	VII-A	VII-A
No adult 2	II-B	III-B	IV-A	VI-A	VI-B	VII-A	

Notes: Unemployed workers who have already worked and retirees are classified according to their last job. The concepts of adult 1 and adult 2 may refer to the reference persons and their potential spouse, or to parents 1 and 2 (most often father and mother).

of households in the last standard of living quintile) and educational resources (54% with at least one adult who has an undergraduate university degree or higher). However, the hierarchy between sub-groups changes depending on the type of resources. For example, executives with an economically inactive spouse or no spouse (II-B) have, on average, a higher standard of living and higher qualifications than households in other sub-groups, but a lower property wealth. Among couples in middle-management professions (II-D), which comprise one third and one quarter of men and women in primary education professions or similar (CS 42) and middle-management health or social work professions (CS 43), a high proportion (43%) include at least one civil servant. Sub-groups are also differentiated by the degree of asymmetry of positions occupied by women and men. Three sub-groups appear relatively symmetrical: by construction, socially homogamous middle-management professions (II-D), executives or middle-management professions with self-employed (II-C), whose modal situation is the man who is an artisan or trader (CS 21 or 22) and the woman who is in a middle-management administrative profession or a company sales representative (CS 46), and executives with an economically inactive spouse or no spouse (II-B), where the proportions of executive women and men without a spouse are close (42%[11] and 45% respectively). In contrast, female social hypergamy dominates among heterogamous executives (II-A), a sub-group composed of 71% male executives in a couple with a white- or blue-collar worker.

Group III, comprising heterogamous middle-management professions, with either one of the spouses economically inactive or no spouse and homogamous white-collar workers, complements the vast array of households ranging from mid-positions to the highest positions in society. It is one level below the previous groups in terms of economic resources (in the third and fourth standard of living quintiles) and academic resources (less often holding an undergraduate university degree or higher, but almost always having qualifications). Unlike the equivalent sub-group for executives (II-A), that of middle-management professions with a white- or blue-collar worker (III-A) is almost as much composed of hypogamous men – from middle-management professions (especially technicians or supervisors) whose spouse is white-collar or, more rarely, blue-collar – as hypogamous women (for example, a middle-management health or social professional

whose spouse is a blue-collar worker or, more rarely, a white-collar worker). The sub-group of middle-management professions with an economically inactive or no spouse (III-B) is more female (52% female with no spouse, compared to 38% male with no spouse). Relatively less frequent in the total population, the sub-group of homogamous white-collar workers (III-C) has greater resources than those in groups V and VI, where other white-collar workers are classified. Thanks to the bi-activity and the fact that homogamous white-collar workers are recruited in the most qualified categories of white-collar workers, these white-collar workers should not be confused with working classes: more than two thirds are in the third standard of living quintile; 43% of households in this sub-group include at least one civil servant; finally, 26% of households have at least one person with higher education qualifications.

Group IV, predominantly self-employed/small business owner households, includes farmers, artisans or traders, unless they are in a couple with an executive spouse or a spouse in a middle-management profession (sub-group II-C). This group occupies a pivotal position, with resources close to those of the working class households in groups V, VI and VII, but a level of wealth that brings them closer to groups I and II. The households in this group are the most evenly distributed in all standard of living quintiles (yet with slight over-representation in the first quintile). They also overwhelmingly own their home, which, more than in other groups, is large and located far away from large urban areas. The group is characterised by high social reproduction (one of the adults has a self-employed/small business owner parent in nearly one in two households, which is twice the average). It has two sub-groups: the first (IV-A) is a group of household configurations counting male (40%) or female (20%) self-employed with no spouse, or homogamous (26%) or self-employed with an economically inactive spouse (14%) – who share the fact of being less financially well-off (44% belong to the first standard of living quintile) and more often than not without qualifications (16%), but relatively well-off with regard to property wealth (32% own a large home). A little more than one male farmer in two is in this sub-group, compared to 40% of male artisans. In the second sub-group (IV-B), composed of self-employed in couple with a

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11. *In fact, the II-B sub-group concentrates a significant proportion of female executives: it concerns 40% of female executives in the fields of information, art or entertainment (CS 35) and 36% of female teachers or those who exercise a higher scientific profession (CS 34).*

white- or blue-collar worker, being in a couple outside the self-employed sector enables them to combine greater professional stability, a dual income and a relatively high level of wealth.

Couples with a dominant blue-collar worker (group V) constitute the fraction of working-class households where resources (economic but also educational, social, etc.), although low, can be pooled between spouses. Their bi-activity provides them with a standard of living close to the median (between the second and fourth quintiles) and spouses often have a qualification (second degree vocational qualifications – CAP, BEP –, or the baccalaureate). They often reside outside of large urban areas, and about half own or have a mortgage on their homes, and their places of residence allow them to access ownership without compromising on the size of the home. The slightly better off V-A sub-group most often reproduces a "classic" gender configuration, with a white-collar female and blue-collar male (more often than not with qualifications). With fewer qualifications and more often settled in rural communes, couples in the V-B sub-group bring together more low-skilled blue-collar workers (CS 67 and 68).

With socio-professional categories identical to those of group V, group VI of households with one white- or blue-collar worker and the spouse economically inactive or no spouse, which represents nearly one in four households in France, is mainly characterised by situations of singledom and single parenthood. It is composed of 37% single men, 48% single women and 12% male white- or blue-collar workers with an economically inactive spouse.[12] These households are predominantly between the first and second standard of living quintiles and have fewer resources (qualifications, social background, and housing) than those of the previous groups. White-collar workers with an economically inactive spouse or no spouse (VI-A) – women in three quarters of cases – are the largest sub-group numerically; they are primarily civil servants working in administration, health service officers or health assistants (CS 52), and employees of direct services to private individuals (CS 56). Comprising 1 in 10 households, 40% of blue-collar workers and 1 in 4 economically inactive women, the sub-group of blue-collar workers with an economically inactive or no spouse (VI-B) concentrates the low-skilled fraction of the working world.

Yet it is the last group – that of households composed solely of economically inactive people (group VII) – that comprises the majority of inactive people (47% inactive women and 75% inactive men belong to this group). Depending solely on resources from social welfare or private solidarity, these households, although few, form a separate group. They are made up of 37% single men, 57% single women, and only 6% couples. Heavily concentrated in the first standard of living quintile (71%), they rarely have qualifications (69% have, at most, a secondary education certificate – BEPC) and make up the group with the least favourable social background.

1.3. Availability and Principles of Nomenclature Construction

Together, these 7 groups and 16 sub-groups enable the socio-professional structure of households in France to be described in a new way. Referring to the historical categories and groups of the individual socio-professional nomenclature and summarising, as it does, several dimensions of social characteristics, the Household PCS was designed to be easily appropriable by researchers and statisticians. For descriptive and explanatory purposes, it will be progressively made available in all sources of official statistics in France from 2022 onwards.

Its construction principle (cf. Table 2 and a presentation in algorithmic form in Online Appendix C3) allows for retrospective implementation back to 1982. Implementation only requires entering the individual socio-professional group[13] of the two main adults in the household and specifying the definition of the household to be used: "housing" (as in the census), "living unit" (or "fiscal home", which tends to become the norm in official statistics), or even "family" or "parental couple" (for example, in surveys regarding children,[14] or in the analysis of social mobility). The choice of the two main adults in the household is, in

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12. Female white- or blue-collar workers with an economically inactive spouse represent only 3% of the group.

13. This is usually the first position of the 'CSTOT' variable (the 2-digits detailed socio-professional category defined on the whole population), where the categories of retirees are classified according to their previous profession. More specifically, a slightly adapted version of the six original groups in the 1982 nomenclature is used to define the Household PCS, as shown in Table 2. For reasons of sample size and proximity in terms of resources held, the two groups of farmers and artisans and traders have been grouped together (they are all "self-employed/small business owners"), and the company manager with more than ten people category is included in the group of executives and higher intellectual professions when data permits (in the opposite case, they remain with the "self-employed/small business owners").

14. In this case, we can even define a child's reference household in different ways according to whether we take a residential, educational or social background approach; the household may include the two parents or step-parents providing primary/alternate care of the child, ensuring their education, or the biological parents (who constitute a household or pseudo-household of origin).

principle, left to users and is modular according to analysis needs, but the version retained in official statistics sources will be consistent with the concepts of household and reference person in each survey, namely, a construction based on the household's "reference" adults in terms of their activity status, economic contribution, parental position, etc. that the reference person and their potential spouse represent. Thus constructed, the Household PCS enables biases linked to gender or age to be eliminated, including retrospectively, in the sense that the principles for drawing up the nomenclature are totally symmetrical between the two main adults (see Table 2), unlike the single reference person PCS.

The way in which groups and sub-groups in the Household PCS are referred to can also be adapted to the objects and fields studied. For example, groups VI and VII can be merged for analyses conducted on the parents' field (see below). Finally, the choice to mobilise groups or sub-groups – like the choice to rely on groups or socio-professional categories for analyses of individuals – is left to the discretion of each user, depending on the advantages and disadvantages that the following section will partially clarify.

2. Explanatory Power and Descriptive Interest: Three Empirical Illustrations

Frugal, the Household PCS has an undeniable advantage in describing social phenomena at household level. It is also more explanatory[15] in the statistical models, reflecting the socio-professional position of the two main adults in the household and their articulation. The analysis of three different research themes provides an illustration of its empirical contribution.

2.1. Place of Residence and Housing Conditions

Up until the 2000s, place of residence and housing conditions were mostly studied according to the socio-professional category of the household reference person taken as the social position of the household (for work conducted during this period see, in particular, Bonvalet & Lelièvre, 1991; Bonvalet, 2003). In light of today's dissatisfaction with this type of approach, some authors characterise households by the highest profession (or "dominant position"; see, for example, Le Roux *et al.*, 2020), but many others abandon the socio-professional categories and only take into account income and standards of living.[16] If, in this second trend, we can see an additional manifestation of the

"twilight of PCS" (Pierru & Spire, 2008), we may also think that the income approach enables the difficulty of characterising a household on the basis of the PCS of one of its members to be circumvented. However, by considering the socio-professional positions of two potential adults, and also by taking into account the social homogamy or bi- or mono-activity of couples, the Household PCS better accounts for residential positions at all levels of the social hierarchy, and provides a significant statistical gain compared to other variables (PCS of the reference person, highest PCS, household income).

For the better-off, the combination of two high professional positions reinforces the residential advantage of executives. For the most part homeowners, predominantly executive households more often than not live in a house and have an average of 30 m^2 more than the average French household, although they are over-represented in the Parisian urban area (Table 3).[17] Sticking to a characterisation by the reference person would obscure part of this benefit, by showing, for households whose reference person is an executive in relation to group I of the Household PCS, a rate of ownership lower by 8 percentage points, a proportion of households residing in a house lower by 10 points, and a number of square meters separating them from the average divided by 2.

At the other end of the nomenclature, the Household PCS highlights the divide between working class households in groups V and VI. Though 50% of households whose reference person is a blue-collar worker are owners, this is the case for 62% of predominantly blue-collar worker households, and 37% of households composed of only one white- or blue-collar worker. Conversely, while 24% of households whose reference person is a blue-collar worker are tenants in social housing, this situation is rarer in predominantly blue-collar worker households and more frequent among households with only one white- or blue-collar worker (Table 3). The Household PCS thus accounts for the

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15. *Notions of "explaining" gain, or explanatory power are understood in the sense of the statistical quality of the models to account for the variance of the phenomena studied, not in an analytical sense. It is measured using McFadden's pseudo-R^2 (for logistic regressions conducted on nominal variables) or R^2 (for linear regressions conducted on continuous variables). These two indicators of statistical power are influenced by the number of nomenclature modalities compared; that is why their explanatory contribution is systematically reduced to the number of nomenclature modalities.*
16. *For example, all of the works published by INSEE on the 2013 Housing survey (Laferrère et al., 2017).*
17. *These analyses are carried out on all households, the main difference with the field of households with no retirees or economically inactive people 60 years of age and over being the increase in groups and sub-groups composed of individuals with no spouse, due to widowhood.*

Table 3 – **Indicators of residence and dwelling per Household PCS**

	Occupancy status (%*)			Dwelling type (%*)		% living in deprived neigh-bour. (ZUS)	Average living area (m²)	Place of residence (%)			
	Owner	Social sector hou-sing	Private rental	House	Apart.			Paris (urban area)	Other urban areas	Peri-urban areas	Rural areas
I. Predominantly executive households	82	2	15	67	32	6	121	29	42	22	8
I-A Executive with executive	84	1	14	63	37	6	125	36	40	18	6
I-B Executive with middle-management profession	81	2	15	71	29	6	118	23	43	25	9
II. Predominantly middle-management (or executive) households	71	6	21	60	39	7	104	23	40	25	11
II-A Executive with white or blue-collar worker	79	5	14	73	27	7	113	18	39	32	11
II-B Executive with economically inactive or no spouse	60	7	31	39	60	9	88	35	44	14	8
II-C Middle-management or executive profes-sion with self-employed small busi. own.	82	2	15	76	21	6	127	13	36	30	22
II-D Middle-management profession with middle-management profession	79	5	15	77	22	5	111	14	37	36	13
III. Predominantly white-collar (or middle-management) households	62	13	22	59	40	11	90	17	43	26	14
III-A Middle-management profession with white- or blue-collar worker	76	8	14	76	23	8	103	11	38	32	18
III-B Middle-management profession with economically inactive or no spouse	51	17	29	42	56	13	79	22	47	20	11
III-C White-collar worker with white-collar worker	58	16	21	64	34	15	94	14	45	28	13
IV. Predominantly self-employed small business owner households	77	6	14	79	19	5	107	8	30	29	33
IV-A Self-employed small business owner living with another self employed/ economically inactive adult or lives alone	76	6	15	77	20	5	104	7	29	28	35
IV-B Self-employed small business owner with white- or blue-collar worker	78	7	13	83	15	5	113	8	33	29	29
V. Predominantly blue-collar worker households	62	18	18	72	27	12	94	9	38	30	23
V-A Blue-collar worker with white-collar worker	61	18	18	71	28	13	94	9	39	31	21
V-B Blue-collar worker with blue-collar worker	64	18	16	74	24	11	93	6	37	30	27
VI. Households with a white- or blue-collar worker	37	31	29	41	56	21	72	14	51	18	17
VI-A White-collar worker with economically inactive or no spouse	38	31	28	38	59	21	72	17	52	17	14
VI-B Blue-collar worker with economically inactive or no spouse	35	31	30	45	52	22	73	10	50	20	20
VII. Economically inactive households	25	19	51	29	68	21	61	11	65	12	12
VII-A Economically inactive with economically inactive or no spouse	25	19	51	29	68	21	61	11	65	12	12
Total	58	16	24	57	42	13	91	16	44	23	17

* "other" situations involving between 1 and 4% of each sub-group are not shown here.
Sources and coverage: INSEE, *enquête Logement* (Housing survey) 2013; all households.

predominant weight of the couple and the bi-ac-tivity within working class households, which is also observed by ethnographers (Masclet *et al.*, 2020).

In the median fraction of the nomenclature, it is at sub-group level that the Household PCS turns out to be heuristic. On the one hand, the homogamous middle-management professions

(II-D) are mainly homeowners, a situation that goes hand-in-hand with their larger pres-ence in peri-urban areas. In this way, they are closer to predominantly self-employed house-holds (group IV), who, in turn, choose to live in rural areas. On the other hand, the middle-man-agement professions with an economically inactive spouse or no spouse (III-B) reside more in large urban areas (in particular Paris), more

often than not in an apartment, and are less often homeowners. This sub-group even resides as frequently as the average in a deprived neighbourhood, or in a ZUS (sensitive urban area) (13%), of which it is often the most well-off population.

Table 4 presents the result of further analyses conducted in order to quantify the explanatory gain of the Household PCS groups compared to the reference person's socio-professional group and the dominant position. Comparison of these three ways in which to characterise the household from six or seven groups (see the first three columns of Table 4) consistently shows an increase in the explanatory power (between 11% and 69% depending on variables and nomenclature) with the Household PCS.

The same type of comparison is made for income quartiles, which are the most used in recent literature, but this first implies to reduce the sample analysed, with 2% of respondents in the Housing survey having not declared their incomes. In this sub-sample, the income quartiles are, with only four categories, only a little better than the groups in the Household PCS in explaining the status of owner and the fact of living in a deprived neighbourhood (ZUS), but not very useful at all if we are interested in the type of housing or place of residence, determined more so by professional specificities (Bruneau *et al.*, 2018).

2.2. Household Financial Situation

The economic situation of households is another area of analysis for which the use of social position variables at household level is sought, but currently remains too limited. Statisticians, economists or sociologists thus describe the social differences in the population using internal logic – as when comparing average amounts of income, standard of living or wealth according to the deciles of these same variables – or by referring to the household reference person's group or socio-professional category (see Blasco & Labarthe, 2018 for a recent example). In the wealth or consumption surveys (*enquête Patrimoine, enquête Budget de famille*), the common sources for analysing these issues, the reference person is defined as the household's main contributor of resources. Yet, as we will see in the models explaining the poverty rate or level of wealth of households, the reference person has less statistical power than the Household PCS.

Firstly, we note that the Household PCS reflects the hierarchy of economic situations (Table 5). The median standard of living (disposable income per unit of consumption) varies from €30,800 per year for predominantly executive households (group I) to €8,000 for economically inactive households (group VII). Reflecting the lifetime differences and household debt capacity, the median gross wealth has an even wider spectrum of variation, ranging from €372,900 to €4,900 (a multiplicative factor of 75). Between these two extreme situations, the gradation is regular between the groups in the Household PCS; only the predominantly self-employed household group is singled out both by poverty rates that bring them closer to working class household groups (V, VI and VII) and by levels of wealth that, on the contrary, link them to more affluent households (groups I and II). By showing this pivotal position, the nomenclature reflects the singularity of self-employed small business owners, whose incomes, often unstable, are marked by a large dispersion and are, in part, determined according to a logic of wealth

Table 4 – **Comparison of the explanatory powers in terms of residence and dwelling**

	McFadden's pseudo-R^2 depending on nomenclatures (%)					Explanatory gains (%)		
	(1) Household PCS (7 groups)	(2) Reference persons (6 groups*)	(3) Dominant position (6 groups)	(4) Revenue quartiles (4 categories)**	(5) Household PCS (16 sub-groups)	1 vs 2	1 vs 3	1 vs 4
Being an owner [58%]	9.2	6.2	7.3	7.5	10.8	+48	+26	+23
Living in a deprived neighbourhood (ZUS) [13%]	4.5	3.4	3.9	4.0	4.9	+32	+15	+13
Living in a house [57%]	5.9	3.5	3.5	1.5	9.5	+69	+69	+293
Living in a large urban area (including Paris) [60%]	3.0	2.6	2.7	1.0	4.9	+15	+11	+200

* Defined using the same socio-professional groups as in the construction of the Household PCS (see above): executives or company managers; middle-management professions; farmers, artisans or traders; white-collar workers; blue-collar workers; economically inactive people. The order of these groups is that used to determine the dominant position.
Notes: Statistics obtained from weighted regressions. Percentages in the whole population in brackets.
Sources and coverage: INSEE, *enquête Logement* (Housing survey) 2013; all households (**: who have declared their income)

Table 5 – **Economic indicators by Household PCS**

	Median annual standard of living (€)	Poverty rate (%)	Wealth rate (%)	Median gross wealth (€)	Share of gross wealth less than €4,300	Share of gross wealth over €595,700
I. Predominantly executive households	30,800	3.1	21.1	372,900	0.0	29.0
I-A Executive with executive	35,300	2.7	30.5	458,300	0.0	39.7
I-B Executive with middle-management profession	28,600	3.4	12.9	331,800	0.0	19.6
II. Predominantly middle-management (or executive) households	24,300	8.1	12.7	270,300	2.0	16.3
II-A Executive with white or blue-collar worker	23,900	6.3	10.0	317,500	1.5	16.8
II-B Executive with economically inactive or no spouse	25,300	10.4	18.3	194,600	3.6	12.8
II-C Middle-management or executive profession with self-employed small business owner	27,000	4.9	13.0	414,300	0.0	36.4
II-D Middle-management profession with middle-management profession	22,700	7.5	4.6	259,400	0.7	9.3
III. Predominantly white-collar (or middle-management) households	19,500	11.5	2.3	150,400	5.7	3.6
III-A Middle-management profession with white- or blue-collar worker	20,500	6.7	1.1	213,000	2.5	4.3
III-B Middle-management profession with economically inactive or no spouse	18,500	16.2	3.7	59,600	9.0	3.3
III-C White-collar worker with white-collar worker	18,600	10.7	0.9	161,500	4.1	1.9
IV. Predominantly self-employed small business owner households	14,000	39.2	5.5	293,700	2.8	25.5
IV-A Self-employed small business owner living with another self-employed/economically inactive adult or lives alone	12,600	45.9	5.4	249,700	4.2	24.0
IV-B Self-employed small business owner with white- or blue-collar worker	16,300	30.0	5.5	329,600	1.0	27.6
V. Predominantly blue-collar worker households	17,100	17.8	0.1	144,400	6.8	1.1
V-A Blue-collar worker with white-collar worker	17,200	17.7	0.1	153,600	5.4	1.1
V-B Blue-collar worker with blue-collar worker	16,800	17.9	0.0	105,800	11.5	1.1
VI. Households with a white- or blue-collar worker	13,900	35.8	0.7	13,600	25.6	1.1
VI-A White-collar worker with economically inactive or no spouse	14,300	32.3	0.3	13,200	25.7	0.9
VI-B Blue-collar worker with economically inactive or no spouse	13,600	39.8	1.1	14,000	25.4	1.4
VII. Economically inactive households	8,000	73.3	0.8	4,900	45.9	0.4
VII-A Economically inactive with economically inactive or no spouse	8,000	73.3	0.8	4,900	45.9	0.4
Total	*17,900*	*22.5*	*5.3*	*135,900*	*11.2*	*9.0*

Notes: Standards of living, poverty rates (standard of living below 60% of the median, i.e. €1,015 per month as of 1 January 2015) and wealth rates (standard of living above double the median, i.e. €3,384 per month as of 1 January 2015) are obtained from tax data; the total gross wealth indicators are calculated from the respondents' declarations, with thresholds of €4,300 and €595,700 corresponding to the first and last decile (Ferrante *et al.,* 2016).
Sources and coverage: INSEE, *enquête Patrimoine* (Wealth survey) 2014; all households with no retirees or economically inactive people aged 60 years or over.

accumulation (professional assets constitute on average only one fifth of their total wealth).

High levels of wealth can also be seen in sub-group II-C (executive or middle-management profession in a couple with a self-employed/ small business owner), but this time associated with a more comfortable economic position. Contrary to the reference person approach, the Household PCS thus gives us a new way of perceiving fundamental distinctions between households with self-employed/small business owners according to the position of their spouse. More broadly, the nomenclature allows the economic situation of couples according to the

degree of social homogamy to be differentiated. The median gross wealth levels of couples in which one of the spouses is an executive are thus between €458,300 if the other spouse is an executive (I-A), €331,800 if he/she is in a middle-management profession (I-B), €317,500 if he/she is a white- or blue-collar worker (II-A), and €194,600 if he or she is economically inactive or if there is no spouse (II-B).

Finally, the sub-groups in the Household PCS highlights the particular situation of households with only one economically active person: whether at the top (II-B), in the middle (III-B, IV-A), or at the bottom of the nomenclature (VI-A,

VI-B), these households are systematically more at risk of poverty and have a lower level of wealth than those in which both spouses are economically active. In this landscape, groups VI and VII (households with only one white- or blue-collar worker, or households of economically inactive persons) are distinguished by the accumulation of particularly high poverty rates (above 30%) and an equally high proportion of absence (or near absence) of wealth. Their situation is very different from couples that are predominantly blue-collar (group V), whose poverty rate is twice lower and the proportion of quasi-zero wealth is divided by four. Such distinctions cannot, again, be highlighted using the socio-professional group of the household's sole reference person.

Overall, the statistical power of the Household PCS appears to be equivalent or superior of a characterisation by the reference person for all of the indicators analysed (Table 6). The most notable explanatory gains relate to the poverty and wealth rate below the first decile, which refers to the relevance of groups VI and VII of the Household PCS in representing the most fragile economic situations (on the contrary, diluted in the "white-collar worker" and "blue-collar worker" groups when referring to the sole reference person). The advantage of sub-groups over groups appears clearly for indicators of wealth and high level of wealth, due to the specificity of the sub-group of homogamous executives on the one hand, and the differences between sub-groups with self-employed small business owners on the other.

2.3. Children's Educational Trajectories

In the field of education, the father's profession has long been used as a measure of the social background of children. Its administrative

adaptation through the category of "pupil guardian" – the father when there is one, the mother in the opposite case – now determines certain scientific and analytical uses, and implementation beyond reflection on public policy. Therefore, for example, the map of priority education networks (REP) is drawn from a small number of indicators, including the profession of the pupil guardian. Recently, however, some sociologists have advocated use of the mother's profession, arguing that it is the mother who does most of the educational work (Champagne *et al.*, 2015), while still others have implemented *ad hoc* nomenclatures with regard to the dominant position (Brinbaum *et al.*, 2018; Cayouette-Remblière & Moulin, 2019). In light of these plural uses, the nomenclature of the Household PCS has several advantages.

Firstly, it provides a statistical gain compared to other nomenclatures of common professions. The study of three "events" in educational trajectories correlated with social background, namely general or technological (GT) orientation in Year 11 (a situation that concerns 59% of a generation of pupils), repeating a year in primary school or in one of the first three years at high school (27% of pupils) and being enrolled for at least one year in enhanced priority education[18] (2.7% of pupils) illustrates this. For these three events of a varied nature, and with an equivalent number of modalities for each nomenclature, the Household PCS enables an average gain of 7% in explanatory power compared to the dominant profession, 35% compared to the father's profession and 31% compared to the mother's profession (Table 7). The interest is not only descriptive: it also makes

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18. *At the end of the 2000s, priority education was divided into two levels: an enhanced framework called the "Réseau Ambition Réussite" (ambition success network) was created for the minority of establishments most in need; the current equivalent is REP+.*

Table 6 – **Comparison of the explanatory power in terms of economic situation**

	R^2 (or McFadden's pseudo-R^2) for the three nomenclatures			Explanatory gains (%)	
	(1) Reference person (6 groups*)	(2) Household PCS (7 groups)	(3) Household PCS (16 sub-groups)	2 vs 1	3 vs 2
Standard of living	14.2	16.1	16.8	+13	+4
Poverty rate	12.1	15.3	16.2	+26	+6
Wealth rate	18.6	18.4	21.3	−1	+16
Gross wealth	6.5	6.7	8.3	+3	+24
Share of gross wealth ≤ €4300	13.8	19.6	20.9	+42	+7
Share of gross wealth ≥ €595,700	17.7	19.8	22.1	+12	+12

* cf. Table 3.
One variant of reference person, in which farmers are separated from artisans and traders (which allows the exact same number of modalities in both nomenclatures), only modifies the results marginally.
Notes: Statistics obtained from weighted regressions.
Sources and coverage: INSEE, *enquête Patrimoine* (Wealth survey) 2014; all households with no retirees or economically inactive people aged 60 years or over.

Table 7 – **Comparison of explanatory power on school events**

	McFadden's pseudo-R^2				Explanatory gains (%)		
	(1) Household PCS (6 groups)[a]	(2) Dominant profession (6 groups)[b]	(3) Father's profession (6 groups)[c]	(4) Mother's profession (6 groups)[c]	1 vs 2	1 vs 3	1 vs 4
At least one year in enhanced priority education	9.5	8.8	7.0	7.7	+8	+35	+23
Repeated year in primary, Year 7, Year 8 or Year 9	9.0	8.3	6.5	6.8	+9	+39	+33
Orientation in Year 11 GT	11.9	11.2	9.1	8.7	+6	+31	+37

[a] Given the lower share of groups VI (13%) and VII (1.5%) of the parent population of pupils in relation to the total population, they were grouped together.
[b] The dominant profession variable was built iteratively by prioritising professions as follows: (1) at least one executive or company manager parent; or (2) at least one middle-management profession parent; or (3) at least one farmer, artisan or trader parent; or (4) at least one white-collar worker parent; or (5) at least one blue-collar worker parent; or (6) all parents are economically inactive.
[c] The professions of the father and mother were also classified into six groups. Following the example of what is done for the Household PCS, company managers have been grouped together with executives, and farmers, artisans, and traders form the "self-employed/small business owners" category. When no profession was entered for the mother (6%), the father's profession was considered, and when no profession was entered for the father (10%), the mother's profession was considered.
Notes: Statistics obtained from weighted regressions.
Sources and coverage: MEN-DEPP, *Panel d'élèves du second degré* 2007 and family survey 2008; all students entered in Year 7 in 2007, respondents to the Family survey, except pupils for whom no parent profession is provided (*N*=32,585).

it possible to avoid attributing part of the effect of social background to other variables that are correlated to it (place of residence, schooling context, immigrant status, etc.).

The Household PCS also better accounts for the social hierarchy of pupils' families (Table 8) by distinguishing, at the top, homogamous executive families (I-A) and, at the bottom, those of groups VI and VII, which better highlight the school dropout rate which is more frequent in children from the most vulnerable households.

Finally, the sub-groups of the nomenclature highlight the effects of the bi-activity and social homogamy of the parental couple on the educational trajectories of children in upper-, middle- and working-class households (Online Appendix, Table C4). For example, a secondary school pupil, both of whose parents are executives (I-A) has a 91% chance of being oriented towards a GT pathway in Year 11, compared to 78% if one of their parents is an executive and the other a white- or blue-collar worker. Among households with a lower social position, a student whose parents are both in a middle-management profession (II-D) has an 81% chance of being of being oriented towards a GT pathway in Year 11, compared with 59% if they have just one economically active parent in a middle-management profession (III-B). Finally, in working-class households, a child whose parents are a white- and a blue-collar worker (V-A) has a 44% chance of being oriented towards a GT pathway in Year 11 and a 3.0% chance of being oriented to priority education but, if only one of his parents is economically active and is a blue-collar worker (VI-B), he

only has a 30% chance of being oriented towards a GT pathway in Year 11, and his probability of going into priority education is triple (9.2%).

In the field of housing, financial situation or even the educational trajectory of children, the analyses presented show the descriptive empirical contribution and the explanatory gain of the Household PCS. Taking into account the socio-professional position of the two main adults in the household, this nomenclature restores reinforcement effects (resp. mitigation) related to social homogamy (resp. heterogamy), as well as the specificity of mono-active households.

3. A Nomenclature That Can be Used Retrospectively back to 1982

In addition to offering a tool to re-examine contemporary society from a household perspective, the Household PCS can also be mobilised retrospectively on all data sets constituted since 1982, thanks to the stability of socio-professional groups. This use for time comparisons, however, calls for interpretative caution, because it involves having a construction based on a resource analysis conducted in the 2010s cross several decades. The meaning of "blue-collar worker" (Beaud & Pialoux, 1999) or "economically inactive woman" (Maruani & Meron, 2012) may have changed over this period, just as "forming a household" or "being in a couple" may have been affected by the individualisation of finances or the reorganisations of domestic labour division (Champagne *et al.*, 2015). Analysis of the evolution of the weight of different family configurations in society and that of the

Table 8 – **Three school events with different household nomenclatures**

	% of pupils entered in Year 7	Orientation in Year 11 GT	Repeated year in primary, Year 7, Year 8 or Year 9	At least one year of high school in enhanced priority education
Household PCS, households...				
predominantly executive	14	90	7	0.2
predominantly middle-management	17	79	14	0.6
predominantly white-collar worker	22	61	23	1.9
predominantly self-employed small business owner	10	54	28	1.6
predominantly blue-collar worker	23	42	36	3.1
with a white- or blue-collar worker or economically inactive person	15	33	51	8.6
Dominant position				
Executive or company manager	23	85	10	0.4
Middle-management profession	23	68	18	1.3
Self-employed small business owner	10	54	28	1.7
White-collar worker	30	45	35	3.6
Blue-collar worker	12	32	47	6.8
Economically inactive	2	21	69	15.8
Father's profession				
Executive or company manager	20	85	10	0.4
Middle-management profession	18	69	19	1.2
Self-employed small business owner	12	60	25	1.3
White-collar worker	15	52	32	3.9
Blue-collar worker	34	43	37	4.1
Economically inactive	2	24	65	14.2
Mother's profession				
Executive or company manager	11	87	8	0.3
Middle-management profession	20	77	13	0.8
Self-employed small business owner	5	59	25	1.2
White-collar worker	45	53	30	2.5
Blue-collar worker	12	36	42	4.5
Economically inactive	7	37	51	10.5
Total	*100*	*59*	*27*	*2.7*

Sources and coverage: MEN-DEPP, *Panel d'élèves du second degré* 2007 and Family survey 2008; all students entered in Year 7 in 2007, respondents to the Family survey, except pupils for whom no parent profession is provided (*N*=32,585).

transformations internal to groups and sub-groups seems particularly necessary from this point of view. It makes visible the family configurations made equal by groups and sub-groups in 1982 and 2019; in other words, it explains the evolution of the "conventions of equivalence" (Desrosières, 1992; 2001) that the nomenclature expects to adopt. In doing so, it provides users of the Household PCS the elements needed to interpret its evolution over the past few decades – following an approach similar to that followed by Maruani & Meron (2012) about women's activity – which, enriched by contemporary sociological work, reflects the descriptive interest and analytical scope of the nomenclature.

3.1. Transformations at Individual Level...

After a period during which household entry predominated (until the 1970s), and then another period when individual analyses became increasingly established, the way in which these two levels are articulated has seemed, for around ten years, to be taking a new direction of research into statistics and social sciences (Amossé & De Peretti, 2011). In fact, evolution of the household structure (see below, Table 9) is inseparable from the transformations observed at individual level, including the three main ones that we will indicate here.

A first transformation concerns the structure of jobs. Firstly, this is marked by a massive increase in qualifications: between 1982 and 2019, the proportion of executives and company managers increased by 2.4 (from 7.7% to 18.7%) and that of middle-management professions by 1.5 (from 15.8% to 23.4%). This rise is accompanied by, among other, the decline in agriculture, crafts and small retail, going along

with, for example, a decline in the proportion of "self-employed/small business owners" (from 9.5% to 6.6%).

The second notable development is the fall in women's economic inactivity. Between 1982 and 2019, in households with no retirees or economically inactive people aged 60 years and over, the proportion of women in couples who are economically inactive decreased from 37% to 6%.[19] This disruption particularly affects households in which a man is an executive or a blue-collar worker, which constituted the most common situations of male mono-activity in couples: between 1982 and 2019, the proportion of men in a couple with an economically inactive woman decreased from 38% to 2% among executives, and from 37% to 7% among blue-collar workers (Figure). But the increase in women's

economic activity is huge at all levels of the socio-professional scale.

The third major development is the increase in the proportion of people who do not live as a couple (whether they be single, divorced, separated or widowed). In 1982, in the field of reference persons and their potential spouse, 14% of men and 18% of women lived without a spouse; in 2019, this situation concerns 31% of men and 38% of women. This results in new divides between those who live in a couple and others. For men, there has been a change from small gaps between socio-professional groups

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19. *In 40 years, economic inactivity in the working ages has changed dramatically in both scale and appearance: quantitatively, it has been practically halved; qualitatively, it has become highly masculinised and now affects a large majority of people living alone (or, more rarely, with another economically inactive person).*

Figure – **Family structure of households according to the man's profession**

A – In 1982

B – In 2019

■ With an economically inactive spouse ▨ With no spouse □ With an economically active spouse
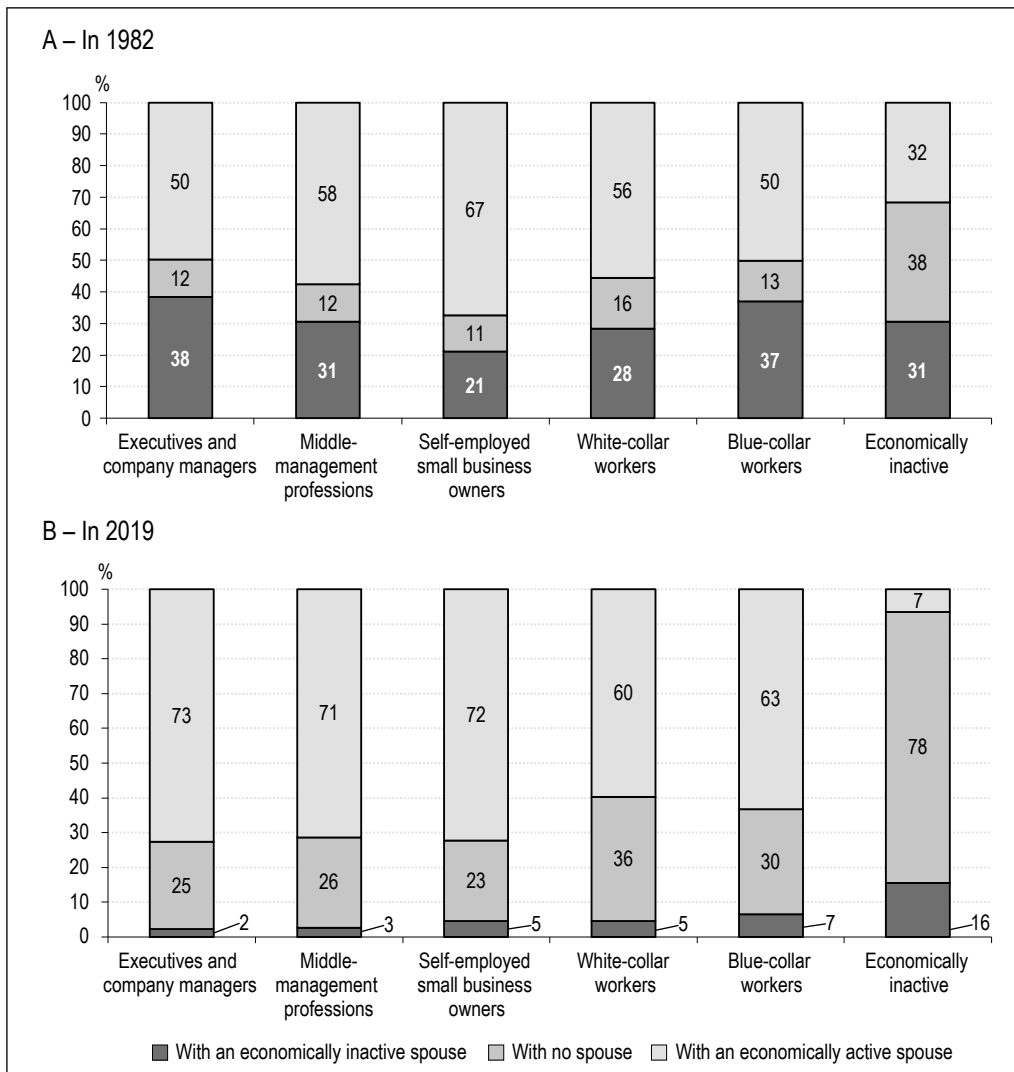
Sources and coverage: INSEE, *enquête Emploi* (Labour Force survey) (2019); male reference persons or spouses in households with no retirees or economically inactive persons aged 60 years and over; the analyses conducted at individual level are carried out on the field of reference persons and spouses of households with no retirees or economically inactive persons aged 60 years and over.

in 1982 to a greater absence of spouses among white- and blue-collar workers. For women, the proportion of executives with no spouse drops slightly (from 35% in 1982 to 32% in 2019), whilst it increases among white-collar workers (from 23% to 34%) and blue-collar workers (from 20% to 39%). In short, the absence of a spouse is more concentrated in the working classes for men, while it spreads and equalises across all social classes for women. Thus, although "being in a couple" may appear as a resource (Masclet *et al.*, 2020), it is both rarer and more unevenly distributed in 2019 than it was in 1982.

3.2. … Which are Disrupting the Households Structure

Under the impetus of these dynamics, but also of the transformations in the social structure of conjugal unions, French society changed profoundly between 1982 and 2019, which is reflected in the evolution of Household PCS (Table 9). Overall, these transformations have led to a strengthening of the proportion of households[20] located at both the top and bottom of the socio-professional structure. As such, there is a sharp increase in the weight of

households with a predominantly executive and middle-management background (groups I and II) and, admittedly more moderately, an increase in the proportion of households with an economically inactive or white-collar worker with an economically inactive or no spouse (sub-groups VII-A and VI-A), which are now the poorest. At the same time, the decline in female economic inactivity and the rise in the proportion of people with no spouse have led to a profound internal transformation of groups and sub-groups of households with an economically inactive or no spouse, with the proportion of households with no spouse now far exceeding that of mono-active couples. Beyond these general trends, four evolutions in household structure deserve to be mentioned.

The first and main development in the socio-professional structure of households over the last 40 years has been the massive transformation in employment structure, which has resulted in an increase in the proportion of the first two groups of the household nomenclature (it has tripled,

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20. *The analyses presented below relate to the field of households with neither a retiree nor an economically inactive person aged 60 years or over.*

Table 9 – **Share of the groups and sub-groups of the Household PCS in 1982 and 2019**

	1982	2019	Change (%)
I. Predominantly executive households	3.5	10.5	+200
I-A Executive with executive	1.3	4.9	+279
I-B Executive with middle-management profession	2.2	5.7	+157
II. Predominantly middle-management (or executive) households	12.4	19.4	+56
II-A Executive with white or blue-collar worker	1.9	3.5	+88
II-B Executive with economically inactive or no spouse	6.2	8.9	+43
II-C Middle-management or executive profession with self-employed small business owner	1.2	2.6	+111
II-D Middle-management profession with middle-management profession	3.1	4.4	+41
III. Predominantly white-collar (or middle-management) households	21.1	22.4	+6
III-A Middle-management profession with white- or blue-collar worker	7.8	8.9	+14
III-B Middle-management profession with economically inactive or no spouse	10.1	11.0	+9
III-C White-collar worker with white-collar worker	3.3	2.5	−23
IV. Predominantly self-employed small business owner households	13.6	6.7	−51
IV-A Self-employed small business owner living with another self-employed or with an economically inactive adult or lives alone	10.9	4.1	−63
IV-B Self-employed small business owner with white- or blue-collar worker	2.7	2.7	−1
V. Predominantly blue-collar worker households	15.1	9.5	−37
V-A Blue-collar worker with white-collar worker	9.9	7.5	−24
V-B Blue-collar worker with blue-collar worker	5.2	2.1	−60
VI. Households with a white- or blue-collar worker	29.2	24.1	−17
VI-A White-collar worker with economically inactive or no spouse	10.7	13.4	+25
VI-B Blue-collar worker with economically inactive or no spouse	18.4	10.7	−42
VII. Economically inactive households	5.1	7.4	+45
VII-A Economically inactive with economically inactive or no spouse	5.1	7.4	+45

Sources and coverage: INSEE, *enquête Emploi* (Labour Force survey) 1982, 2019; households with no retirees or economically inactive people aged 60 years or over.

and more than doubled, respectively.) At the same time, the increase in women's economic activity, the increase in their level of qualifications and the strengthening of homogamy among graduates of prestigious higher education institutions (Bouchet-Valat, 2014) have contributed to increasing the proportion of homogamous executives: the proportion of executives (both men and women) in a couple with an executive or partner in a middle-management profession increased from 36% in 1982 to 54% in 2019. Together, these developments are part of the increase in the proportion of predominantly executive households in society.

The decline in and transformation of self-employed small business owners is a second notable development, with the professions of self-employed small business owners whose workforce has declined least being the least endogamous. Of 6% of households in 1982, couples composed of two self-employed small business owners became scarce in 2019 (they represent just 1% of households), as did those composed of a male self-employed small business owner and an economically inactive woman. As such, it was sub-group IV-A that absorbed all of the decline observed in group IV. Conversely, the transformation of some self-employed small business owners and their lifestyle (Bernard, 2017; Laferté, 2018) has resulted in an increase in the proportion of households composed of a self-employed small business owner in a couple with an executive or someone in a middle-management profession (II-C): in 2019, one in four self-employed small business owners belonged to the II-C sub-group, compared to 6% in 1982.

The third development that can be observed through the Household PCS is the strengthening of divides in white- and blue-collar worker households, which refers to the growth of women's economic activity, the increase in the proportion of people with no spouse, and various desegregation processes among the working classes

(Schwartz, 1998). White-collar worker couples evolve in two opposite directions: the proportion of white-collar workers with an economically inactive or no spouse (VI-A) increases, but so does the proportion of white-collar workers in a couple with an executive (II-A). While blue-collar workers are also more concerned by hypergamy in 2019 than in 1982 (a sharp increase in the proportion of those who are classified in groups II and III), they remain more heavily concentrated in groups V and VI (Table 10). These developments are consistent with the breakdown of the "archipelago of white-collar workers" (Chenu, 1990) observed over the period and, more generally, the contribution of the marital status and social position of the spouse to the segmentation of the working classes (Amossé, 2019b; Masclet *et al.*, 2020).

As a result of these developments, the composition of group VI has changed fundamentally: couples with a male blue- or white-collar worker and an economically inactive spouse who formed the basis in 1982 are now replaced by households composed of white- or blue-collar workers with no spouse. This movement widens the differences in living conditions and housing of group VI white- and blue-collar workers and those of other groups, contributing to the increasing heterogeneity of working class households (Amossé, 2019a; Cayouette-Remblière, 2015).

The fourth and final evolution concerns the growing weight of group VII (economically inactive households), which goes hand-in-hand with its internal transformation. In 1982, the majority of economically inactive men (68%) already belonged to this group, but only a small proportion of economically inactive women (13%) did. With the end of the housewife model, economic inactivity is increasingly associated with the most fragile social positions and, in 2019, 47% of economically inactive women and 75% of economically inactive men belong to this group, more often than

Table 10 – Classification of white- and blue-collar workers in the Household PCS groups in 1982 and 2019

Proportion of individuals in the group… ranked among the households…:	… White-collar worker		… Blue-collar worker	
	1982	2019	1982	2019
predominantly middle-management (II)	5	8	0	3
predominantly white-collar worker (III)	33	30	5	11
predominantly self-employed small business owner (IV)	5	6	2	2
predominantly blue-collar worker (V)	27	20	48	43
with a white- or blue-collar worker (VI)	30	37	44	40
Total	100	100	100	100

Sources and coverage: INSEE, *enquête Emploi* (Labour Force survey) 1982, 2019; all white- and blue-collar worker reference persons or spouses of households with no retirees or economically inactive people aged 60 years or over.

not because they do not have a spouse (with economically inactive couples becoming rarer over the period, decreasing from 20% to 6% of the group). This evolution is, on the one hand, driven by an increase in the duration of studies (the proportion of students doubles in the population considered)[21] and the period of professional integration (Epiphane *et al.*, 2019), and, on the other hand, induced by the fragility and precariousness of growing segments of working class households that are on the fringes of employment (Perrin-Heredia, 2009; Rosa Bonheur, 2017).

<p style="text-align:center">* *
*</p>

Based on statistical analyses carried out within the framework of the last socio-professional nomenclature reform, the Household PCS provides a new reading grid for society. It responds to the need for a definition of the social position at household level for various areas of analysis (demographic behaviours, child development, educational practices and performance, economic and housing situations,

etc.). Multidimensional and backed by the socio-professional groups of adults in the household, it reports on their cross-referenced situations by proposing 7 hierarchical groups and 16 sub-groups where both social homogamy and mono- or bi-activity are identified. Retaining a unique place in the modular self-employed small business owner category, the Household PCS can be used in a stratification perspective at group level (even grouping them together if we want to adopt a binary, ternary class diagram, etc.) or as-is in order to preserve the wealth of information associated with sub-groups, possibly on sub-fields (e.g. households with executives, self-employed small business owners, blue-collar workers, etc.). Compared to existing categorisations (reference person and dominant position), it is both heuristic from a descriptive point of view and statistically powerful from an explanatory point of view. Made available in official statistics surveys from 2022 and simple to use retrospectively, it enables a wide range of new empirical research at household level, on classic questions posed by statisticians and social scientists, to be considered. □

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21. *These are the reference persons and their spouses of households with no retirees or economically inactive people aged 60 years and over.*

Link to the Online Appendix:
https://www.insee.fr/en/statistiques/fichier/6472323/ES532-33_Amosse-Cayouette_Annexe-en-ligne_Online-Appendix.pdf

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