

Sex, Politics and Social Change in the eighteenth and the nineteenth Centuries. Evidence from the Swiss Alps.

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Abstract

The eighteenth century “sexual revolution” can not simply be explained as a consequence of economic or institutional factors – industrialization, agricultural revolution, secularization or legal hindrances to marriages: the example of western Valais (Switzerland) shows that we have to deal with a complex configuration of factors. The micro-historical approach reveals that in the eighteenth and nineteenth century sexuality – and above all illicit sexuality – was a highly subversive force which was considerably linked to political innovation and probably more generally to historical change. Non-marital sexuality was clearly tied to political dissent and to innovative ways of behaviour, both among the social elites and the common people. This behaviour patterns influenced crucial evolutions in the social, cultural and economic history of the region.

Keywords: *Sexuality, Illegitimacy, Politics, Demography, Alps, Social Change*

1. Historiography and Methods

The basic working hypothesis of this paper is simple: in the eighteenth and nineteenth century sexuality – and above all illicit sexuality – was a highly subversive force which was considerably linked to political innovation and probably more generally to historical change. In the case studies presented in this paper, concerning a mountain valley and a plain community in the Swiss Alps, non-marital sexuality was clearly tied to innovative ways of behaviour, both among the social elites and the common people. Moreover, the analysis shows that this behaviour patterns had important consequences for the social, cultural and economic history of the region. From this point of view we can raise some important questions concerning the relationship between non-conformist sexuality and socio-economic innovation.

Curiously, the historical role of sexuality as a driving force of social, economic and political innovation has been clearly underestimated by historians and social scientists. Although we know – at least since Sigmund Freud, without considering an older literary tradition – that sexual desire is one of

the strongest forces in individual life, social scientists do not seem to believe that this could be true for societies too, especially not for early modern societies.

This may have to do with an ambiguous attitude toward sexuality in contemporary societies; but from the methodological point of view one central reason is that historians and anthropologists have mostly studied “sex” or “sexuality” as an *object* of cultural discourses, of political practices, of Church control or as a consequence of economic factors. This way they rarely studied particular women and men as sexually active and “desiring” individuals in their social and political contexts.¹

It is nearly impossible to overview the huge historical production on the history of illicit sexuality²; this field of historical research has been strongly influenced by classical French studies around Philippe Ariès and Jean-Louis Flandrin and by the studies of the Cambridge Group for Population History.³ Their macro-historical, often quantitative approach provided precious insights into collective sexual behaviour in the past, but underestimated the creative role of individuals and of their strategies – in one word, their “agency”. A few authors suggested the necessity to deepen the analysis about the parents of illegitimate children, by studying their families, their kinship relations and social networks; but this path was not consequently developed.⁴

The problem of these classical studies is that they considered sexuality essentially a dependent variable, influenced by ecologic, economic, social or cultural factors, probably underestimating the transforming power of non-conformist ways of behaviour.

Introducing in the 1970s the concept of “the eighteenth century sexual revolution”, Edward Shorter proposed a different perspective; he saw the crucial evolutions in sexual life essentially as a symptom of new cultural and social attitudes, but his interpretation was mostly criticized by other historians who stressed the importance of economic, social or legal evolutions influencing sexual life.⁵

New researches did not fundamentally change the perspective. On the contrary: Recently the medical historian Edward Shorter proposed a very disputable linear interpretation, suggesting that the breakout of desire in the late nineteenth and the 20th centuries resulted essentially from the fall of traditional “hindrances” like plagues or moral control by the community.⁶

So it is not surprising that only a few historians have studied the relationship between sexuality and politics from the point of view of acting individuals: they did so mostly from a macro-historical cultural perspective which highlighted the consequences of political discourses and practices on collective perceptions of sex, masculinity, gender roles and ideals.⁷

A large range of cultural studies, strongly influenced by the work of Michel Foucault, have interpreted changes in human sexuality as a result of cultural discourses, shaping the perceptions and conceptualisations of the body and of sexual practices.⁸ Important from a cultural perspective was also George L. Mosse’s book about sexuality and nationalism, but a number of other influential studies could also be quoted.⁹ Since the 1980s, influential feminist studies have stressed the influence of state building, “confessionalization” and gender roles on sexuality, describing concrete sexual practices essentially as a result of a regulation of gender rules, of pressure from above.¹⁰

But the problem of such studies is that they are based on norms and elite discourses, widely ignoring concrete practices and perceptions by working class individuals.¹¹ On the contrary, I do not know any detailed studies which question the link between sexual behaviour and political-ideological ideas among rural common people.

The path I will try to follow in this paper is therefore new and different, to a certain extent, from most studies on the history of sexuality. The starting point is built by fragmentary information from a parochial register, above all about illegitimate children, children legitimated after birth and prenuptial conceptions¹² - which is nothing unique. But the central interest is not a quantitative one: the crucial question is who the concerned parents – as sexually active men and women - were. So I will try to analyse their personal stories in order to understand their culture, their political and social ideas, in order to give them an identity and to shed a new light on particular forms of sexual behaviour. This micro-historical approach is based on my own studies on Western Valais, a rather marginal region in the Swiss Alps, which I will compare with classical and recent studies on family, kinship and sexuality.

But this kind of study would not be possible without the availability of a large genealogical database providing essential insights in the structure of families and kin groups. A significant part of my conclusions are in fact made possible by an exceptional database on the Val de Bagnes, a mountain valley in Western Valais (Switzerland)¹³: this rich mine of information allows us to identify illicit parents and to trace their connections to their extended kin groups.

MAP 1: Bagnes, Valais, Switzerland

This way, basic genealogical information about individuals can be matched with other sources, like notaries' records, census rolls and above all political documents, getting interesting biographical perspectives on women and men of the valley and on their social networks. I will then try to extend the perspective by including further data from the community of Vouvry, on the Rhone plain of western Valais, thus situated in a different ecological and economic context.¹⁴

2. Sex and politics in nineteenth century Bagnes.

In the nineteenth century, local courts in the Swiss canton Valais were frequently concerned with “scandals” and “immorality”: illegitimate births, prostitution, infanticide, concubines and even incest – meaning sexual relations with kin - were recurring crimes, which the authorities tried to suppress. In fact, women and men in nineteenth century Catholic Valais were not as virtuous as before. Even in the mountains of the Bagnes valley, illegitimacy and prenuptial conceptions had grown sensibly since 1800.

Tab.1. : Prenuptial conceptions and illegitimate births in Bagnes, 1680-1899

→ Tables at the end of the file

Sources : parish registers of Bagnes

Of course, illegitimate children concerned only a small minority of the local population, but premarital sex was affecting a significant part of couples. Since the mid-nineteenth century, at least about 1/5 of the married couples had certainly started their sexual lives before marriage.

Geography played a significant role: most prenuptial conceptions occurred in the lower valley, and above all in the villages of Le Châble (16.1%), Bruson (14.3%) Villette (9%) and Versegères (8.4%). The mountain villages like Verbier, Médières or Lourtier had lower rates.

However, the numbers presented above must be treated with caution, because they reflect different phenomena: basically, prenuptial conceptions were often legitimated by marriage. Sometimes, however, children were born before the marriage of the parents, and legitimated later; in many cases they remained illegitimate. But the concept of “illegitimacy” can encompass different situations: sometimes the children were acknowledged by the father and received the father’s name; sometimes they were not, and the father was unknown¹⁵. In a few cases the father was known, but the children received the mother’s name and, in other cases, the mother was unknown.

Moreover, we have to notice that illicit relations are probably underestimated. When we compare genealogical data with other sources, we detect some interesting differences. One example may illustrate this problem. In 1762 the Abbot of St-Maurice fined André-Clément Cretton and Anne-Françoise Dumoulin , accused to have born 3 illegitimate children. Yet, the parochial registers reveal the baptism of only two illegitimate children. In fact, the trial is very interesting: both illicit parents were married, but with different partners, and had an adulterine relation during 16 years at least, apparently tolerated by the community and to a certain extent by the local Church. We have some evidence that in such cases the priest and the abbot tried to find consensual solutions, avoiding harsh punishment: under pressure by Cretton’s relatives, the fine was reduced twice¹⁶.

Crude genealogical data actually simplify the amazing variability of social and sexual life, and we must be conscious that we deal with fragmentary information. In this case, anyway, we notice that both illicit parents appear among our data about illicit relations: in this perspective, qualitative analysis does not contradict the trends described above.

In this paper I will not linger on these problems: the focus of the reflection is on the sexual attitude of the parents. In this sense, as a first step of a more complex analysis, I will treat all “Individuals issued from an illicit relation (IIR)” as one common category, and consider them as symptoms of a more permissive sexual discipline touching their parents and their relatives.

In fact, illicit sexual behaviour was not equally common among all families, but it was concentrated with certain kin groups showing an unusual sexual attitude. Sexual behaviour was clearly

transmitted within the families: there were “families” with a large number of illegitimate children or pre-marital sexual relations, and there were other “families” where such phenomena were nearly inexistent.¹⁷ In this case the word “family” is a simplification, because often we have to do with larger kin groups (mostly up to the 3d degree) sharing similar behaviour patterns.

A large quota of all illegitimate children were issued from a few kin groups or branches: in the nineteenth century the Bessard 7 from Villette and Le Châble had 14 illegitimate children and 28 premarital pregnancies; the Dumoulin 6 had 11 illegitimate children and 25 premarital pregnancies; the Besson 14 had 11 illegitimate children and 19 premarital pregnancies and the Luisier 4 9 illegitimate children and 23 prenuptial conceptions between 1800 and 1900. Although the branches mentioned above are quite extended, the interesting sexual events took place within a close kin group.¹⁸ The influence of the family on sexual behaviour is not difficult to explain: traditionally parents controlled the sexual lives of their children very carefully, especially when they had unusual wealth, power or prestige to transmit to their heirs.

To simplify our analysis I considered primarily patrilineal descent groups, which are easily recognizable within our genealogies (all individuals having the same family code); but reality is much more complex. We can easily observe that such “deviant” families tended to have alliances to each other, building dense kinship networks.

Before considering particular kin groups, we have to answer a crucial question: who did decide about sexual relations? Did women decide whether an illicit relation was possible, or did men? Several studies have considered illegitimate births as a symptom of patriarchal power and women’s subordination.¹⁹ We have no direct, reliable witnesses about this question, but our data suggest that women actually played a role as active as men did.

Generally, we observe that women share the same sexual attitudes than men within their own kin group. In the “bastardy-prone” kin groups like the Bessard 7, Dumoulin 6, Besson 14 or Luisier 4, for example, both women and men participate actively in illicit relations. This suggests that the attitudes of women were as important as those of men when it was about taking the opportunity of an illicit relation; it seems that shared values and attitudes within the same kin group influenced the actions of both women and men.²⁰ The influence of a more or less rigid sexual discipline was similar on women and men of the same group.

So it is not surprising that women and men coming from kin groups with particular sexual attitudes tended to marry each other. Let us consider the example of the Cretton 2 group, which played a significant political role in the first half of the nineteenth century. It was a group producing numerous illegitimate children since the eighteenth century; Catherine Cretton was condemned in 1865 to 3 months of prison after the birth of her 4th illegitimate child: she was accused of infanticide.²¹ In 1878 her cousin Anne-Marie Cretton had an illicit and scandalous relation with a well-know Italian counterfeiter named Joseph-Samuel Farinet, who lived in the Bagnes region for long periods between 1869 and 1880.²² Anne-Marie’s and Catherine’s group had many alliances to other kin groups

showing similar ways of sexual behaviour, like the Dumoulin 6 or the Olliet 3. One of the women of this group, Louis Dumoulin's sister-in-law Lucie Olliet, was accused to have an incestuous relationship with his uncle and to be a "public girl". She had several illegitimate children.²³

The trial against Lucie Olliet reveals a typical network within kin groups, showing outstanding sexual patterns : her uncle and lover was married to A.-Marie Luisier who belonged to one of the groups with the highest number of illegitimate children in the valley.

In 1850, Lucie Oillet accused Cyprien Morend to be the father of one of her children: Morend belonged to a group with similar sexual habits.

Generally, groups with a less rigid sexual moral tended to establish alliances with similar groups, producing dense specific networks and building what Peter Laslett called a "bastardy prone sub-society".²⁴ If we consider the Bessard group – with the highest illegitimacy rate of the community – we observe that the children conceived before marriage were the product of relations with similar groups, like the Fellay 8, the Morend 10, the Besse 30, the Bessard 2 ... (Table 2). 14 out of 51 partners of the Bessard 7 branch came from branches with many IIR; but the interesting aspect is that these partners often married other IIR or their close kin.

Table 2: Alliances in the Bessard 7 branch 1830-1900 (only marriages with identified partners considered).

➔ Tables at the end of the file

Legend: IR: couple certainly had an illicit relation;

top 25: branch belonging to the 25 with the highest number of IIR in the nineteenth century

Yet, the groups producing many illegitimate children and often having sexual intercourse before wedlock were clearly radical groups or families close to this milieu.²⁵

At the top of our list, as I said above, we find the Bessard 7 and Dumoulin 6 groups : two branches clearly belonging to the core of the radical faction between 1830 and 1900²⁶. The third group in our ranking, the Besson 14, had less evident political orientation, but at least one of its members – Jérémie Besson - appears in 1844 among the members of the radical association « The Young Switzerland » (*La Jeune Suisse*)²⁷. Several other groups showing unusual sexual behaviour were connected to this faction: the Oillet 3, the Fellay 8, Morend 10, Fellay 34, Carron 9, Besse 30, Alter 5, Besson 3, Michaud 14.

Certainly, there were several exceptions too: the Luisier 4 group, for example, had many illegitimate births but does not reveal any particular political orientation. Further men and women

having illicit intercourse before marriage belonged to kin groups including some radical, but some conservative elements too, like the branches Corthay 5 and Vaudan 10.

In these cases we can see that genealogical information alone is not enough. The Corthay 5 branch was very large, and since the eighteenth century it was divided in several groups living in different villages. Radical members of the branch lived mostly in the lower valley, in the villages of Le Châble and Villette, where important radical groups were active. The conservative members lived rather in the mountain villages of Verbier and Médières. Yet, the radical families of the Corthay group living in the lower villages had as much IIR as the rest of the branch (11 of 22), although they were a small minority; moreover, 10 of them were born in the crucial years between 1813 and 1893, when political polarisation was strong. On the contrary, the families from Verbier and Médières had several IIR in the eighteenth century (4) or the late nineteenth century (2 in the years 1898-1900).

Radicals, however, were not the only ones tolerating a certain degree of sexual freedom. Curiously, we find several illegitimate children in the kin groups around some conservative leaders, like Jean-Joseph Alter²⁸, Maurice-Chrysostome Besson, or Etienne (-Joseph) Cretton.

From the historical perspective there was nevertheless an important difference between left and right-wing “libertines”: the radical kin groups of the radical milieu, like the Bessard 7, Dumoulin 6 and Besson 14, developed an extraordinary way of sexual behaviour essentially *during* or *after* the time of strong political polarization, since the 1830s. The sexual dissent becomes visible in the time of a deep political mobilization within the radical network around Young Switzerland.

On the contrary, conservative or politically mixed families with significant rates of illegitimate births- like Cretton 2, Corthay 5 or Vaudan 10 - developed this pattern long *before* the 1830ies, mostly during the eighteenth or even the 17th century.²⁹ The genesis of these social patterns is thus different; in fact we have to do with two different phenomena.

For conservative groups, sexual behaviour was largely independent of ideology, although we can suppose that in some cases a marginal social situation, linked with non-conformist sexual attitudes, encouraged active political militancy and sometimes political violence. For radical and sympathising elements, sexual behaviour was often connected to opposition against moral and social control by the Catholic Church, against moral teaching at local schools. This was the reason why radicals founded their own lay school in Villette in 1900 – the *école libre de Bagnes* – after a long fight against clerical teaching at public school. We can suppose that the discrimination of illegitimate children at school was a significant cause of this conflict. Sexual indiscipline was thus not a marginal or, so to say, a residual problem of a changing society, but had direct influence on political and social life; in so far it was also a dynamic factor of innovation and change.

3. Sex and politics in the eighteenth century

Is this close relation between sex and politics a peculiar feature of nineteenth century politics? Was it the consequence of political polarization between a Catholic-conservative and an anticlerical, radical faction? Since we can rely on comparable sources and genealogic data for eighteenth century Bagnes, there was a strong temptation to verify the nature of this relation for the decades preceding 1800 and for the time of the Helvetic Republic, created in 1798 under the influence of the French Revolution.

The eighteenth century was characterized by the struggle of an important part of the community of Bagnes against the feudal lord, the Abbot of St-Maurice. The culminating point was a local upheaval in 1745 in Le Châble, during which the Abbot was forced to sign several documents according to the wishes of the rebels. In the end the upheaval failed, and the Abbot withdrew the concessions he had made.³⁰ But in 1765-66 a new struggle grew around the project of a new middle school for the children of the valley, promoted by local notables and sustained by the Bishop of Sion, but contended by the Abbot and his followers. In 1798 the lordship of the Abbey of St-Maurice was swept away by the fall of the ancient Swiss confederation and by the creation of the Helvetic Republic, under strong pressure by French revolutionary troops. We can assume that the new republican officials were reformers showing a critical attitude towards the feudal lord.

Studying the mechanisms of political mobilisation, we observed a clear continuity in the opposition against the Abbot: to simplify, we can affirm that the active core of the oppositional faction was built around a dozen patrilineal kin groups, the members of which appear among the protagonists of resistance against the local priest from the conflicts of the 1720s to the republican era. This continuity is impressive if we consider the local officials of the Helvetic Republic between 1798 and 1803: among a list of 50 counsellors, secretaries and members of the republican “*comité particulier de Bagnes*” (particular committee) only one man is not closely related by kinship to the protagonists of the struggles with the Abbot in the period 1745-1766. The major part of them (35) belong to the same patrilineal groups, the others are related by alliance or by maternal kinship.

To come back to our basic question, we can also notice that numerous families belonging to the core of the oppositional faction between 1745 and 1803 are characterized by peculiar forms of sexual behavior: they had several children who were conceived outside of marriage (prenuptial conceptions or illegitimate births). Can we thus speak of a relation between sexual indiscipline and radicals, similar to that in the nineteenth century?

The answer is not so evident. First of all, evidence of sexual indiscipline is still rare and concerns a small minority of the local population: were prenuptial conceptions simply accidents, or can we interpret them as a sign of a peculiar sexual attitude?

From this point of view I considered that one single prenuptial conception within a kin group may be an accident; on the contrary I assumed that two or more such “events” are not accidental if they concern the same person or a close kin. In this case I assume that such events indicate a lower

degree of sexual control within the family or the kin group or a peculiar attitude towards sex – as I have shown for nineteenth century.

Statistical analysis revealed 240 conceptions out of marriage between 1700 and 1810: thanks to our genealogical database we dispose of 426 genealogical data about the parents of these children. I crossed these data with information about the political allegiances of women and men, considering their families and kin groups.³¹ For women it is of course difficult to speak of political allegiances, because they rarely appear on political lists. But I supposed that wives, sisters or daughters of politically active men shared the same ideas as their close kin. This hypothesis is not anodyne: the analysis of political mobilization showed that wives, women and daughters played a significant role within the factions, participating in the reproduction of political dynasties and mediating strategic alliances.³²

Under these assumptions, is there a significant correlation between sexual behavior and political attitudes?

We can not affirm that sexual indiscipline was linked to political opposition in a linear way. Nevertheless we can observe several groups with unusual sexual behavior building an active and important part of the oppositional faction. Let us consider an important oppositional group, like the Besse 3 (according to our genealogical system) from Sarreyer and Villette: it was the offspring of Angelin Besse, a prominent adversary of the Abbot at the time of the upheaval of 1745. Its members appear among the sponsors of the local middle school (in 1766) and among the officials of the Helvetic Republic (in 1798-1803).

Yet the women of this patrilineal group had more prenuptial conceptions in the crucial time 1717-1762 (4), all of them with political active partners or men belonging to oppositional families, like the Tissières 1, the Maret 50, the Maret 39 and Perron 1. These were also families with peculiar sexual events in their history: in the Perron 1 branch we can observe an illegitimate child and a prenuptial conception in the eighteenth century; the illicit parents were close kin of the political activists; the Maret 50, Maret 39 and the Tissières 1 had 2 prenuptial conceptions each.

The Filliez 4 from Bruson were another prominent oppositional group; they had 4 conceptions outside marriage between 1724 and 1805, all of them closely related with the rebels of 1745 and the sponsors of the “Grande Ecole” in 1766. And all the time the illicit relations occurred with partners from oppositional groups and/or issued of sexual undisciplined families, like the Filliez 3.

The relation between sexual and political dissent is even more evident in the Terrettaz 7 group from Lourtier and Le Châble, which had 3 illegitimate children between 1691 and 1803 – an outstanding situation in the eighteenth century. All these children were close kin of the political activists of 1745 and 1798. Numerous other groups show a similarly close relation between sexual and political indiscipline: the Cretton 2, Cretton 7, Fellay 27, Filliez 14, the Baud 1 and so on.

With about 20 kin groups we can observe a clear relation between sexual indiscipline and political opposition. Moreover, these groups were often tied by alliance with other similar groups, building dense networks of dissent.

The cases of the Besse 3 and Filliez 4, mentioned above, illustrate this tendency very clearly: the partners in illegitimate relations were members of similar oppositional families. The Gard 2 group represents a further example: it was a group deeply involved in resistance against the Abbot in 1745. At the same time we reckon at least 7 IIR within the group between 1729 and 1797³³: all partners came from similar “dissident” groups, like Besse 43, Besson 14, Filliez 7, Fellay 27, Gailland 1, Vaudan 10-7. We could mention several further examples³⁴: they show that sexually and politically dissident groups formed a thick homogeneous network based on shared political, religious and moral values.

But not all the groups present a clear situation. The Besson 14 group represents a different case: the group had numerous conceptions out of wedlock between 1689 and 1809, with two illegitimate children: but the IIR were not very close relatives of Jean-Pierre Besson, counselor under the Helvetic Republic (they were kin to the 2d and 3d degree). However, Jean-Pierre Besson was also Lucie Rege’s husband, a woman issued from another politically and sexually dissident group. In this case the relation is more difficult to interpret, but it exists within an oppositional network too.

This example shows that there was no typical and representative situation, but a variability of constellations according to the different family histories. To sum up, we can say that the oppositional faction in eighteenth century Bagnes consisted of different interacting components:

- Wealthy notable families, like the Magnin 7, the Bourgoz 4 or partially the Gard 1... which were strongly involved in resistance against the lord did not allow their own young members any sexual *faux-pas*. The reason is easy to explain: in these families the organized devolution of wealth and prestige requested a strong control upon the sexual lives of the young people – especially the young women. The social discipline and the careful education within the family made uncontrolled sexual adventures very difficult.³⁵

- On the other hand we observe a number of kin groups which were deeply involved in opposition to the Abbot, but were less rigid in controlling their own young people. These groups encompassed several men and women with dissident sexual behavior closely connected by kinship to politically active men or their wives. They were men and women who were less obedient to the moral and religious prescriptions of the Catholic Church as well as towards the secular lordship of the Abbey of St-Maurice. These groups were strongly interconnected through illicit sexual activities and political interests, building a dense and homogeneous milieu. After a detailed analysis of eighteenth century conflicts we may suppose that sexual and political dissent came along with other forms of religious, social and cultural opposition: the wish for free consumption, the struggle for the development of

commerce and exchange, for a certain degree of cultural autonomy and secularization, and for political autonomy...³⁶

- But not all social groups can be clearly assigned to these categories: we have families with more illegitimate children or prenuptial conceptions without a clear political position – as far as we know – or families without any peculiar character to notice.

But for a significant part of the oppositional faction – say 35 out of 48 groups at the core of the oppositional faction - sexual dissent was clearly connected to political opposition against the Abbot. In other words: sexual disobedience was already a factor of political innovation.

4. Sex and Politics on the plain: Vouvry

The analysis of Vouvry, a community situated on the Rhone plain, suggests that the relationship between sex and politics as discussed for Bagnes is no exception; but because of the lower reliability, genealogical data only partly allow to confirm the insights we gained for Bagnes, so that several questions remain open. Moreover, the comparison shows that social variability was high and that specific local factors must be taken into account.

In the nineteenth century, Vouvry was a very active liberal-radical community, and illegitimacy rates were significantly higher than in Bagnes. In this period we can observe a relatively strict correlation between well-known radical elements and unusual patterns of sexual behaviour.

We know, for example, the list of radical men from Vouvry who died in the violent fight at Trient (near Martigny) in 1844: all of them come from kin groups showing more conceptions out of wedlock than the average rates.

Elie Parchet belonged to a group which produced 8 illegitimate children between 1800 and 1845 (10 since 1755, at least 3 of them close kin of Elie). The influential liberal leader Emmanuel Bonjean was born in a kin group which developed less controlled behaviour in the nineteenth century; he had 5 bastards among his kin, 4 of them where cousins or nephews. Further evidence confirms these results.

But in the eighteenth century, the phenomenon appears to be more complex in Vouvry than in the Bagnes valley. In contrast to Bagnes, sexual change (**unusual sexual behaviour? Ggfs. Bitte um Rückspr.**) before 1800 was mostly connected to recently immigrated families like the Dumont, Favre and Vernaz – artisan families coming from the neighbouring areas of Savoy in the second half of the century. Since our sources are not very informative about the political orientation of these groups, we do not know whether there existed any significant correlation to the political orientation of popular groups. Nevertheless, we can notice that these groups were not marginalized, but were rapidly integrated into the village, concluding alliances with local families. This pattern contributed, as we will see below, to a better integration of illegitimate children into local society.

But also a number of local popular families – i.e. families resident in the community since at least the 17th century – had interesting illegitimacy rates : above all the Boquis (3 illegitimate births = 15.1 %), the Melley (4 illegitimate births = 8.3 %), the Carraux (6 illegitimate births = 6.7 %) or the Bois (3 illegitimate births = 11.1%)... It seems that the concerned families were experiencing a social decline: the Boquis, f.e., were a noble family which had lost most of its propriety and of its prestige; the Melley were artisans who were loosing their influence in Vouvry.

Since we do not know much about political struggles in the community in the eighteenth century, however, we can not establish any correlation to political allegiances: we can rely only on data about the local elite during the republican period (1798-1803). In these years, political offices were monopolized by three related groups: the families of Michel Pignat, an influential notary, and of Jean-Joseph Pignat, the group around J.-François Coppex and the Cornut, the descendant of a wealthy merchant, Michel Cornut.

The new village elite, which occupied the most important offices at the end of the century, does not show particularly high illegitimacy rates. This is certainly not surprising: wealthy families like the noble de Nucé, the Pot and the Cornut had to control sexual life in order to preserve wealth and prestige. However, if we consider the Cornut group, which was strongly engaged in local administration under the Helvetic Republic (1798-1803), we can see that it has significantly more prenuptial conceptions and illegitimate children than the elite groups not involved in the republican administration, like the de Nucé or the Pot.³⁷

J.-F. Coppex, since 1787 tied by alliance to the Cornut group, comes from a family where illegitimate births were relatively frequent: we observe 5 premature births in his own branch (up to the 3rd degree) in the eighteenth century. The data for other republican groups are less reliable. The question of a correlation with political orientation must remain open.

To sum up, in the nineteenth century the connection between sex and politics is evident and comparable to Bagnes. Before 1800, the situation is more complex: the increase of illegitimacy and of illicit relations was partly connected with immigration from Savoy and partly with the social decline of a number of peasant and artisan families. Nevertheless we have evidence that migrant groups and illegitimate children were not marginalized, but since 1760 they were rapidly integrated into local alliance circles and local kin groups, because they found social partners who were open towards new alliances and cooperation with the migrants. Within the republican elite, scarce reliable data suggest that the degree of sexual control was lower than for other elite families not involved with the republican regime.

5. Sex and social change: some hypotheses.

The implications of the connection between sex and politics discussed above raise some more general questions about the role of sexuality as a factor of change in history. The illegitimacy prone network in nineteenth century Bagnes was not only a factor of political, religious and social protest; it

contributed to build a new socio-economical milieu too. It was the milieu represented by mountain guides, inn-owners and small tourist operators: people looking for new possibilities to earn money in the valley, outside the declining agricultural sector. The foundation of an own “free school” in Villette by radical elements, in 1900, was connected to this composite radical network.³⁸

In the eighteenth century too we can highlight some important social and demographic implications of specific sexual behaviour, although historical sources are less telling. I will try to illustrate some implications by a simple, well documented example.

In 1782 Marie-Catherine de Nucé, a noble widow from St-Maurice, in Western Valais - wrote a long and worried letter to her son Eugène, then in London. Some days before, Eugènes brother Joseph-Alphonse – called Joson – had told the mother that he had a secret relation with Marie-Marguerite de Quartéry – a noble woman from St-Maurice – and that she was pregnant.

It was a dramatic moment, with many tears, sighs, discussions and reconciliations. The honour of the family was in danger, long and difficult negotiations were necessary. But in the medium-run the consequences for Joson were not unpleasant. Finally, an agreement was found with the bride’s family; Joson could marry the woman he loved, which would have been difficult without the pregnancy, because of the economic difficulties the de Nucé had to face. He was accepted by his wife’s family, which supported him economically and politically and allowed him a political career in St-Maurice – for which he had to pay, however, by a subordinated and sometimes humiliating position within the de Quartéry family. By the way, Joson de Nucé was an exponent of the reformist faction in lower Valais.

Illicit sexual relations could be an active strategy aimed to force parents to change the family policy. Theoretically, there were several strategies to face the problem of illegitimacy: from reparatory marriage to active or passive elimination of the unwished child; from exclusion of the unmarried mother from the kin group to the full assumption of care and responsibility by her or by the father’s family³⁹. Yet, a fundamental change in the situation of bastards happened during the 2nd half of the eighteenth century and in the early nineteenth century: despite of the state’s rather repressive pressure on unmarried women, the life expectancy of illegitimate children increased considerably.

Table 3: Illegitimate children dead during their two first years of life in Vouvry, 1700-1849.

➔ Tables at the end of the file

Source: Baptism record Vouvry.

Since the brutal elimination of unwished children was less accepted, families were requested to find new solutions in order to raise unplanned children within the group. This meant a considerable burden for most farmers’ families in the context of population growth. On the other hand, the pressure

exerted by illegitimacy supported social and economic diversification and weakened the traditional demographic checks within the agricultural society.

The detailed history of some families in Vouvry shows that economic and demographic behaviour in the lower strata changed since the 2nd half of the eighteenth century: artisan families like the Dumont – coming from Savoy – had not only a high rate of illicit sexual relations; several branches of this group founded very large families – with 8 children and more – although they did not belong to the wealthy elite. It was a new phenomenon among the working classes. The increasing availability of waged labour and money allowed to change economic and sexual behaviour and reduced collective discipline, particularly in artisan's families, which were less dependent on land and farms. The phenomenon is evident also for other groups recently immigrated from Savoy, like the Dupont, the Buffet, the Vernaz or the Primaz. In these illegitimacy-prone branches, more couples had 9 to 10 children, and often they had started sexual intercourse before marriage.⁴⁰

In many well documented cases there was a clear connection between large peasant or artisan families and illicit sexual relations within the group. In the Dupont group, for instance, we count 6 families with 8 or more children between 1780 and 1850, 5 of them revealing a prenuptial conception or an illicit relation. In the Fumey group, the largest family can be detected in Michel-Constantin's branch (*1764), and not – as we could expect – among the descendants of his eldest brother, Joseph-Antoine, who occupied the most prestigious political positions. Yet, two of Michel-Constantin's children were born before marriage. The same relation can be observed with numerous other families...⁴¹. Of course, we can find some exceptions too: in the Planchamp group, for instance, the rare parents who had premarital sexual intercourse were not those who had highest number of children. It is therefore useful to look beyond a mere qualitative appreciation.

6. Sexual indiscipline and demographic change

The systematic genealogical data from Bagnes allow for a more reliable analysis of the connection between sexual indiscipline and demographic change. The hypothesis is that large lower class families often emerged within groups revealing a lower degree of sexual discipline: couples having 10 children or more are therefore supposed to have prenuptial conceptions or to be closely related with illicit relations.

In the large Bagnes database, I considered all families with 12 or more children (now: F>11) born from the same father between 1670 and 1900. Before 1750, such large families were mostly issued from wealthy parents: as we can observe in most European regions, a large number of children was a mark of prestige and influence. In these cases, no particular connection to illicit sexual behaviour can be observed. But in the eighteenth century, a growing number of lower class families had at least 12 children, so that the overall number of F>11 increased steadily.

Table 4. Number of families with 12 or more children (F>11) in Bagnes,

1650-1900.

→ Tables at the end of the file

*based on the last child's birth date.

Among the lower class families we can detect in most cases a close correlation with a permissive sexual discipline. The following table considers the kinship relations between the parents of large families and the parents of IIR – i.e. parents who certainly had illicit relations. The considered unit is the large family (F>12) with at least one child born between 1700 and 1900: in this sense, a relation exists if one of the F>12 parents has a kin having an IIR among his or her children.

Table 5: Kinship relations between F>11 and parents of IIR, 1680-1900

→ Tables at the end of the file

*The same family can have relations to IIR through the father and through the mother.

The connection is evident: in most cases (95%) a relation can be observed, and in 71% of the families it is a close relation, up to the 2nd degree (cousins). In 13 cases, the parents of F>11 families certainly started their sexual intercourse before marriage. The relation between sexual indiscipline and the weakening of demographic control among the lower strata seems to be verified. In order to obtain more evidence about the dynamic of demographic change we can now focus on the first crucial period, between 1680 and 1810, but now considering all families with 10 or more children (F>9). The results on a sample of 128 F>9 are similar:

Table 6: Kinship relations between parents of F>9 and parents of IIR, 1680-1810.

Categories	all relations	degree 1	degree 2	degree 3	degree 4	
Same person (father)	6	6				Father of IIR is also father of F>9
Kinship relation through the father	51	24	10	14	3	
Kinship relation through the mother	36	10	13	12	1	
No relation known	34					
Relation uncertain	1					
TOTAL	128	40	23	26	4	

These data are less reliable than the results presented in table 5. We have to take into account that genealogical data for the eighteenth century are less complete, because reliable registration begins

at the end of the 17th century: it is therefore more difficult to reconstruct significant genealogical chains. Although the relation between illicit sex and large families is probably underestimated, it seems to be significant: in the eighteenth century – when conceptions out of wedlock were still rare – many large lower class families (63 cases = 49.2 % up to the 2nd degree) had a close kinship relation to IIR parents.⁴² In 6 cases, F>9 parents begun their sexual life before wedlock, and in 34 cases their siblings, parents or children had visible illicit relation. It is interesting to notice that the large lower class families often grew in the oppositional milieu: in the nineteenth century we can observe this connection in several branches belonging to the core of the radical faction, like the Dumoulin 6, Fellay 34, Fellay 8, Brochoud 5, Maret 49 Michaud 14, Michellod 5, Perraudin 4 or Troillet 5.

7. Conclusions: changing sexualities in a changing world

The case studies presented in this paper show that the role of non-conformist sexual behaviour, and more generally the role of sexual change in history must be reconsidered. The subversive role of sexual desire which I have tried to stress becomes more evident by adopting a micro-historical, prosopographical perspective, considering sexually active women and men as complex, thinking individuals with a culture of their own and a peculiar social identity. This kind of analysis is made possible by the availability of a large genealogical database which provides insights into local kinship structures and allows for a specific analysis of different kin groups. Evidence from Bagnes and to a certain extent from Vouvry suggests that non-conformist sexual behaviour was not only a consequence of an underprivileged social situation as a result of economic pressure, but a (partly) conscientious attitude correlated with political and religious values and often shared by close relatives. From another point of view, the loss of sexual discipline was linked with demographic change within the lower strata and contributed to the weakening of demographic checks as well as to socio-economic diversification.

We do not know how much the results can be generalized. But the data presented above suggest that sex can no longer be considered a dependent variable in history, but that it has to be seen as being linked with cultural, political, social and economic innovation in a complex way.

From this perspective, the eighteenth century “sexual revolution” can not simply be explained by economic or institutional factors – industrialization, agricultural revolution, secularization or legal hindrances to marriages: the example of western Valais shows that we have to deal with a complex configuration of different factors interacting and shaping a new cultural, social and economic dynamic. Illicit sexuality must thus be studied by its interaction with factors like:

- Political conflicts and ideologies,
- Religious ideas and attitudes,
- Demographic growth and fertility,
- Commercialization and diversification of local economy,
- Money circulation and waged labour,

- Immigration and mobility,
- Social integration or exclusion of illegitimate children,
- Kinship organization and alliance strategies: rigid patrilineal discipline or more flexible (cognatic) alliance structures.

In this context, the subversive pressure exerted by sexual desire may not be underestimated. From this perspective, we can speak of a “sexual revolution” in the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, according to Edward Shorter’s phrase, not as a sudden and global break-out, but in the sense of deeply changing sexualities in a rapidly changing economic and social world. The problem is probably not to decide about what was the cause and what the consequence of change, but to describe precisely the interaction between sexual behaviour and the different phenomena mentioned above.

¹ Recently : Anna Clark, *Desire. An History of European Sexuality*, New York, London: Routledge 2008, 1-11.; Among the recent studies: Kathrin Crawford, *European Sexualities, 1400-1800. New Approaches to European History*. Cambridge University Press, 2006. Kathrin Crawford, “Privilege, Possibility, and Perversion: Rethinking the Study of Early Modern Sexuality”, in: *The Journal of Modern History*. 2006, 412-433; H.G. Cocks, Matt Houlbrook, (eds), *Palgrave Advances in the Modern History of Sexuality*, Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan 2005; Robert A. Nye (ed.), *Sexuality*, Oxford [etc.] : Oxford University Press, 1999; Stephen Garton, *Histories of Sexuality : Antiquity to Sexual Revolution*, London: Equinoxe 2004; Franz X. Eder, Sabine Frühstück, (eds.), *Neue Geschichten der Sexualität. Beispiele aus Ostasien und Zentraleuropa 1700-2000*, Wien 2000. Cf. Robert Nye, ‘Regard sur vingt ans de travaux: le Journal of the History of Sexuality’, In : *Clio. Histoire, femmes et sociétés* 31 (2010): 239-266.

² For Switzerland : Markus Lischer, „Illégitimité“, In: *Dictionnaire historique de la Suisse*, online version : www.dhs.ch, 5.11.2009 ; Susanna Burghartz, *Zeiten der Einheit. Orte des Unzucht. Ehe und Sexualität in Basel während der Frühen Neuzeit*, Paderborn 1999, 330 pp.; Lilane Mottu-Weber; « « Paillardises », « anticipation » et mariage de réparation à Genève au XVIIIe siècle », in : *Revue suisse d’histoire* 52, 2002, 430-447; Brigitte Schnegg, «Illegitimität im ländlichen Bern des 18. Jahrhunderts», in *Berner Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Heimatkunde*, 44, 1982, 53-86; Lucienne Hubler, „La population de Vallorbe, op.cit., 203-224; M. Alt, E. Sutter, «Bethört, verführt, gefallen...», in *Itinera*, 1985, 2/3, 120-148; Eva Sutter, "Ein Act des Leichtsinns und der Sünde",: *Illegitimität im Kanton Zürich. Moral und Lebensrealität (1800-1860)*, Zurich: Chronos 1995; Sandro Guzzi-Heeb, *Donne, uomini, parentela. Casati alpini nell’europa pre-industriale (1650-1850)*, Torino : Rosenberg&Sellier 2008, 239-41. Cf. Edward Shorter, “Illegitimacy, Sexual Revolution and Social Change in Modern Europe”, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 2, 1971, p. 237-272 ; Michael Mitterauer, *Ledige Mütter. Zur Geschichte illegitimer Geburten in Europa*, München 1983, 173 pp. ; Christian Pfister, *Bevölkerungsgeschichte und historische Demographie 1500-1800*, München : R.Oldenbourg-Verlag 1994, 86-88. More recently: Lisa Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundlings. Illegitimacy in Eighteenth-Century England*, Columbus 2005,; Jeremy Hayhoe, « Illegitimate, inter-generational conflict and legal practice in eighteenth-century Northern Burgundy », *Journal of social history*, vol. 38, n°3, 2005, 673-684

³ Jean-Louis Flandrin, *Les amours paysannes (XVIe-XIXe siècle)*, Paris : Gallimard/Julliard 1975 ; Idem, *Le sexe et l’Occident. Evolution des attitudes et des comportements*, Paris : Seuil 1981, (especially 303-321 and 109-135); Peter Laslett, *Family Life and Illicit Love in earlier Generations*, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press 1977 ; P. Laslett, K. Oosterveen and R.M. Smith (eds.), *Bastardy and its comparative History*, London 1980; Philippe Ariès, André Béjın (eds.), *Sexualités occidentales*, Paris: Seuil 1982.

⁴ Karla Osterveen, Richard M. Smith and Susan Stewart, “Family reconstruction and the study of bastardy: evidence from certain English parishes”, in: P. Laslett et al. (éd.), *Bastardy and its comparative History*, op.cit., 86-140. Cf. Pier Paolo Viazzo, “Illegitimacy and the European Marriage Pattern : Comparative Evidence from the Alpine Area”. In: L. Bonfield, R.M.smith and K. Wrightson (eds.), *The World we have Gained. Histories of Population and social structure*, London: Basil Blackwell 1986, 100-121.

⁵ Antje Kraus, “Antizipiertes Ehesegen” im 19. Jahrhundert. Zur Beurteilung der Illegitimität unter sozialgeschichtlichen Aspekten“, in: *Vierteljahresschrift für Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte* 66, 1979, 174-215; Mitterauer, *Ledige Mütter*, op.cit.,87-90; David W. Sabeau, „Unehlichkeit: ein Aspekt sozialer Reproduktion kleinbäuerlicher Produzenten. Zu einer Analyse dörflicher Quellen um 1800“, in: R.H. Berdahl u.a. (Hg), *Klassen und Kultur. Sozioanthropologische Perspektiven in der Geschichtschreibung*, Frankfurt a.M. 1982, 54-76 ... Cf. Heinrich Richard Schmid, *Dorf und Religion. Reformierte Sittenzucht in Berner Landsgemeinden der Frühen Neuzeit*, Stuttgart u.a.: G. Fischer Verlag 1995, 173-188.

⁶ Edward Shorter, *Written in the Flesh. A History of Desire*, Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2005. Oddly enough, Shorter overlooked the important changes in sexual life in eighteenth and early nineteenth century, highlighted by the homonymous social historian.

⁷ ‘Sexualité et politique (special issue)’, *Bulletin d'histoire politique* 15, n° 1 (2006). Cf. Lynn Hunt (ed.) *The Invention of Pornography. Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity 1500-1800*, New York: Zone Books 1993; Michel Jeanneret, *Eros rebelle: littérature et dissidence à l'âge classique*, Paris: Seuil, 2003; Robert Darnton, *Edition et sédition: L'univers de la littérature clandestine au XVIIIe siècle*, Paris: Gallimard 1991.

⁸ Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité*, 3 vol., Paris : Gallimard 1976-78; Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex : Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*, Cambridge (MA), London: Harvard University Press 1990; Philipp Sarasin, *Reizbare Maschinen. Eine Geschichte des Körpers*, Frankfurt a.M. : Suhrkamp 2001.

⁹ George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality. Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe*, New York: Howard Fertig Inc. 1985, Idem, *The Image of man: the Creation of Modern Masculinity*, New York : Oxford Univ. Press, 1998. Cf. recently Alexandra Przyrembel, „Rassenschande": Sexualität, "Rasse" und das "Jüdische" vor NS-Gerichten in den Jahren 1935 bis 1945“, dans: *Historische Anthropologie* 12, 2004, 338–354; Kathrin Crawford, „Discursive Deviance: Sexual Slander and Politics during the Regency of Philippe d'Orléans“, in: *Proceedings of the Western Society for French History*, ed. Barry Rothaus. Vol. 29, (2003), 255-62.

¹⁰ Isabel V. Hull, *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society in Germany, 1700-1815*, Ithaca, London : Cornell Univ. Press, 1996; Ulrike Strasser, *State of Virginity: Gender, Religion and Politics in an early modern Catholic State*, Ann Arbor : The University of Michigan Press, 2004; S. Burghardz, *Orte der Reinheit*, op. cit.

¹¹ S. the critical remarks of Peter Hersche, *Musse und Verschwendung. Europäische Gesellschaft und Kultur im Barockzeitalter*, Freiburg, Basel, Wien: Herder 2007, 726.

¹² I will consider all births before 210 days after marriage as prenuptial conceptions. To get more information, especially about sexual behaviour before 1800, we can compare these data with births between 210 and 240 days after marriage, that I will consider as probable prenuptial conceptions as far as they take place within the same kin groups as the ascertained prenuptial conceptions. Statistical elaboration: Arnaud Bringé (INED, Paris).

¹³ A.A.V.V., *Familles de Bagnes du XII^e au XX^e siècle. Généalogie, histoire, étymologie*, 5 vol., Bagnes 2005-2008. Statistical and relational elaboration of data was made possible thank to the careful work by Arnaud Bringé and Pascal Cristofoli (EHESS, Paris).

¹⁴ S. Sandro Guzzi-Heeb, *Donne, uomini, parentela*, op.cit., *passim*.

¹⁵ Despite of some innovations in 1804, local laws fundamentally protected the rights of the mother until 1847-48, as the liberals came to power in Valais: after this date, the number of children acknowledged by the fathers sunk drastically. S. Myriam Evequoz-Dayen, « Inconduite et contrôle social dans le Valais romand (1780-1850) ». In : *Equinoxe* 20, 1998, p. 79-87.

¹⁶ AASM, TIR 10/6/14, 15, 1762-63.

¹⁷ Peter Laslett, “The bastardy prone sub-society”, in: P. Laslett, K. Oosterveen and R.M. Smith (eds.), *Bastardy and its comparative History*, London 1980, 217-246.

¹⁸ In th Bessard 7 branch most prenuptial conceptions (21) occurred within a close kin group, encompassing cousins (2nd degree). In the Dumoulin 6 branch we observe a similar concentration: 11 cases concern the offspring of 3 brothers (DUM/6- 2311,2323 and 2315) ; 15 further illicit relations appear in the descent of other brothers, DUM/6-3321, 3328 and 332.11...

¹⁹ Jacques Solé, *L'amour en Occident à l'Époque moderne*, Paris : Albin Michel, 1976, 185-217, Lucienne Hubler, „La population de Vallorbe du XV^e au début du XIX^e siècle. “. Lausanne : Bibl. historique vaudoise 1984, 203-224.

²⁰ Of course, there were some differences, according to the different families and kin groups: in the Besse 3 group in eighteenth century, for instance, most illicit relations are linked to women; on the contrary in the Fellay 44 group, at the same time, only men are involved in this type of intercourse. But globally we notice a fundamental equilibrium between men and women within the same group.

²¹ Archives du Tribunal d'Entremont, Sembrancher, 5075 A1, 28 avril 1870.

²² S. Willi Wottreng, *Farinet : die phantastische Lebensgeschichte des Schweizer Geldfälschers, der grösser tot war als lebendig*, Zurich : Orell Füssli 2008 ; cf. Sandro Guzzi-Heeb, « Sexe, parenté et politique dans une vallée alpine au XIXe siècle », in : *Annales de démographie historique*, 2010 (forthcoming).

²³ Archives du Tribunal d'Entremont, Sembrancher, 5075 A1, 29 avril 1862.

²⁴ P. Laslett, “The bastardy prone sub-society”, op.cit. The concept was formulated by Karla Oosterveen ; for examples from the alpine area see Pier Paolo Viazzo, “Illegitimacy and the European Marriage Pattern : Comparative Evidence from the Alpine Area”, in : L. Bonfield, R.M.smith and K. Wrightson (éd.), *The World we have Gained. Histories of Population and social structure*, London: Basil Blackwell 1986, 100-121.

²⁵ We dispose on several sources revealing the names of individuals involved in local political conflicts, especially petitions, trial sources compiled by the conservative authorities after the clash with the radicals in 1844, and sources produces by the local courts... Cf. S. Guzzi-Heeb « Politique et réseaux. Logiques de la

mobilisation politique populaire dans une vallée alpine 1839-1900 ». In: *Revue d'histoire de XIXe siècle* 36, 2008/1, 119-131.

²⁶ In the radical branch of the extended Dumoulin group we notice 11 illegitimate births between 1830 and 1890 whereas only 1 illegitimate child can be observed in the other 2 branches existing in the nineteenth century.

²⁷ Louis Besson, member of the radical brass-band "L'Avenir" in 1893 probably belonged to the same group

²⁸ His daughter, however, was the wife of a radical member of the young Switzerland.

²⁹ Let us consider Etienne-Joseph Cretton's case, an important Old Switzerland leader in 1844 : his brother was the product of adultery, his nephew was a bastard too. But already Etienne-Joseph's grand-uncle, born in 1729, was the product of an illegitimate relation. A similar case is the one of Pierre-Zacharie Corthay, another conservative element.

³⁰ Sandro Guzzi-Heeb, Christine Payot; "Des rebelles novateurs? Conflits politiques et réseaux sociaux dans une vallée alpine du XVIIIe siècle », in : *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 2010 (forthcoming).

³¹ In this way we can collect 499 political data, whereby more mentions may concern the same individual.

³² S. Guzzi-Heeb « Politique et réseaux », op.cit.

³³ If we count 3 probable prenuptial conceptions (within 8 months after marriage) we obtain 10 interesting events.

³⁴ Above all core-oppositional groups like the Michellod 5, the Troillet 7 ... which produced numerous children conceived out of marriage.

³⁵ It is possible, however, that these families could hide their illegitimate children easier than others, for example sending unmarried mothers and their children out of the valley. This is a probable bias in our sources; on the other hand, the visible illicit relations are also a symptom of a different, more permissive attitude.

³⁶ S.Guzzi-Heeb, C. Payot, "Des rebelles novateurs? » op.cit.

³⁷ The Cornut had 3 premarital conceptions in the 2d half of the century, what is clearly higher than in the other elite families. Moreover the eldest son of Emmanuel Cornut, the castellan of the community, had two illegitimate children before his wedding with Louise Carraux. That suggests that in this family the control over young people was weaker than in comparable wealthy families: the pressure to marry and to legitimate the children was lower than for other similar groups.

³⁸ S. Guzzi-Heeb, *Sexe, parenté et politique*, op. cit.

³⁹ We find in fact these different solutions in Bagnes: until 1850 an astonishing high number of illegitimate children was registered under the father's family name; they were probably acknowledged by the fathers.

⁴⁰ S. Guzzi-Heeb, *Donne, uomini, parentela*, op.cit., 303-327; numerous examples of demographic change tied to new economic activities have been described in the studies about proto-industrialization: s. for ex. Franklin F.Mendels, *Industrialization and population pressure in eighteenth-century Flanders*, New York: Arno Press, 1981, Hans Medick, „Strukturen und Funktion der Bevölkerungsentwicklung im protoindustriellen System“, in: Peter Kriedte et al. (eds.), *Industrialisierung vor der Industrialisierung*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht 1977; for Switzerland s. Ulrich Pfister, « Proto-industrialization in Switzerland », in, Sheilagh C. Ogilvie et Cerman Markus (eds.), *European proto-industrialization*, Cambridge: University Press, 1996, 137-154.

⁴¹ The Parchet group: the largest families between 1750 and 1850 (11 to 13 children) were all characterized by a prenuptial conception. In the Bené group too, the parents who evidently had sexual intercourse before marriage had more children than the others. In the Bonjean group, the largest families are concentrated in the branches where we can find most illicit sexual relations (and the liberal activists).

⁴² I only considered IIR born before the birth of the last child in a large family or about at the same time (until 10 years later). Anyway, we have to notice that the relation's nature can be sensibly different: in the cases reckoned above, the illicit relation preceded the foundation of a F>10 family or happened about at the same time. In this case we can assume a relation with a more permissive discipline within the kin group. But sometimes, the documented illicit relation took place after the foundation of a F>10 family. In these cases the interpretation is more difficult. It could be the symptom of a less rigid sexual discipline, but the contrary could be true too: the large number of children, eventually linked with economic difficulties, weakened the sexual control over the offspring.

Sex, Politics and Social Change in the eighteenth and the nineteenth Centuries. Evidence from the Swiss Alps.

- Sandro Guzzi-Heeb –

Tables

Tab.1. : Prenuptial conceptions and illegitimate births in Bagnes, 1680-1899

years		prenuptial conceptions	illegitimate children
1680	1689	7	5
1690	1699	12	3
1700	1709	11	3
1710	1719	7	1
1720	1729	13	2
1730	1739	20	4
1740	1749	20	6
1750	1759	8	6
1760	1769	26	7
1770	1779	18	7
1780	1789	18	4
1790	1799	18	8
1800	1809	24	12
1810	1819	38	13
1820	1829	35	11
1830	1839	54	24
1840	1849	37	13
1850	1859	45	13
1860	1869	81	33
1870	1879	90	35
1880	1889	75	32
1890	1899	79	34

Sources : parish registers of Bagnes

Table 2: Alliances in the Bessard 7 branch 1830-1900 (only marriages with identified partners considered).

Genealogical Code	IR	First names	Name	day	m.	year	partner	Code of partner	category
BSA§7-12271	IR	Etienne-Joseph-Em.	Bessard	13	9	1833	Marie-Julie Morend	MRE§10-8.10.512	top25
BSA§7-13617		Pierre-Joseph	Bessard	5	6	1833	Anne-Ursule Boven	BOV§1-25711	
BSA§7-13619		Anne-Thérèse	Bessard	13	6	1833	Félix-Cyprien Caseux	CAS§2-22.12.77	
BSA§7-1361.11.	IR	Marie-Antonie	Bessard	26	3	1838	Jean-Maurice Dumoulin	DUM§6-33214	top25
BSA§7-12272		Jean-Joseph	Bessard	26	3	1840	Anne-Elisabeth Fellay	FEL§34-10.13.424	
BSA§7-12281		Anne-Catherine	Bessard	24	2	1841	Michel-Benjamin Miret	MIR§1-122167	
BSA§7-136153		Marie-Elisabeth	Bessard	22	4	1843	Jos.-Augustin Nicollier	NIC§9-4155	
BSA§7-12281			Bessard	2	12	1845	J.-Jos.-Benjamin Maret	MAR§1-11126.13.	
BSA§7-12282		Jean-Joseph	Bessard	30	6	1845	Anne-Rosalie Besse	BSE§43-7625	
BSA§7-122134		Jean-François	Bessard	3	12	1846	Marie-Rosalie Courthion	COU§3-141326	
BSA§7-122131	IR	Marie-Angélique *	Bessard	16	5	1847	Maurice-Cyprien Bruchez	BRU§31-241.11.42	top25
BSA§7-12274	IR	Pierre-Joseph	Bessard	20	3	1847	Marie-Cécile Bessard	BSA§2-12658	
BSA§7-16453		Marie-Euphrosine	Bessard			1848	NN. Bruchez	BRU§31-241.11.221	
BSA§7-12282			Bessard	8	1	1849	Marie-Françoise Cretton	CRE§2-142114	top25
BSA§7-16451		F.-Jos.-Frédéric	Bessard	29	12	1853	M.-Madeleine Mabilard	MAB§1-411311	
BSA§7-16453	IR	Anne-Catherine	Bessard	24	4	1854	Etienne-François Fellay	FEL§8-56323	top25
BSA§7-136181		Etienne-Joseph	Bessard	2	4	1855	Marie-Thérèse Besson	BSO§3-11623.10.	
BSA§7-136156		Marie-Louise	Bessard	23	11	1857	Pierre-Antoine Fellay	FEL§8-10.7539	top25
BSA§7-136171		Anne-Marie	Bessard	6	6	1857	Jean-Joseph Vaudan	VAU§10-24113	top25
BSA§7-123112		Etienne-Joseph	Bessard	30	4	1859	Mgte-Philomène MAY	MAY§5-424971	
BSA§7-12289		Françoise-Faustine	Bessard	17	5	1860	François-Daniel Dorsaz	DOR§1-1	
BSA§7-136188		François-Augustin	Bessard	18	4	1860	A.-Mthe-Rosalie Cretton	CRE§7-3754	
BSA§7-16457		Georges-François	Bessard	26	8	1861	Anne-Catherine Gabbud	GAB§9-2122421	
BSA§7-136152		Maurice-Joseph	Bessard	27	11	1862	Marie-Angélique Oillet	OIL§4-47312	
BSA§7-136153		Marie-Elisabeth	Bessard	7	1	1862	Maurice-Eugène Magnin	MAG§6-421313	
BSA§7-122714	IR	Etienne-Joseph	Bessard	6	6	1864	Marie-Françoise Fellay	FEL§37-144	top25
BSA§7-122715	IR	François-Justin	Bessard	22	10	1864	Marie-Léonie Luisier	LUI§8-312638	
BSA§7-122721	IR	Jean-Joseph	Bessard	1	12	1867	Rosalie Filliez	FIL§1-224421	
BSA§7-122713		Joseph-Séraphin	Bessard	21	3	1872	Julie-Léonie Maret	MAR§18-3.11.4735	
BSA§7-1228.10.	IR	François-Benjamin	Bessard	20	12	1874	Julie-Philomène Besse	BSE§30-1614545	top25
BSA§7-122139		Marie-Egyptienne	Bessard	26	12	1875	Joseph-Frédéric Michaud	MCA§14-63324	
BSA§7-122741	IR	Marie-Célestine	Bessard	30	6	1878	Pierre-François Gabbud	GAB§10-1241334	
BSA§7-1361811		Maurice-Eugène	Bessard	4	6	1879	Marie-Louise Bruchez	BRU§20-3434321	
BSA§7-122825	IR	Marie-Hortense	Bessard	9	2	1882	Louis Guex	GAY§6-	
BSA§7-1361812	IR	Maurice-Joseph	Bessard	29	4	1882	Marie-Angélique Besse	BSE§18-321332	
BSA§7-1361815	IR	Marie-Françoise	Bessard	30	9	1883	François-Fabien Besse	BSE§18-321333	
BSA§7-122744		P.-Louis-Emile	Bessard	21	5	1888	Marie-Julie May	MAY§3-2163616	
BSA§7-164573		François-Camille	Bessard	29	12	1889	Marie-Adèle Carron	CAR§9-1422271	top25
BSA§7-1361881	IR	François-Joseph	Bessard	4	12	1890	Marie-Delphine Cretton	CRE§2-1421124	top25
BSA§7-12213.10.1		Pierre-Justin	Bessard	5	10	1891	Louise-Marguerite Fellay	FEL§27-638511	
BSA§7-1227143		Joseph-Hercule	Bessard	8	12	1891	Louise-Emma Deslarzes	DES§7-5713813	
BSA§7-1231121		Maurice-Joseph	Bessard	1	1	1892	Marie-Sophie Michellod	MCO§	
BSA§7-1231124		Marie-Adèle	Bessard	10	6	1892	Et.-Benjamin Masson	MAS§5-3151346	
BSA§7-1231125		François-Florentin	Bessard	14	5	1893	Marie-Marine Luisier	LUI§20-3433343	
BSA§7-1227153		Marie-Adèle	Bessard	17	11	1894	Louis-Casimir Dumoulin	DUM§6-2311374	top25
BSA§7-1227211	IR	Mce-Jos.-Candide	Bessard	17	11	1894	Marie-Louise Fellay	FEL§37-1451	top25

BSAŞ7-164571	IR	François-Louis	Bessard	26	5	1894	Marie-Angeline Vaudan	VAUŞ10-7233152	top25
BSAŞ7-1227145	IR	Antoine-Séraphin	Bessard	25	12	1898	Cath.-Eugénie Charvoz	CHAŞ1-2431233	
BSAŞ7-1228.10.2		Marguerite-Louise	Bessard	15	4	1899	Mce-Emile Gailland	GAIŞ10-354125	

Legend: IR: couple certainly had an illicit relation;

top 25: branch belonging to the 25 with the highest number of IIR in the nineteenth century

Table 3: Illegitimate children dead during their two first years of life in Vouvry, 1700-1849.

Period	baptisms	illegitimate	%	illegitimate dead during the first 2 years	% of all illegitimate children
1700-49	938	23	2,5	10	43,5
1750-99	1030	39	3,8	15	38,4
1800-49	1693	83	4,9	14	16,9

Source: Baptism record Vouvry.

Table 4. Number of families with 12 or more children (F>11) in Bagnes, 1650-1900.

Years*	N. of families
1650-1700	2
1701-1750	9
1751-1800	11
1801-1850	20
1851-1900	26
TOT	68

*based on the last child's birth date.

Table 5: Kinship relations between F>11 and parents of IIR, 1680-1900

Categories	degree					
	all	1	1d	2	3	4
Same parents (father)	13	13				
Relation through F>11 father	25	8	2	8	7	
Relation through F>11 mother*	32	12		9	9	2
Families without known relation to IIRI	4					
TOT relations	74					

*The same family can have relations to IIRI through de father and through the mother.

Table 6: Kinship relations between parents of F>9 and parents of IIR, 1680-1810.

Categories	all relations	degree 1	degree 2	degree 3	degree 4	
Same person (father)	6	6				Father of IIR is also father of F>9
Kinship relation through the father	51	24	10	14	3	
Kinship relation through the mother	36	10	13	12	1	
No relation known	34					
Relation uncertain	1					
TOTAL	128	40	23	26	4	