

Solitude and Vulnerability in Female Life Courses Geneva, 1816-1843*

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Introduction

All the students in history learn that each present asks to its past its own questions. While recent statistics reveal that half of the population live alone in Western metropolis, at least in historical demography solitude strangely remains a understudied dimension, usually treated as a section in researches which main focus is elsewhere: demographic regulation, family structure, life cycle service, gendered life courses, poverty and vulnerability, etc.¹ This paper aims at exploring the several dimensions of solitude in a peculiar context, the one of Geneva between 1816 and 1843, on the basis of six censuses². In a first time we propose a typology of forms of solitude, as they have been pointed out in historical demography, family history, social and gender history. It results in five categories that can overlap, and do to some extent. Solitude is a complex, multidimensional phenomena, that we do not want to reduce to a single category. Such approach is directly illustrated through a measure of the weight of solitude in its various forms among the male and female populations of Geneva. In sections 2, 3 and 4, we successively analyze domesticity, celibacy and widowhood, and finally the household perspective on solitude. Section 5 is a summary of solitude location in the life course, stressing the differences between male and female trajectories. In section 6, we approach vulnerability associated with solitude through the location on the urban labor market and in the social structures. There are structural dimensions, but we also start to look at transitions in section 7. Indeed we have tried to track the Geneva inhabitants from census to census. Such long and tedious effort is not finished. Nevertheless, we have run logistic regressions on a large sample, first to look if solitude (and which types especially) rose the probability to leave Geneva during the inter-census period, second to identify factors that increase or decrease the chance to leave solitude among those present at two successive censuses, and third and finally to make the same exercise on the same sub-sample on the risk of entering into solitude.

Our research is based on a case-study of the city of Geneva between the restoration of the old Calvinist bourgeois regime and the transformation of an homogeneous urban republic in a religiously mixed canton in 1816, and the radical revolutions in the 1840s, from which Geneva will start its modernization after a long hesitation between the old and the new times (Herrmann 2003). During the period 1816-1843, the town remains confined between the

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¹ Two notable exceptions are the beautiful books edited by Arlette Farge and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber in 1984: *Madame ou Mademoiselle? Itinéraires de la solitude féminine 18e-20e siècles*, and the same year, the book of L.V. Chambers-Schiller, *Liberty, a better husband. Single women in America...*

² 1816, 1822, 1828, 1831, 1837 and 1843. We recorded an alphabetical sample taking all those with a name beginning by the letter "B", as well as their household members. When, however, only a lodger or a servant had a name beginning by "B", we just recorded him or her individually with a few indications about his/her household. We were obliged to do that to keep the work feasible. Our analyses are all on the B population (11% of the whole population) but, for example, when we calculated at which type of household belonged our B individuals we used the data about their cohabitants.

strong fortifications that permitted during centuries the survival of the Calvinist Rome surrounded by Catholics. Such confinement restrained both economic and demographic growths. After the disappearance of the textile before 1830, the "Fabrique" (i.e. the many branches active in the watch making) remained the only and consequently dominant productive activity in the city. Such a production with high added value was essentially destined to the international markets, and therefore quite sensitive to the political conjuncture. From a demographic standpoint, the city grew from 21,327 inhabitants in 1798 to 31,200 in 1850 (Schumacher 2002, 8-9).

Such progress, which is not very impressive in the European 19th century context, hides a complex demographic regime. Mortality was low with a gross annual rate almost always below 23 per thousand and an infant mortality that was still around 200 per thousand between 1750 and 1799 but fell to 100/130 in the first half of the 19th century (Schumacher 2002, 98). It could have resulted in a serious endogenous demographic pressure, but Geneva is famous for its pioneering role in the diffusion of birth control. The couples married during the first half of the 19th century made only 2.32 children as an average. Geneva is at this time one of the very rare place where have coexisted neo-Malthusianism and a traditional Malthusianism since the access to marriage remained severely restricted, with a high level of final celibacy and an average age at the first union of 28 for women and 30 for men (Ryczkowska 2003; Schumacher 2004). As a result, between 1806 and 1850, the city counted only 557 more births than deaths. The population was much more renewed by immigration that could suggest its modest global growth, and such renewal sometimes implied real structural changes: in the Calvinist Rome, the proportion of Catholics rose from 11 to 28 % between 1816 and 1843 (Oris and Perroux forthcoming).

1. The many definitions of solitude

Solitude has many definitions. Historical demographers tend to emphasize two categories that were structural components of pre-transitional and transitional societies: singles and widows, the "women without men" (Bourdelaïs 1984, 62-63). In the famous 1982 volume on "Family Forms in Historic Europe", John Hajnal reassessed the existence of an European marriage pattern, characterized by high level of final celibacy and high ages at marriage, as it was still the case in Geneva in the first half of the 19th century. In the same book, Peter Laslett (1982) added the low propensity to remarriage in the Western part of Europe, widowhood being especially there an important brake to fertility considering the proportion of unions broken by the untimely death of one of the partners³. Moreover, many researches revealed that widows remarried much less than widowers, as well as a concentration of widows in towns, because of both their charity institutions and their matrimonial market with usually more women than men that increased the gender differential in access to remarriage (Oris and Ochiai 2002, 66-72). Singles, and especially single women were also more present in urban populations because of the domesticity (Dauphin 1991, 517-518). For most of those servants, their stay in the city was part of their life cycle and of the long road giving access to marriage (van Poppel and Oris 2004, 3-5). Spinsters were recruited among those who failed to establish a relation and settle a household of their own, or among those who renounced to this perspective, particularly within a sibling group the one who "sacrificed" him- or more frequently herself to

³ François Lebrun (1988, 18) estimated that at the European level before industrialization, the average number of children per complete family was 7, but if we consider all marriage it falls to 4-5, the difference being due to the unions broken before the wife reached 50. The reference volume is Dupâquier et al. 1981. More recently see Derosas and Oris 2002.

take care of the parents in their old age, to avoid them to finish their life in an empty nest (Alter 1996).

Through those issues of differential access to remarriage by gender, as well as the forms of cohabitation between generations according to their respective matrimonial status, historical demography joins family history. For family historians, and on the basis of the well-known Hammel-Laslett (1974) typology, solitude means a household of size one, or sometimes a person living alone with domestic(s). Beyond such a basic definition, solitude is seen as a structural product of the nuclear family system dominant in Western Europe (Bourdelaïs 1984, 64-65). Following the nuclear hardship hypothesis (Laslett 1988), the neo-local establishment rule for the newly married implied the progressive departure of the children, and parents finished their life in the famous "empty nest" evoked above, especially the widows because of the gender differential in mortality at old age. It rapidly resulted in a deep poverty for the households that were supposed to live on their own resources as an autonomous economic niche (Reher 1997, 108). The old and the afflicted could then find an help only from the civil or religious collectivities (Neven 2003, 155).

However, even in a "perfect" nuclear system like the English one, only half approximately experimented the solitude, while the other part became guest of a married children until their death (Laslett 1988; Oris and Ochiai 2002, 40). More recently, as noted above, George Alter stressed the importance of the "stayers" among the children. In pragmatic terms, it has been observed that even in societies clearly dominated by the nuclear family ideals and even in old age, solitude remained statistically a rare life experience (Reher 1997, 98; Neven 2003, 160). Probably living alone was even less common in towns because of the difficulties to rent a housing with just individual incomes and the consequent incitement to share a lodging, at least in the popular classes. It was even more a concern in early 19th century Geneva, confined within its fortification, where urban ecology was characterized by a particularly high density (Schumacher 2004). In 1835, the average number of inhabitants per house reached the very high level of 21.7! (Mallet 1837, 15)

Family history is also influenced by a third tradition of studies about solitude coming from social and/or gender history. Those researches stress the peculiar situation of persons who are physically part of a household with several members, but are "living with the others". As noted above, the ties can be close, of a kin nature, involving not only old parents but also single or widowed brothers or sisters, uncles or aunts, or still orphan nephews, nieces, cousins, ... that in our perspective avoid solitude or institutionalization since they are welcomed by an allied family nucleus. In Hammel-Laslett typology, the households without a nucleus are a peculiar case with however a similar logic, since several researches saw them as another solution to avoid physical solitude and a survival strategy for the poor people, especially but not exclusively the daughters who sacrificed themselves, waiting the death of their parents and sometimes losing their chances to access to marriage (Hufton 1995, 131; Neven 2002, 422).

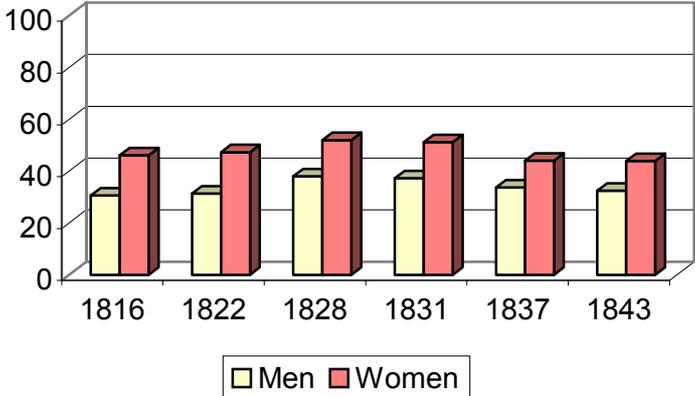
For gender historians, especially during the 19th century when this activity expands with the bourgeoisie, living with the others was particularly the destiny of the many domestics and servants, with again an urban concentration. Separated from their parents, often far from their other kin and friends stayed in the villages, affiliated to a household by only contractual ties, often informal, and always in a subordinate position, they could suffer from promiscuity and absence of intimacy, from a "control of their body and negation of their identity", as wrote Cécile Dauphin (1991, 524). If domesticity was essentially a female status, and consequently

of interest for gender or feminist scholars, another group, mainly male, was in a more or less similar situation: the workers living with their master (as well as a statistically marginal category of students living with their professor in pensions). Finally, the position of the lodger was an ambiguous one. Usually immigrants temporarily inserted on the local labor market but without kin in town able to receive them, they were lodged and nourished by others against payment. It has been evoked as both a survival strategy and solution to avoid solitude, for those who received those lodgers who were often women alone (Scott and Tilly 1987).

Our typology of “solitude” results from all those research traditions and observations in our data. In the type 1 are all those who live with real ‘others’, i.e. with non-kin: subtypes are the servants (11), the workers at home (12), the lodgers (13) and the students (14). The persons living alone, strictly (21) or with members of type 1, i.e. with non-kin form the second type (22). Singles above the average age at first marriage (30 years) and below the age of 45 (spinsters, subtype 31) and those aged 45 and more (final celibacy in its classic definition, subtype 32) are the type 3. Widows and widowers, without (41) or with children (42) are in type 4. Finally, the non-stem kin of extended households as well as the members of non-nucleus households form altogether the type 5. Subtypes are exclusive from each other within their type, however several overlaps can occur between different types (like for example a spinsters aged 50 [32] who worked as servant [11]). Such overlaps are important since they represent redundancies of forms of solitude.

Figure 1 shows the weight of solitude, whatever the type, in the female and male Geneva populations between 1816 and 1843. A person that cumulated several forms of solitude is counted one time. The first major result is at which point solitude was a constitutive feature of urban life and population. Among men, 30.6% belonged to one of our five types in 1816. Their proportion rose to 37/38% in 1831/1837 before falling again to 32.4% in 1843. Among females, the risks were 10 to 15% higher, with a proportion of 46.1% in 1816 rising to 51/52 in 1828/1831. Their situation clearly bettered in 1837-1843 (44%) but all along the period the percentages were quite impressive and demonstrate the amplitude of solitude in a town like Geneva, at a level that we did not suspect.

Figure 1. The proportion of solitude in female and male Geneva population, 1816-1843



We can now start to investigate the causes of solitude, focalizing on the female one, looking at their importance, status and perceptions. Table 1 summarizes the types of solitude among women at each census from 1816 to 1843. It is important to note that in the "Real total", each

individual is counted one time, while some – as explained above – can be counted in more than one category. That is why for the numbers as well as the percentages the arithmetic sums always clearly exceed the totals indicated.

2. Domesticity as a factor of female solitude

Table 1 shows clearly that in Geneva between 1816 and 1843, domesticity was the most important provider of female solitude. They represented 29.6% of the total in 1816 and such proportion grew: 36.1% in 1822, 41.1% in 1843. The high number of women serving the others indicates the importance of what Laslett called the “life-cycle service”, which is “a period of service in the household of another which provided something of a hiatus between leaving home and establishing one’s own household” (Wall 1983, 458). Far from decreasing during the century of industrialization such phenomena rose during the 19th century, and everywhere in European towns, servants were massively young, migrant, female and single (Dauphin 1991, 520). Usually they experimented a real transition in their life course, to not say a break: breaking with their environment and community of origin, their family, etc. Those young girls often left their native residence to avoid celibacy there, reduce the charges weighting on their household or still to escape from unemployment (Fraisie 1984, 112).

Table 1. Types of female solitude in Geneva from 1816 to 1843

Types	N					
	1816	1822	1828	1831	1837	1843
Servants	190	226	278	229	309	341
Workers	7	8	17	8	14	16
Lodgers	118	119	163	144	138	150
Students	3	0	1	1	0	0
Solitary	67	45	70	75	39	58
Solitary+S	71	51	62	57	79	64
Singles >=30	132	126	147	140	187	183
Singles >=45	74	88	82	102	93	109
W. isolated	117	94	118	94	61	84
W. with child.	87	56	76	43	56	83
Cohabitants	70	79	78	85	84	67
Total réel	642	626	797	676	753	829

Types	%					
	1816	1822	1828	1831	1837	1843
Servants	29.6	36.1	34.9	33.9	41.0	41.1
Workers	1.1	1.3	2.1	1.2	1.9	1.9
Lodgers	18.4	19.0	20.5	21.3	18.3	18.1
Students	0.5	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
Solitary	10.4	7.2	8.8	11.1	5.2	7.0
Solitary+S	11.1	8.1	7.8	8.4	10.5	7.7
Singles >=30	20.6	20.1	18.4	20.7	24.8	22.1
Singles >=45	11.5	14.1	10.3	15.1	12.4	13.1
W. isolated	18.2	15.0	14.8	13.9	8.1	10.1
W. with child.	13.6	8.9	9.5	6.4	7.4	10.0
Cohabitants	10.9	12.6	9.8	12.6	11.2	8.1
Total réel	100	100	100	100	100	100

As already noted, in the mind of these girls, the decision to leave home and serve the other was a temporary one, and the natural end of such a life experience was the marriage and family life with a country fellow, back home. Since age at marriage follows a Gaussian curve with an obvious “proper age at marriage”, many understood that their chances to find a spouse decreased with the years of service, rising the risks of final celibacy. However, while young male immigrants in towns lived in the most popular neighborhoods often in harsh conditions, doing the work that locals did not want to do, in other words discovering too often the dark side of the city, the female servants, although for sure controlled and exploited, lived much more in wealthy households and environments, discovering a world totally different from the one of their village with a work not necessarily harder the one they did in the countryside before. Therefore, and although uneasy to measure, it is obvious that many changed their plans and thought to afford their domestic skills and learning of the bourgeois culture to men from the middle classes, craftsmen and shopkeepers (Charle 1991, 317-318). And for Claudine Dauphine (1984, 82): “the dream of wealth and a marriage in the city was also a producer of solitude for those who failed. There were many who experimented a long solitude

with the others”. The nineteenth century literature amplifies the story of those whom the dream finished in the precarious status of unwed mothers, if not prostitutes (Oris 2000, 185). Those who reached the marriage did it at an older age than the average (Dauphin 1984, 81). Geneva data confirm this since between 1800 and 1845, the average age at first marriage for the servants was 29.52 against 27.82 for the brides as a whole (Ryczkowska 2003, 43).

3. Celibacy and widowhood, in town and in individual life courses

In our typology, precisely, the spinsters are the second most important group contributing to female solitude and the overlapping with domesticity is obvious: almost 4 about 10 single women aged 30-44 were servants (exactly 39.5%), and it was still the case for 18% of those aged 45 and more (See Table 2). The single women aged 30-44 were at a crucial moment of their life since their chances to access to marriage decreased rapidly. In Geneva, from 1816 to 1843 their contribution to female solitude was between 20 and 25%. A slight rise during this period, as well as in the weight of domesticity, can be explained by the increase of female immigration and the extension of its recruitment area. Below we explore more in-depth the links between changes in migrations and changes on the matrimonial market that rose the risks for solitude to become final.

Indeed, if the proportions of single women aged 45 and more were indeed less important, they were not negligible, between 11.5 and 15.1%. Towns like Geneva were more touched by this component of the European marriage pattern: “the town, usual disgorgement of the rural excesses, becomes the ordinary landscape of the singles; town produces as well as attracts solitude” (Dauphin 1991, 517). Spinsters suffered from a bad image. Since the “normal” female life course was to access to marriage, procreates and fulfils the duties of a spouse and mother, those out of this status tended to be kept on the margins, socially discriminated, at least to be seen with pity (Gordon and Nair 2002, 126). For S. Hahn, the rise of the bourgeois ideology in the 19th century even worsened such visions and conditions. The contempt for the old single women did not focalize only on the age and unwed status but also insisted on physical and biological aspects as menopause and the incapacity to procreate (Hahn 2002, 35).

After celibacy, widowhood comes as the next contributors to female solitude. Table 1 shows that at the beginning of our period, those without men and children were more numerous than those with children. In 1816, the former were 18,2% and the latter 13.6%. For both categories, proportions tend to diminish, probably because of the progressive disappearance of the Napoleon wars effects. In 1831, there were respectively 13.9% and 6.4%. In 1843, the two subtypes became similar in size, both counting for 10%.

Table 2. Matrix of female solitude types in Geneva, 1816-1831

SOLITUDE	1816-1831 (N)					
	Solit.+S	Sing.>=30	Sing.>=45	Widows	Widows & c. Cohabitants	
Servants	30	203	49	26	0	0
Workers	2	12	0	2	0	0
Lodgers	75	78	63	96	5	0
Students	0	1	0	0	0	0
Solitary	0	46	53	108	0	0
Solitary+S	13	41	47	95	0	0
Singles>=30	0	133	0	0	0	57
Singles>=45	0	0	61	0	0	87
Widows	0	0	0	78	0	40
Widows & c.	0	0	0	0	254	3
Cohabitants	0	0	0	0	0	125
Total	120	514	273	405	259	312

SOLITUDE	1816-1831 (%)					
	Solit.+S	Sing.>=30	Sing.>=45	Widows	Widows & c. Cohabitants	
Servants	25	39.5	17.9	6.4	0	0
Workers	1.7	2.3	0	0.5	0	0
Lodgers	62.5	15.2	23.1	23.7	1.9	0
Students	0	0.2	0	0	0	0
Solitary	0	8.9	19.4	26.7	0	0
Solitary+S	10.8	8	17.2	23.5	0	0
Singles>=30	0	25.9	0	0	0	18.3
Singles>=45	0	0	22.3	0	0	27.9
Widows	0	0	0	19.3	0	12.8
Widows & c.	0	0	0	0	98.1	1
Cohabitants	0	0	0	0	0	40.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

SOLITUDE	1837-1843 (N)					
	Solit.+S	Sing.>=30	Sing.>=45	Widows	Widows & c.	Cohabitants
Servants	17	162	41	10	0	0
Workers	1	8	2	0	0	0
Lodgers	34	53	34	23	3	0
Students	0	0	0	0	0	0
Solitary	0	16	23	34	0	0
Solitary+S	6	27	42	40	0	0
Singles>=30	0	92	0	0	0	28
Singles>=45	0	0	22	0	0	45
Widows	0	0	0	25	0	14
Widows & c.	0	0	0	0	136	0
Cohabitants	0	0	0	0	0	64
Total	58	358	164	132	139	151

SOLITUDE	1837-1843 (%)					
	Solit.+S	Sing.>=30	Sing.>=45	Widows	Widows & c.	Cohabitants
Servants	29.3	45.3	25	7.6	0	0
Workers	1.7	2.2	1.2	0	0	0
Lodgers	58.6	14.8	20.7	17.4	2.2	0
Students	0	0	0	0	0	0
Solitary	0	4.5	14	25.8	0	0
Solitary+S	10.3	7.5	25.6	30.3	0	0
Singles>=30	0	25.7	0	0	0	18.5
Singles>=45	0	0	13.4	0	0	29.8
Widows	0	0	0	18.9	0	9.3
Widows & c.	0	0	0	0	97.8	0
Cohabitants	0	0	0	0	0	42.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Following Reher when he develops the model of the nuclear hardship hypothesis, “demographic realities made vulnerable women more numerous than vulnerable men, and economic realities made them poorer. This was especially true with widows since normally they were unable to be as productive economically as their husbands” (Reher 1997, 109). Indeed, social historians have usually assumed the fall in poverty as a consequence of widowhood, and extensively studied the “survival strategies” of widows (Oris and Ochiai 2002, 19). After a husband death, a widow facing economic difficulties had three options: coming back on the labour market (Oris 2000, 183), being assisted by her family (especially married children for the older or parents for the younger), or sustained by single children old enough to work (Hufton 1995, 133). This last case was not exceptional in the urban world where old parents often decided to keep at home at least one child. In Geneva until 1874, men who wanted to contract a marriage were obliged to present the consent of their (surviving) parents until the age of 30, and the women until 25 (Ryczkowska 2003, 4). However, various bargains were obviously more important than theoretical constraints. Indeed, for the period 1816-1831 we count 405 widows without children for 259 with. Among those 405, 26.7%

lived alone, but 23.5% received lodgers in their housing, almost the same number (23.7%) were lodgers, 19.3% lived with some kin and 6.4 were servants. So, a high variety of solutions were found to avoid physical solitude, but often without avoiding redundancy of solitude...

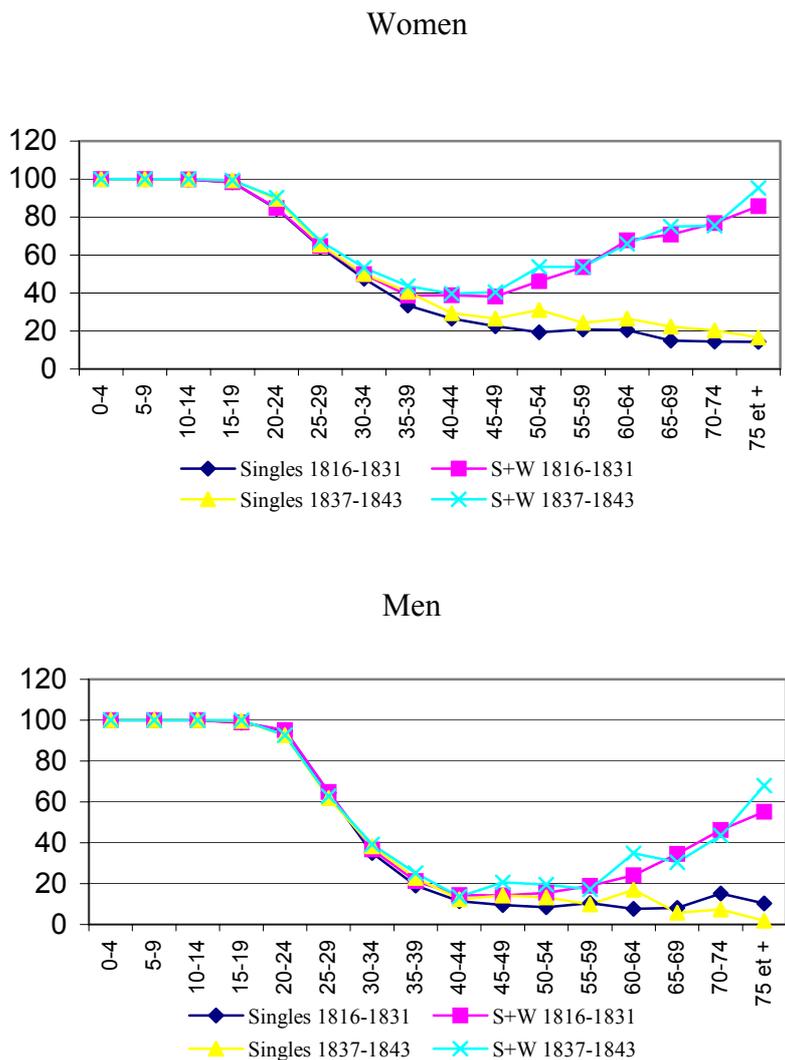
As the spinsters, widows suffered from a negative perception. For S. Hahn, in Latin *viduus* means “unmarried, single, lonely, empty”, or still “denuded, unprotected” women. The transition to widowhood implied a new role for women “who have been robbed of their guardian, the head of their family, and their sexual partner”. In Western societies where (nuclear) family was the norm, those who lost their husband were seen as incomplete and out of the social norms because it was uneasy to locate them in a hierarchical society (Hahn 2002, 35-36). For E. Gordon, in 19th century Glasgow society, widows were seen as social problem, because of their poverty and sexual impropriety (Gordon and Nair 2002, 126). However and inversely, even in the Western societies that from the sixteenth century showed an increasing intolerance with the poor, widows remained a privileged category of “good” poor, innocents from their poverty and worthy of help (Oris and Ochiais 2002, 19-20).

On Figures 2a and 2b we draw the evolution of the demographic components of solitude along the life course, i.e. the proportion of singles and widow(er)s in the whole population by age and sex groups. To base the curves on enough number, we put together the censuses of 1816, 1822, 1828 and 1831 on one side, and those of 1837 and 1843 on the other side. It means that the percentages we analyze are not measures of the contribution to female solitude – as are the numbers commented above – , they are the proportions of "women without men", singles and widows, in the Geneva population.

The curve of celibacy of course starts from 100% but knows a sudden drop between 25 and 35. It illustrates that in Geneva there existed a proper age at marriage, which was, indeed, typically high between 1816 and 1843 in this town. We also see that many women did not experiment the transition to marriage. In the city of Calvin in 1816-1831, 22.9% of the females aged 45-49 were single while it was the case of only 9.6% of the men. In 1837-1843 the gender gap decreased but this is just because the male value rose more (14.3%) than the female one (26.6%). Even when compared with Western area below the famous Trieste-Leningrad line, the values observed among Geneva women were really high. A first explanation has already been evoked: the sex ratio, which is essential to understand several urban demographic patterns. The predominance of women in most European cities during the 19th century⁴ did not affect only their age at marriage but also the final celibacy (Oris 2000, 201). The much higher number of female than male singles has roots in their overrepresentation on the matrimonial market between 20 and 29. In this age bracket the sex ratio was around 70 men for 100 women in 1816-1831, 84 in 1837-1843.

⁴ See Fauve-Chamoux 1983, 478; Wall 1983, 429; Bourdelais 1984, 63; Diederiks 1986, 185; Dauphin 1991, 517.

Figures 2a and 2b. Proportions of singles and widow(er)s by age and sex. Geneva, 1816-1843



A second explanation highlights the economic conditions of those young adults. If they did not prove that they could settle and sustain a family, they had to postpone their marriage, if not to break their promises (Alter 1991, 1). Following Hufton (1995, 126), "when economic growth lagged behind population growth, the result was more spinster. Society did not make available to a proportion of its young people the means to set themselves up and to constitute a viable family economy". In that perspective, it is clear that in 19th century Geneva changes were progressive. One of us has observed the fluctuations in wheat prices (Ryczkowska 2003, 34-35). The French period has been bad, and just followed by a real crisis in 1816-1817. New peaks occurred in 1830 and 1832. High prices came back again in the 1840s with a peak in 1847. Correlations demonstrate the inverse relation between such fluctuations and nuptiality in the first half of the 19th century, and the break of this link after.

A third explanation of the presence of so many singles in Geneva resides in migrations, the almost exclusive responsible of the population growth. In the early 19th century, natives were still more numerous than the "foreigners" (15,854 vs. 9,025), while in 1880 the latter clearly exceeded the former (19,268 vs. 30,775) (Cardinaux 1997, 10-12). Among the brides, 39.3%

were "foreigners" between 1800 and 1810, but 60.7% between 1841 and 1850! (Ryczkowska 2003, 20). And we know that immigrants had a higher age at marriage than natives.

When comparing figures 2a and 2b it is obvious that women were more numerous than men to stay single, but also that widows clearly exceeded widowers. In 1816-1831, 46.2% of the women were widows in the age group 50-54 and they were 85.7% at 75 and over. Those proportions rose in 1837-1843 (respectively 53.8 and 95.2%). Male values were much lower⁵. Such differences are not exceptional in historical towns. They can be attributed to the short duration of unions broken by the death of a spouse, the age gap between the spouses and the much lower propensity to remarry of women than men (Oris and Ochiai 2002, 69-72; Hahn 2002, 49). In Geneva between 1800 and 1845, among 1,894 marriages (implying a person with a name beginning by the letter B), we found 11.2% of widowers against only 4.5% of widows, while the latter were much more numerous in the population than the former. Among those widowers 46% remarried in the 12 months after the death of their preceding spouse, while only 26% of the widows did during the first year (Ryczkowska 2003, 65-72).

Globally, the demographic perspective highlights the specificity of female life trajectories that are much more marked than the male ones by transitions and solitude. Geneva in the first half of the 19th century is a quite extreme rather than typical illustration of this pattern.

4. Living alone or living with the others: the household perspective on solitude

To complete our overview of solitude, we still have to speak of those living alone in their household, the lodged and the cohabitants. The household, defined as "the set of persons who share a housing and the food" (Neven 2003, 131), is the basic social and economic unit. Following the Hammel-Laslett (1974) typology, Geneva belonged to an area of nuclear family system. In 1816, 64.4% of the individuals lived in simple households, 59.3% in 1843. Less than 10% of the population belonged to complex households, around 6% to the extended ones, 6 to 7% to the solitary ones, 2/3% to the non-nucleus ones.

From Table 3, it is clear that more female individuals lived in solitary households than men (8.6% vs. 5.6), but the differences are not as striking as between single men and women or widows and widowers. Moreover, here, Geneva values are not high, just similar to the ones observed elsewhere (Dauphin 1984, 80). Table 1 shows that among the various types of female solitude, those who lived alone have been divided in two subcategories, one for those really living alone, and those living with non-kin (servants or workers or lodged or students). They contribute to a bit less than 20% of the female solitude (15% in 1843), and the two subtypes are more or less equal in size with marginal fluctuations.

⁵ 15.5% of widowers at 50-54 and 55.1% at 75 and more in 1816-1831; 19.5% and 67.9% in 1837-1843.

Table 3. Individuals by sex and household type in Geneva, 1816-1843

<i>N</i>												
Types	Men						Women					
	1816	1822	1828	1831	1837	1843	1816	1822	1828	1831	1837	1843
Lodgers	102	134	205	194	249	279	207	257	337	283	338	402
Solitary	73	52	74	69	95	99	138	96	132	132	118	122
No nucleus	25	25	35	53	24	27	42	53	64	61	42	43
Nuclear												
couples without children	104	119	137	132	150	161	120	102	130	72	103	127
couples with children	674	649	650	661	755	807	661	587	648	581	686	746
Widow(er)s & children	106	94	118	117	127	124	201	158	243	149	196	188
Extended	70	74	83	94	181	118	108	107	101	91	198	100
Complex	139	141	108	123	26	136	126	143	134	124	27	153
Total	1293	1288	1410	1443	1607	1751	1603	1503	1789	1493	1708	1881
<i>%</i>												
Types	Men						Women					
	1816	1822	1828	1831	1837	1843	1816	1822	1828	1831	1837	1843
Lodgers	7.9	10.4	14.5	13.4	15.5	15.9	12.9	17.1	18.8	19	19.8	21.4
Solitary	5.6	4	5.2	4.8	5.9	5.7	8.6	6.4	7.4	8.8	6.9	6.5
No nucleus	1.9	1.9	2.5	3.7	1.5	1.5	2.6	3.5	3.6	4.1	2.5	2.3
Nuclear												
couples without children	8	9.2	9.7	9.1	9.3	9.2	7.5	6.8	7.3	4.8	6	6.8
couples with children	52.1	50.4	46.1	45.8	47	46.1	41.2	39.1	36.2	38.9	40.2	39.7
Widow(er)s & children	8.2	7.3	8.4	8.1	7.9	7.1	12.5	10.5	13.6	10	11.5	10
Extended	5.4	5.7	5.9	6.5	11.3	6.7	6.7	7.1	5.6	6.1	11.6	5.3
Complex	10.8	10.9	7.7	8.5	1.6	7.8	7.9	9.5	7.5	8.3	1.6	8.1
Total	100											

The lodgers were an important group since their proportion rose from 18.4% in 1816 to 21.3% in 1831 and came back around 18% at the end of the period. Some 46% were young women who arrived in town and or had not still find a position of servants, or wanted to work in another sectors of production or services, without living with their employer. Some 24% were single women older than 30 and, as noted above, widows were also present in this group at a level of 16.3% (numbers for 1816-1831). Lodgers or paid guests were a composite population scattered in the popular households. Geneva families, to increase their incomes, paid a renting, often rented a room to “foreigner”. It was an important door to urban life especially for young women. “Rare are the young girls that have the means and the daring to settle an independent lodging” (Dauphin 1984, 80). The others found there housing in an overcrowded city, and an escape from physical solitude.

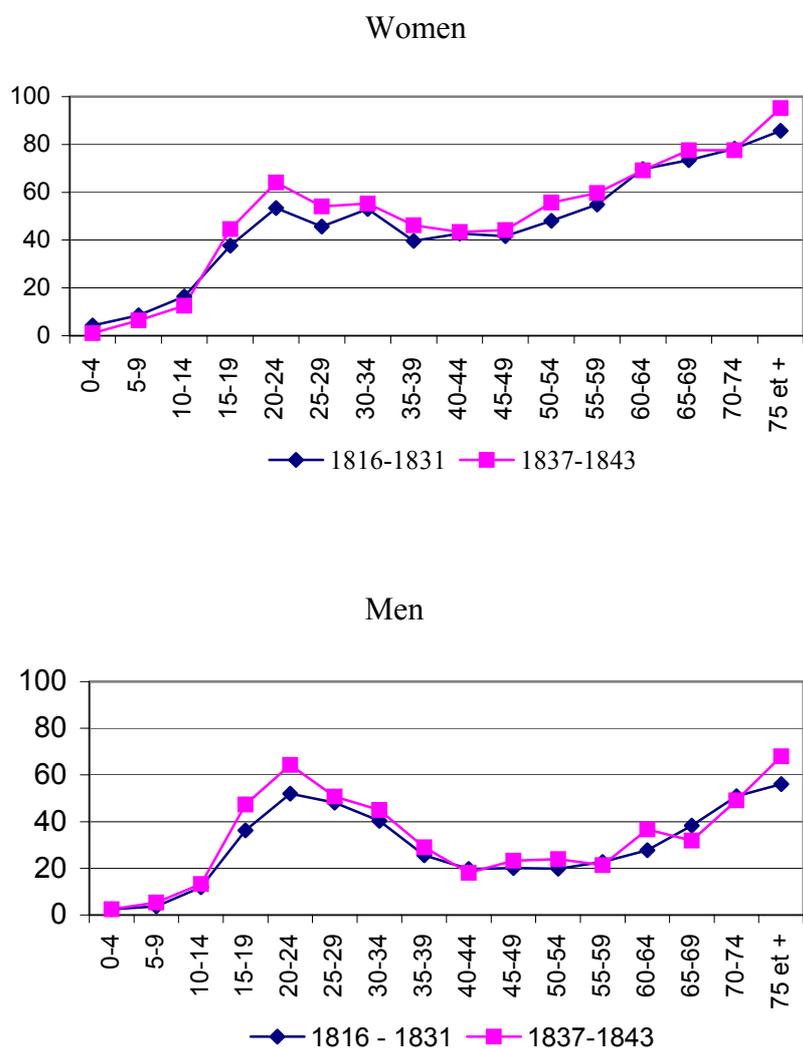
The last category was the one of cohabitants, the kin but non-stem members of extended households, as well as the members of non-nucleus households. For Laslett (1972, 31), there were “coresident siblings, coresident relatives of other kinds, persons not evidently related”. From Table 3 it is obvious that such form was rare in Geneva at this time. From Table 1, we see that members of such households, as well as the non-stem kin in extended households,

contributed to Geneva female solitude for 10.9% in 1816, 12.6% in 1831, but the proportion declined to 8.1% in 1843. Looking more precisely at the non-nucleus households, we found that in 1816 women were largely the majority (68.2%) among those who found an escape to solitude in that kind of cohabitation structure. Although their proportion tended to diminish (60.9% in 1843) the pattern remains clear all along our period. Confirming Laslett assertion, the most frequent tie to the household head was sibling (28% in 1816; 23.6% in 1843). Then came other collateral kin, lodgers and servants, each with a bit less than 10%. So, not all for sure, but a fair part of those individuals were single women that formed "spinster clustering" to share the cost of life and avoid solitude (Hufton 1995, 130).

5. Solitude in male and female life courses in Geneva

After such an examination of the solitude type by type, a first synthesis is needed. On Figure 3a and 3b we look at the weight of solitude in each age group as a cross-sectional proxy of its evolution along the life course. After already so many evidence, it is not a surprise that such figures confirm that differences between gender were considerable. In 1816-1831, the presence of solitude started to rise already from the age of 15 to reach a first peak at 20-24, an age group where 53.4% of the women belonged to one or more category of solitude. They were even more in this situation in 1837-1843: 64.1%. Here, we deal with young servants, workers, lodgers, engaged in an experience of life cycle service. Even if they did not all work in the domesticity they all were in this phase between leaving home and marriage, living "with others". The slight decrease of solitude between the ages of 25-29 and 45-49 shows that it was indeed a transitory phase for several of them. However, even during this part of the female life cycle the percentages remain high, above 40%, what is not a total surprise taking into account the high number of singles aged 30-44. Those women have the proper age at marriage behind them but celibacy is not still final. From the age of 50, widowhood, empty nest, solitude clustering and other forms impressively rose the curve. Older women finished their live "alone", to some extent at least.

Figures 3a and 3b. Female and male solitude by age. Geneva 1816-1843



Male solitude is of a different amplitude but also of a different nature. The beginning is however quite similar. For them too, solitude started to increase from 15 and reached a maximum already in the age group 20-24 (52% in 1816-1831, 64,3% in 1837-1843). They were also immigrants in the same transitory phase of their life course than the women. However, the matrimonial market was more favorable for them and their much better access to marriage is reflected in a progressive but really substantial lowering of solitude: the percentages were around 20% from 45-49 to 55-59, half of the female values! Male solitude rose from the age of 60 but the effects of gender differential mortality at old age are obvious.

So, female solitude in Geneva clearly exceeded the male one first because of a difficult access to marriage, second because of a higher probability to experiment widowhood. Both effects cumulated their effects along the life course.

Figures 3a and 3b shows on one side that in Geneva in the first half of the 19th century solitude was clearly more a part of female than male destiny, and on the other side that

women were particularly “alone” in the most vulnerable moment of their life, old age. It does not seem that the Geneva case was a peculiar one. Patrice Bourdelais (1984, 64) noted that in France in 1851, the minimum of solitude (in the demographic sense, i.e. singles+widows) was observed at 35-44 (18%). The rise became obvious from age 50 and a value of 85% was observed at 70. For C. Dauphin (1984, 78), applying the same approach to the town of Chatillon-sur-Seine, in 1851 too, “the classic age structure can be read as a profile of solitudes where young singles from the bottom are replaced by the widows above”. In Chatillon-sur-Seine, women “alone” formed 48.7% of the whole female population, with a profile by age similar to the Geneva one. Proportions were high until age 30 (58.5% between 20 and 29), then diminished because of marriages, then rose again at higher ages (44.5% at 60-69, 80% for the women of 70 and above) (Dauphin 1984, 89).

6. From solitude to vulnerability: women “alone” on the labor market and in the social structures

When commenting situations of solitude, we necessarily started to evoke vulnerability. In this section, we address this issue more explicitly, looking at the peculiar positions of women experimenting solitude on the urban labor market and in the Geneva social structures. First of all, a large majority of women in solitude exercised an economic activity. Some 73% were active in 1816-1831, 77.2% in 1837-1843, while among the other women the rates were respectively 37.6% and 39%, only. Few women "alone" had the opportunity to not work. The minority that did not report an occupation at the censuses were recruited especially among the widows (52% of non active) and the cohabitants (42 to 45%). Males in solitude were as active as females, even a little bit more: 85/87%. For both sexes, working was almost an obligation for this large portion of the whole population.

For women in solitude, the major branch of activity was, without surprise, domesticity, which employed 37.2% of the whole group in 1816-1831, 45.2% in 1837-1843. Of course most belonged to our type 1 of solitude, but a fair amount of aged singles (30.5% in 1816-1831, then 39% in 1837-1843) found there a living. Between domesticity and trades were the "personal services", that included laundresses, ironers, etc. During the data entering, we noticed that many worked on a daily basis, without stable incomes. They were 8 to 10% of the women in solitude. No particular type of solitude was "specialized" in that branch. The trade was less important for women in solitude than in the whole city population. This type of activity implied to already have at least a little capital. Only 6% of our group lived as shopkeepers, with however here some specialization since widows tended to maintain the husband (or couple) shop to survive (there were 9.5% in this branch against 6% as an average). It explains the overrepresentation of those living alone (household size=1) who were 10.5% in the trade branch. The percentage was the same for the cohabitants.

If female activity was clearly concentrated in the services, textile was one of the rare branch of production where women could find a place: among those in solitude, there were 7 to 8% working there. Again, the cohabitants (14%) were more present than the others, while widows (5%) were less. In the most important sector of Geneva economic life, the Fabrique (watch making) the extension of labor division progressively offered some segments for women. However, only 4.4% of those in solitude were active in this branch.

Table 4. Women in solitude by branches of activities. Geneva, 1816-1843

1816-1831	N			%		
	No solitude	Solitude	Total	No solitude	Solitude	Total
Inactivity	1812	745	2557	62.4	27.3	45.4
Unknown	76	101	177	2.6	3.7	3.1
Agriculture	0	7	7	0	0.3	0.1
Craft	14	18	32	0.5	0.7	0.6
Housing	6	6	12	0.2	0.2	0.2
Fabrique	201	120	321	6.9	4.4	5.7
Textile	268	202	470	9.2	7.4	8.3
Food	33	13	46	1.1	0.5	0.8
Transport	3	8	11	0.1	0.3	0.2
Domesticity	57	1013	1070	2	37.2	19
Personnal services	232	282	514	8	10.3	9.1
Trades	162	172	334	5.6	6.3	5.9
Businnes	1	0	1	0	0	0
Liberal profession	10	1	11	0.3	0	0.2
Civil service	3	7	10	0.1	0.3	0.2
Religion -teaching	27	31	58	0.9	1.1	1
Total	2905	2726	5631	100	100	100

1837-1843	N			%		
	No solitude	Solitude	Total	No solitude	Solitude	Total
Inactivity	863	355	1218	60.1	22.8	40.7
Unknown	18	33	51	1.3	2.1	1.7
Agriculture	1	1	2	0.1	0.1	0.1
Craft	9	10	19	0.6	0.6	0.6
Housing	2	5	7	0.1	0.3	0.2
Fabrique	123	69	192	8.6	4.4	6.4
Textile	169	126	295	11.8	8.1	9.9
Food	14	8	22	1	0.5	0.7
Transport	1	4	5	0.1	0.3	0.2
Domesticity	21	703	724	1.5	45.2	24.2
Personnal services	119	132	251	8.3	8.5	8.4
Trades	79	88	167	5.5	5.7	5.6
Businnes	0	1	1	0	0.1	0
Liberal profession	1	1	2	0.1	0.1	0.1
Civil service	0	2	2	0	0.1	0.1
Religion -teaching	17	19	36	1.2	1.2	1.2
Total	1437	1557	2994	100	100	100

Globally, the importance of female solitude in a city like Geneva was clearly associated with domesticity, and consequently with a transitional phase between adolescence and an expected marriage and settlement, a phase that was especially located in town for the females. It could become a permanent status or solitude could come back after bereavement. For those above, let say 30/35, the town with its multi-sectorial structure, offered several niches and we found them scattered still in domesticity, personal services, shops and clothes or textile.

Table 5. Social status of women in solitude. Geneva, 1816-1843

1816-1831	N			%		
	No solitude	Solitude	Total	No solitude	Solitude	Total
Unknown	1843	646	2489	63.4	23.7	44.2
Unskilled	353	1312	1665	12.2	48.1	29.6
Craft	520	418	938	17.9	15.3	16.7
W. Collar	1	20	21	0	0.7	0.4
Petty bourgeoisie	156	149	305	5.4	5.5	5.4
Elite	32	181	213	1.1	6.6	3.8
Total	2905	2726	5631	100	100	100

1837-1843	N			%		
	No solitude	Solitude	Total	No solitude	Solitude	Total
Unknown	841	286	1127	58.5	18.4	37.6
Unskilled	155	796	951	10.8	51.1	31.8
Craft	308	282	590	21.4	18.1	19.7
W. Collar	5	9	14	0.3	0.6	0.5
Petty bourgeoisie	94	94	188	6.5	6	6.3
Elite	34	90	124	2.4	5.8	4.1
Total	1437	1557	2994	100	100	100

If we move to social classes, we find, without surprise, that most of the female solitude is located at the bottom of the social scale. The workers without skill counted no less than 48.1% of those women in 1816-1831, and the proportion even rose in 1837-1843 to reach the 50%. Such status is over-represented in our type 1 of solitude, grouping 70% of the servants, workers at home and lodgers. On the contrary, widows and cohabitants were relatively few (between 15 and 20%) to be located so low on the social scale. Just above, the blue collars were 15 to 18% of the women in solitude, the cohabitants however, being much more at this level (23 to 28%). Only 5 to 6% of female solitude belonged to the petty bourgeoisie and 4% to the elite. It remains 18 to 24% that had no occupation mentioned, implying that we cannot attribute them a social status. It is really difficult to disentangle among them those who were wealthy enough to not be obliged to work from those living in a deep misery, depending totally of public or private charity.

The importance of social control and gender attitudes cannot be neglected, indeed. It explains that so much female solitude and obvious vulnerability resulted in few disruptive behaviors. Illegitimacy rose in Geneva but after 1850. Before this date only 3 to 4% of the births were illegitimate. The study of criminality provides other interesting information. In Geneva, robbery was the second cause of judicial procedures after the break of marriage promises and ribald behaviors. Between 1816 and 1832, only 145 women compared for robbery against 434 men. Of course, judicial archives provide only the top of an iceberg. But those who have been judged have been "obliged" since the survival of their family was endangered and robbed essentially food. They were indeed "women alone – singles, widows, divorced, separated or abandoned (...) the poorest and less protected social category" (Head and Mottu 1999, 176). Following these authors, female criminality was characterized by the "vulnerability of isolated, subaltern workers, often immigrants, far from the family solidarity, very exposed to sexual solicitations and material constraints" (Head and Mottu 1999, 181).

However, if we take into account the importance of female solitude within the population, as well as its concentration in activities with poor unstable incomes and low social status, we really cannot say that the Geneva society has been disrupted. The social situation, especially the feminine one, clearly remained under control.

7. *From solitude to vulnerability: trajectories in and from solitude*

Another approach of vulnerability is indirect but certainly the one we are the most interested to develop in further research and we just start here: following the individual trajectories, the survival of those in solitude, entrances and exits from solitude, and searching the causes. The work of nominal linkages between the censuses is not finished but advanced enough to work on the pair 1816-1822, 1822-1828, 1831-1837, 1837-1843.

We have run a set of logistic regressions for the following events:

- *leave_ge* leaving Geneva during the inter census period
- *exit* leaving solitude
- *entry* entering into solitude

The logistic regressions were run for men and women together and separately for men and women. For *leave_ge*, we considered all cases, for *entry* we limited the analysis to people who were not in solitude at the beginning of the period and still staying in Geneva at the end of the period, while for *exit*, we considered only people who were in solitude at the beginning of the period and still in Geneva at the end of the period. See Figure 4.

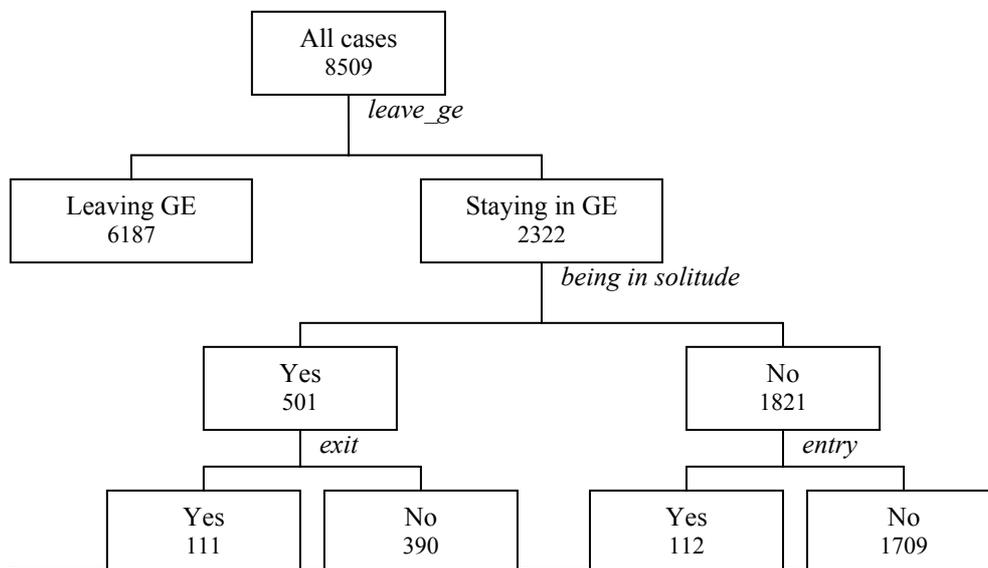


Figure 4

For *leave_ge* and *exit*, the goal was to see how these events were affected by the solitude type. We included therefore the five categorical solitude covariables, i.e. *lodged* (not, servant, worker, lodger or student), *living alone* (not, without and with servants), *single above mean marriage age* (not, between 30 and 44, 45 or greater), *widow* (not, without and with children) and *solitude inside family*, i.e. living with family without belonging to the core. In addition we included also the following control variables: *age*, *civil status*, *religion* and *household size*.

We studied also the relationship between *exit* the variable *marr_in*, getting married during the period.

For *entry*, we considered the covariables *age*, *civil status*, *religion*, *household size* and examined its relationship with *marr_out*, a variable indicating marriages ending during the period either by a divorce or the death of the partner⁶.

Table 6 presents first a parsimonious model with just the category of solitude as explanatory variables of the probability of leaving Geneva in the next six years, i.e. before the next census⁷. On the whole population, both sexes together, the global explanatory power of the model is excellent and results show at which point solitude was a factor of instability. Being lodged multiplied by 5 the chances to leave the city, compared with not being lodged! The impact of living strictly alone was almost as violent. Widows were also twice more at risk than non-widows. Solitude inside family raised the probability of leaving the town by 86%. The only exception is that the singles in the median age group – 30-44 – were 25% more stable than the women aged less than 30. It can be explained by the mobility of the younger but shows also that it was a period of stabilization in the life course, if not through a marriage and an self-establishment, at least through a more stable situation.

Adding 8 additional explanatory variables is profitable since their global contribution to the model is statistically significantly. As we could suspect from the preceding results adolescents (11-19) were more mobile than the young adults (20-44). And as another confirmation that solitude is a factor of instability, higher the household size, lower the propensity to leave Geneva. We are also not surprised to see the Catholics moderately (25%) more inclined to leave what was still the Calvinist Rome than the Protestants (see Oris and Perroux forthcoming).

⁶ We have used the following coding for the covariables:

classes of ages:

- 1 = 10 or less (children)
- 2 = 11 to 19 (young)
- ref = 20 to 44 (active)
- 3 = 45 and more (elder)

civil status:

- ref = single
- 1 = married
- 2 = divorced or widow

religion:

- ref = protestant
- 1 = catholic
- 2 = other

classes of household sizes

- ref = 3 or less
- 1 = between 4 and 9
- 2 = 10 or more

household ratio (binary)

- 1 = 55 or less
- ref = 56 or more

⁷ The cause of such disappearance being out-migration or death. In further research, we will disentangle between those "exits", but here again we still have some more work to do.

Table 6. Leaving Geneva, men and women, n = 8509

	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.
Lodger		.000		.000
lodger (servant)	4.784	.000	4.478	.000
lodger (worker)	5.153	.000	5.140	.000
lodger (lodger)	4.840	.000	4.930	.000
Lone		.000		.000
lone (without servants)	4.599	.000	3.510	.000
lone (with servants)	1.224	.243	.923	.650
Single		.002		.017
single (30-44)	.746	.005	.753	.009
single (> 44)	1.317	.075	1.130	.447
Widow		.000		.000
widow (without children)	2.258	.000	1.857	.001
widow (with children)	2.242	.000	1.711	.001
solitude inside family	1.860	.000	1.729	.000
woman			1.169	.003
age class				.000
age (child, <11)			.734	.000
age (young, 11-19)			1.484	.000
age (elderly, >45)			1.296	.001
religion				.000
religion (catholic)			1.337	.001
religion (other)			.878	.027
household size class				.000
h_size (4-9)			.687	.000
h_size (>9)			.695	.005
household ratio (<56)			.631	.080
Constant	1.758	.000	2.077	.000
χ^2 (dl)	690.0 (10)	.000	844.7 (19)	.000
$\Delta\chi^2$ (dl)			154.7 (9)	.000
Nagelkerke R2	.11		.14	

$$\chi^2 = -2\text{LogLik}(m_0) + 2\text{LogLik}(m)$$

Table 7. Leaving Geneva, women, n = 4547

	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.
Lodgers		.000		.000
lodgers (servant)	4.009	.000	3.921	.000
lodgers (worker)	2.008	.133	1.793	.213
lodgers (lodgers)	3.393	.000	3.359	.000
Lone		.000		.002
lone (without servants)	3.481	.000	2.452	.001
lone (with servants)	1.098	.666	.801	.321
Single		.016		.118
single (30-44)	.787	.063	.758	.040
single (> 44)	1.443	.062	.897	.608
Widow		.000		.019
widow (without children)	2.901	.000	1.742	.022
widow (with children)	2.717	.000	1.524	.060
Solitude inside family	1.523	.016	1.441	.039
age class				.000
age (child, <11)			.559	.000
age (young, 11-19)			1.231	.065
age (elderly, >45)			1.855	.000
religion				.003
religion (catholic)			1.454	.003
religion (other)			.918	.307
household size class				.000
h_size (4-9)			.665	.000
h_size (>9)			.558	.001
household ratio (<56)			.695	.305
Constant	1.942	.000	2.663	.000
χ^2 (dl)	315.0 (10)	.000	451.2 (18)	.000
$\Delta\chi^2$ (dl)			136.2 (8)	.000
Nagelkerke R2	.10		.14	

Table 7 shows the same analysis but only for women. The main differences are that women living with the others were less at risk of leaving Geneva than the men. It is clear both for our types 1 and 5 of solitude, especially for the female lodgers. Inversely, aged singles were slightly more mobile, and the differential in vulnerability of widows compared with widowers is confirmed by the clearly higher propensity of the former to "disappear" from Geneva in the next six years, compared with the latter.

Recovering from solitude while staying in Geneva was not a dominant pattern, by far, precisely since solitude was such a factor of instability per se. Among the 2,322 "stayers" we observed, 1,821 were not in solitude against only 501 who were, a difference that reflects essentially their differential mobility. Among the 501 cases of solitude that we can observe 6 years later, 111 recovered from this status while 390 stayed both in Geneva and in solitude. There are not so much people, especially if we focalize among the 322 women that were present among these 501 cases. On Table 8, we have been obliged to collapse several categories and if the parsimonious model is significant, the contribution of seven additional variables (age, religion, household size) is not! Among the few women in solitude who were

still observed in Geneva 6 years after the first observation, the lodgers in the strict sense had three times more chances to recover from solitude than the servants.

Table 8. Exit, Women, n = 322

	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.
Lodgers (lodgers)	2.908	.023	2.940	.042
Lone		.047		.033
lone (without servants)	4.627	.027	7.306	.021
lone (with servants)	.427	.298	.523	.464
Single		.008		.012
single (30-44)	.430	.042	.383	.040
single (> 44)	.066	.010	.046	.021
Widow	.205	.017	.161	.046
Solitude inside family	3.646	.004	3.813	.007
age class				.924
age (child, <11)			.454	.531
age (young, 11-19)			1.153	.839
age (elderly, >45)			1.035	.969
Religion				.035
Religion (catholic)			.282	.065
Religion (other)			.371	.039
household size class				.296
h_size (4-9)			1.680	.292
h_size (>9)			.603	.580
Constant	.169	.000	.184	.004
χ^2 (dl)	32.9 (7)	.000	42.8 (14)	.000
$\Delta\chi^2$ (dl)			9.9 (7)	.194
Nagelkerke R2	.18		.23	

Living totally alone was also a good prospect, but just for the few who did not left the city! The same can be said about the cohabitants. Inversely, some status were a real trap. From Table 7 we know that widows and singles over 44 were not so mobile, while here we show that their probability to escape from solitude were almost non existent.

Among the 1,821 "stayers" who were not in solitude at the beginning of the observation, only 112 were in solitude 6 years later. It shows, first of all, that if town was a factory of solitude, it was absolutely not by itself, but actually through immigration! Tables 9 and 10 indicate that for the "stable" Geneva citizens being a child was a protection against solitude while being aged (>45), or divorced, or for women being catholic, was dangerous.

Table 9. Entry, men and women, n = 1821

	Exp(B)	Sig.
woman	1.040	.852
age class		.000
age (child, <11)	.251	.002
age (young, 11-19)	.723	.411
age (elderly, >45)	2.513	.000
civil_status		.012
civil_status, married	.752	.395
civil_status, divorced	24.762	.009
religion		.825
religion (catholic)	.871	.711
religion (other)	.879	.577
household size class		.020
H_size (4-9)	.566	.010
H_size (>9)	.308	.113
Constant	.125	.000
χ^2 (dl)	67.2	.000
Nagelkerke R2	.10	

Table 10. Entry, Women, n = 815

	Exp(B)	Sig.
age class		.000
age (child, <11)	.326	.017
age (young, 11-19)	.325	.073
age (elderly, >45)	3.283	.001
religion		.581
religion (catholic)	1.689	.313
religion (other)	.982	.961
household size class		.802
h_size (4-9)	.908	.787
h_size (>9)	.496	.512
Constant	.075	.000
χ^2 (dl)	28.9 (7)	.000
Nagelkerke R2	.10	

Adding the variable “getting married during the period” (*marr_in*) on the covariable list for leaving solitude (*exit*) and the variable “ending marriage during the period” (*marr_out*) on the covariable list for entering into solitude (*entry*) lead to enormous odds ratio effects for these variables. Furthermore, introducing these variables masked almost all other effects. The following cross tabulations exhibit the strong raw relationships between *marr_in* and *exit* on the one hand, and *marr_out* and *entry* on the other hand that explains this phenomenon.

		leaving solitude		Total	
		no	yes		
Women	getting married during period	no	275	17	292
		yes	5	25	30
	Total			280	42
Men	getting married during period	no	106	24	130
		yes	4	45	49
	Total			110	69

		entering into solitude		Total	
		no	yes		
Women	ending marriage during period	no	768	19	787
		yes	1	27	28
	Total			769	46
Men	ending marriage during period	no	940	29	969
		yes	0	37	37
	Total			940	66

*
* *

We do not really conclude a research which is not finished. In this paper we already demonstrated not only the importance but also the multiplicity and complexity of solitude. It was a female destiny, much more than a male one, and its progressive construction has to be understood in a life course perspective. Although there worked in different segments of the labor market, young men and young women started their life similarly, leaving their family and experimenting some forms of solitude, essentially living with the others. The access to marriage broke the parallelism of male and female destinies; then widowhood, both as an experience and as a status, accentuated the divergence at the disadvantage of women. Although many "tactics" were used to avoid a real physical solitude (really living alone), various forms of solitude, and even redundancy of solitude, could not be avoided by most of the women. Both social statuses and economic activities clearly show how vulnerable they were. First analyses of longitudinal data confirmed that several solitude statuses were transitory, but others, especially aged singles and widows were indeed "final" statuses. Those analyses also showed the impressive contribution of solitude globally, and female solitude especially, to the massive migratory turn-over of an urban population, even a population like the Geneva one that was not experimenting a drastic increase. A town like Geneva did not produce so much solitude among its stable, native, population, but really attracted and expelled a lot. Geneva was not a factory, but a crossroad of solitude.

Research perspectives are now to finish the linkages and to follow individual life courses through the whole period 1816-1843 (with points in 1816, 1822, 1828, 1831, 1837 and 1843). It will be a base for an extension and revision of the present study, but also for its extension to

a more integrated approach of individual trajectories in an urban world. For example, Pallazzi, who studied female solitude in 19th century urban Italy, noted that: “In Bologna, for instance, widows frequently moved to a poorer, more vulnerable neighborhood a few months after the death of their husband” (Palazzi 1990, 454). Such note illustrates the interest to cross individual and family dynamics with transitions on both the labor and the housing markets. New statistical tools, in the field of data mining (Ritschard and Oris 2004), make now such integrative approach not only promising but feasible.

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