

NATHALIE BAJOS MICHEL BOZON

SEXUALITY IN FRANCE



PRACTICES, GENDER & HEALTH



THE BARDWELL PRESS

Contents

List of Tables and Figures	XIII
Preface	
<i>Maurice Godelier</i>	XXV
<i>Note</i>	XXXI
Acknowledgements	XXXIII
The Authors	XXXV
1. Introduction: The "Context of Sexuality in France" Survey — Multidisciplinary Research into Sexuality, Gender and Health	
<i>Nathalie Bajos and Michel Bozon</i>	1
<i>History of the Research</i>	1
<i>The CSF Team</i>	2
<i>Research Hypotheses</i>	2
<i>The Method and the Questionnaire</i>	3
<i>How to Read this Book</i>	3
PART I: SURVEY DESIGN	
2. Methodological Issues and Data Collection	
<i>Nathalie Bajos, Nathalie Beltzer and Michel Bozon</i>	7
<i>A Random Sample Survey of the General Population</i>	8
<i>Data Collection</i>	11
<i>Evaluation of the Survey</i>	12
<i>Scientific and Institutional Evaluation</i>	13

Notes	14
References	15
Appendix 2.1: Scientific Committee of the CSF Survey	16
Appendix 2.2: Social and Demographic Characteristics of Individuals in the CSF Survey	18
Appendix 2.3: Construction of the "Educational Level" Variable	22
3. Survey Sampling Strategy and Weighting	25
Laurent Toulemon and Nicolas Razafindratsima	
Introduction	25
The Survey Sampling Method	26
Composition of the Sample	29
The Choice of Weightings	31
Conclusion	38
Notes	39
References	39
4. A General Population Survey of Chlamydia Trachomatis Infection	41
Véronique Goulet and Josiane Warszawski	
Context and Aims	41
Methodology	42
Taking Samples at Home	42
Participation Rate in the Survey	45
Restitution of the Test Results and Treatment of Positive Screening Test Cases	47
Conclusion	47
Notes	48
References	48
Appendix	50
5. Data Quality: Composition of the Sample and Conduct of Interviews	57
Nicolas Razafindratsima	
Introduction	57
Six Telephone Numbers Per Questionnaire: The Different Stages of Sample Composition	58
Context of The Interviews: Interviewer Effects and Presence of a Third Party	63
Conclusion	69
Notes	70
References	70
Appendix	71
6. The Place and the Experience of the Interviewer in a Sensitive Survey	75
Sharman Levinson	
The First Stages of Appropriation of the Survey: The Interviewers at the Heart of a Complex System	76
Questions Posed By Interviewers During The Training	79
Beginning The Field Research Phase: Interviewers Dealing with a Sensitive Survey	81
Rephrasing of Questions: Bias or Benefit?	82

IV SEXUALITY IN FRANCE

<i>Emergence and Evolution of "Implicit Requests": Discussion Groups and Analysis of Interviewer Practice</i>	83
<i>Interviewer Distress in Dealing with the Sexual Abuse and Violence Section</i>	84
<i>Establishment of Discussion Groups: Interpretation and Evolution of a Request</i>	84
<i>Distinguishing Between Distress of the Interviewer and Distress of the Interviewee</i>	85
<i>Rape and Harassment as Metaphors for Malaise in the Position of the Interviewer</i>	86
<i>Valorisation and Recognition of Skills: The Emergence of a New Request</i>	88
<i>Advantages of Paying Serious Attention To The Interviewer Experience</i>	88
Notes	89
References	89
Appendix	91

PART II: AFFECTIVE AND SEXUAL BIOGRAPHIES

7. First Intercourse and First Relationship: Long Anticipated Transitions

Michel Bozon	95
<i>An Event with Multiple Meanings</i>	95
<i>Earlier Socialisation in Sexuality: A Narrowing Gap but a Persistent Difference Between the Experiences of Adolescent Women and Men</i>	96
<i>Lowering of Age at First Intercourse, and Individual Social and Personal Characteristics</i>	100
<i>A Persistent Asymmetry Between Female and Male Experiences at Sexual Initiation</i>	103
<i>Changes in the Settings of Encounters and of First Intercourse: School, Peer Sociability and the "Domestication" of Sexuality</i>	107
<i>From Sex to Relationship: More varied Meanings and Processes</i>	109
<i>Establishment of Contraceptive and Protective Norms and their Limits</i>	111
<i>Early and Late Sexual Debut: Emergent Attitudes to Sexuality</i>	113
Conclusion	116
Notes	117
References	117
Appendix	119

8. Young People Who Have Not Yet Had Sexual Intercourse: Social Norms and Lack of Opportunity

Armelle Andro	125
<i>Delaying the Moment</i>	125
<i>Who Are Those Over 18 Who Have Not Yet Had Sexual Intercourse?</i>	126
<i>Specific Socio-demographic Characteristics Which Change with Increasing Age</i>	127
<i>Which Partners for Which Practices?</i>	128
<i>Two Different Orders of Explanation</i>	129
<i>A Particular Framework of Socialisation?</i>	132
Conclusion	134
Notes	135
References	135
Appendix	136

9. Between First Intercourse and First Union: The Early Trajectories of Men and Women Are Still Different

Laurent Toulemon	139
Introduction	139
From First Intercourse to First Conjugal Union: A New Stage for Women	140
Pre-conjugal Histories Remain Different for Women and Men	152
Conclusion	160
Notes	160
References	161
Appendix 9.1: Extract from Survey Questionnaire	162
Appendix 9.2	164

10. Separations and Their Consequences: Sexual Encounters and Disease Prevention After Conjugal Separation and Romantic Break-up

Nathalie Beltzer and Michel Bozon	171
Romantic Break-up and Conjugal Separation: Two Different Life Experiences	172
The Sexual Context of Break-up: Diverse Situations	173
Sexual Life After Breakdown: Inequalities Between Women and Men, and Age Effects	176
New Partners Already Involved With Others: A Particularly Risky Situation	180
A New Stage in Sexual Life	182
Notes	183
References	183
Appendix	184

PART III: SEXUAL RELATIONS, PARTNERS AND PRACTICES

11. Number of Partners: Some Convergence Between Women and Men, but Continuing Wide Differences in Behaviour

Henri Leridon	189
Introduction	189
Number of lifetime partners	191
Partners in the Past Twelve Months: A Much Smaller Gap Between Men and Women	201
Same Sex Partners	204
The Situation at the Time of the Survey, and Recent Changes	206
Conclusion	209
Notes	210
References	210
Appendix 11.1: Distribution of Numbers of Partners (Lifetime and Past 12 Months)	212
Appendix 11.2: Counting Sexual Partners: A Difficult Exercise ...	214

12. Homo-/Bisexuality: Token Acceptance and Social and Protective Vulnerabilities

Nathalie Bajos and Nathalie Beltzer with the collaboration of Agnès Prudhomme	217
A New Social and Epidemiological Context	217
The Multiple Facets of Homo- Bisexual Sexualities	218
Social Trajectories and the Acceptance of Homosexuality	227

<i>From Token Acceptance to Social and Preventive Vulnerability</i>	234
Notes	235
References	236
Appendix	238

13. Sexual Encounters and Sexual Practices: A Widening Repertoire

Michel Bozon	243
Introduction	243
<i>Sexual Practices: Convergence and Divergence Between Men and Women</i>	244
<i>A New Script: Internet Dating Sites</i>	246
<i>Partner Swapping: Not Just a Matter of Couples</i>	247
<i>Recourse to Prostitution Has Not Declined</i>	248
<i>Pornography: Watched Alone or in a Couple?</i>	248
<i>Cultural and Social Dimensions of Sexual Practices: Diffusion and Resistance</i>	250
<i>Sexual Practices and Religious Adherence</i>	252
<i>Multiple Partners and Versatility of Sexual Repertoire</i>	255
<i>Use of Viagra After Age 45 and its Determinants</i>	256
Conclusion	258
Notes	259
References	259
Appendix	261

14. Non-penetrative Sex: Practices That Are Often Overlooked

Armelle Andro and Nathalie Bajos	265
<i>Non-penetrative Practices, at the Heart of a Diverse Sexual Repertoire</i>	267
<i>Partners with Whom Sex is Always Non-penetrative</i>	269
<i>Non-penetrative Sex: A Choice of Sexual Activity</i>	273
<i>Non-penetrative Sex: A Neglected Dimension of the Sexual Repertoire</i>	276
References	277
Appendix	278

15. Frequency and Modalities of Intercourse: Contrasting Situations Depending on the Type of Partner

Henri Leridon	281
<i>Who Was the Most Recent Intercourse With?</i>	282
<i>Context and Circumstances of Most Recent Intercourse</i>	285
<i>Frequency of Intercourse and Satisfaction</i>	289
<i>Type of Partner, Style of Interaction and Sexual Activity</i>	292
Notes	292
References	292
Appendix	294

16. Absence of Sexual Activity: Singularities of a Heterogenous Population

Charlotte le Van, Michèle Ferrand and Sharman Levinson	299
<i>Sexual Inactivity: Young Men and Older Women</i>	301
<i>Sexual Inactivity Among Individuals Without Stable Relationships: Diverse Ways of Living and Perceiving their Situation</i>	303
<i>Single Sexually Inactive People: A Particular Profile</i>	307
<i>Sexual Inactivity Within a Couple or a Stable Relationship</i>	312

Conclusion	316
Notes	317
References	317
Appendix	319

PART IV: SEXUALITY AND POWER RELATIONS

17. **Concord and Discord: Desire and Its Variations**

Michele Ferrand, Nathalie Bajos and Armelle Andro with the collaboration of Agnès Prudhomme	323
<i>Unwanted Sexual Intercourse, and Practices Engaged in to Please the Partner</i>	324
<i>Management of Disagreements in Day to Day Experience</i>	331
<i>Concord and Discord: Desire and its Variations</i>	337
Notes	337
References	338
Appendix	339

18. **Sexual Violence in France: Resignation, Reproof and Revolt**

Nathalie Bajos and Michel Bozon with the collaboration of Agnès Prudhomme	345
<i>Heightened Social Condemnation</i>	345
<i>Methodological and Ethical Issues, and Considerations of Memory and Forgetting</i>	347
<i>From Obscene Phone Calls to Imposed Sexual Intercourse</i>	348
<i>Attempted or Actual Forced Intercourse: A Transformation in Perceptions</i>	351
<i>The Rise in Reported Sexual Violence in the 2000s: A Shift in the Intolerability Threshold?</i>	357
<i>Heightened Intolerance, but a Resignation That Has Not Entirely Disappeared</i>	361
Notes	363
References	364
Appendix	366

PART V: SEXUALITY, LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES AND HEALTH

19. **Sexuality, Gender and Life Circumstances**

Nathalie Beltzer, Nathalie Bajos and Anne Laporte	375
<i>Couples and Sexuality: The Passage of Time and Domestic Inequality</i>	377
<i>Importance of the Occupational and Economic Context</i>	383
<i>Difficult Life Circumstances and the Calling into Question of the Social Roles of Women and Men</i>	388
<i>Gender and Sexuality at the Intersection of Domestic, Occupational and Economic Issues</i>	389
Notes	389
References	389
Appendix	391

20. **Contraceptive and Preventive Behaviour: Issues in Negotiation at Different Stages of Affective and Sexual Trajectories**

Nathalie Beltzer and Nathalie Bajos	401
<i>Condom Use: A Dual Function in the Behavioural Code of Sexual Debut</i>	402
<i>New Relationships, New Preventive Strategies?</i>	410

<i>Relationship Issues in Contraception and Prevention</i>	413
<i>From Contraception to Prevention</i>	416
Notes	417
References	417
Appendix	420

21. Sexually Transmitted Infections: Inequalities in Access to Screening

Josiane Warszawski and Véronique Goulet	425
<i>Prevention and Screening: Issues in the Public Health Response to Frequently Asymptomatic Infections</i>	425
<i>Frequency of Reported Histories of STIs; the Tip of the Iceberg</i>	427
<i>Chlamydia Trachomatis Infections: Widespread but Poorly Understood and Screened For</i>	432
<i>Management of STIs: Marked Differences Between Men and Women</i>	435
<i>Screening for HIV Infections: Targeted on the Risk Exposure Profile</i>	439
<i>Measures Needed to Improve Access to Screening for Young Women, Socially Disadvantaged Women and for Men</i>	439
Notes	443
References	443
Appendix	446

22. Difficulties with Sexual Function: Contexts, Determinants and Meanings

Sharman Levinson	449
<i>Difficulties in Sexual Function: Frequency, Degree of Hindrance, Recourse to Treatment</i>	451
<i>Multiple Sexual Function Difficulties and Disruption of Sexual Activity</i>	454
<i>Sexual Function Difficulties and Medical Management</i>	458
<i>Health Factors Associated with Sexual Function Difficulties: Frequency, Degree of Hindrance, and Recourse to Treatment</i>	460
<i>Life-Historical Factors, Relational Contexts, and Sexual Function Difficulties</i>	463
Conclusion	466
Notes	467
References	467
Appendix	468

23. Sexuality and Chronic Disease

Anne Laporte and Nathalie Beltzer	471
Introduction	471
<i>Chronic Disease: A General Threat to Sexual Functioning</i>	472
<i>Chronic Diseases and Conjugal Life</i>	475
<i>Sexual Activity Disorders and Types of Pathology</i>	478
<i>The Necessity of Taking the Sexuality of the Chronically Ill into Account</i>	483
Notes	484
References	485
Appendix	486

PART VI: MEANINGS AND REPRESENTATIONS

24. Attitudes Towards Sexuality and the Life Course: Diversification and Reconstitution	489
<i>Michel Bozon and Charlotte le Van</i>	
<i>Decline in Principle-Based Institutions and the Emergence of a New Normative Regime</i>	489
<i>Some Earlier Attempts at Classification of Attitudes</i>	490
<i>Attitudinal Groupings in the CSF Survey: The Indifferent, the Reserved and the Enthusiastic</i>	492
<i>Age-Course and Orientations in Women and Men</i>	496
<i>Orientations — Free Interpretations of Sexual Experiences</i>	498
<i>Between One Survey and Another: Reconstitution of Attitudes Towards Sexuality and the Continuity of the Divide Between Women and Men</i>	499
<i>Notes</i>	500
<i>References</i>	501
25. Sexuality and the Challenge of Equality	503
<i>Nathalie Bajos, Michèle Ferrand and Armelle Andro</i>	
<i>“Natural” Differences Between the Sexes: The Basis of Representations of Sexuality</i>	504
<i>A Naturalising, Binary View of Sexuality at the Heart of a Procreative Model</i>	507
<i>Sexuality: A Field of Expression of Social Inequalities Between the Sexes?</i>	513
<i>The Sexual Injunction</i>	516
<i>From “Differentialism” to “Egalitarianism”: Sexuality and the Test of Equality</i>	518
<i>Notes</i>	521
<i>References</i>	522
<i>Appendix</i>	524

PART VII: SYNTHESIS

26. Sexuality, Gender and Health: The Contributions of the “Context of Sexuality in France” Survey	535
<i>Nathalie Bajos and Michel Bozon</i>	
<i>The Why and the How of Sexual Surveys</i>	535
<i>From One Century To Another: Change and Permanence</i>	537
<i>Female and Male Trajectories: An Attenuation of Difference</i>	539
<i>Modes of Encounter and Sexual Repertoires Are Increasingly Diverse</i>	543
<i>Social Differentiation of Women's Sexual Behaviour</i>	545
<i>Sexual Violence</i>	545
<i>Experiences and Representations of Sexuality: Between Reconstitution and Permanence</i>	546
<i>Some Considerations for Public Policy</i>	548
<i>Notes</i>	553
<i>References</i>	553

SEXUALITY IN FRANCE PRACTICES, GENDER & HEALTH

Edited by
Nathalie Bajos
& *Michel Bozon*

Research coordinated by
Nathalie Beltzer

This book presents the most recent and comprehensive scientific study of the sexual behaviour and attitudes of the French. Published for the first time in English, the work is based on a major research survey conducted in 2006–7 with 12,000 participants, and supported by the main social research and health agencies in France.

The results of the study are described in full and analysed according to the key issues concerning variations in sexual behaviour and attitudes and their consequences for the sexual health of the French population. The book provides detailed information on and analysis of the changing practices in sexual relations for all sections of French society. It offers an authoritative account of age and gender differences that influence sexual behaviour and attitudes, and a comprehensive discussion of issues relating to heterosexual and homosexual practices, sexual dysfunction, and the dichotomy between emotions and sexual urges in the representation of sexuality.

The findings of this important study paint a fascinating picture of the evolution of attitudes, behaviours, sexual practices and health issues in contemporary France. A major contribution to knowledge about sexual attitudes and behaviour, the work provides important information of concern to social scientists, health professionals and social workers alike, and to all those interested in a better understanding of contemporary sexual life.



Nathalie Bajos
Research Director at INSERM
(National Institute of Health)

Michel Bozon
Research Director at INED
(National Institute of Population
Studies)

ISBN 978-1-905622-28-3



Instituts
thématiques



Inserm

Institut national
de la santé et de la recherche médicale

ined

INSTITUT NATIONAL
D'ÉTUDES DÉMOGRAPHIQUES



anRS

Agence nationale de recherches
sur le sida et les hépatites virales
| Agence autonome de l'Inserm |



THE BARDWELL PRESS