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SUMMARIES OF ARTICLES

Women, old age and poverty in Paris during the first half of the XIXthcentury
Christine Piette

The elderly women of Paris present a particular demographic profile throughout the first half of the XIXth century. Firstly, they are more numerous than their male counterparts, and this factor is known to augment with age. Secondly, they are more often widows or unmarried than males. Doubtless it is for this reason that they suffered from great economic instability and actually comprised the least fortunate part of Parisian society at the time. Few of their contemporaries however are known to have been preoccupied with the problem. Several accounts confirm the extreme poverty of these women, yet we know little if anything of their actual daily existence. Only recently has their situation begun to interest historians, and a number of fundamental questions remain to be explored.

Adult life, its rituals and uncertain boundaries: life stories of women in their thirties
Denise Lemieux

Considering the general framework of changes in gender and age relations and taking into account those in life courses observed during the last decades, this article presents some contemporary representations of youth and adulthood in women's lives using a phenomenological approach to women's discourses. The 29 life stories of women aged 30 to 40 analysed here belong to a larger body of data gathered during a research on aspirations pertaining to procreation. Behind a diversification of life lines and transitions and a difficulty to find clear indices of entry into adulthood, the analysis finds distinct strategies of articulation between trajectories in schooling, professional activities and private life.

Common law unions and the future of biparental families
Hélène Desrosiers and Céline Le Bourdais

Forming a union, giving birth, going through a separation are critical moments in women's lives. The dissolution of a union is never easy but the consequences are far more important when children are involved. This paper examines the outcome of unions formed by different generations of Canadian women, from the moment that they first give birth to a child. After reviewing the evolution of patterns in family formation in terms of conjugal histories, we attempt to ascertain the extent to which the changes observed influence the risks of women experiencing a union dissolution and, therefore, single parenthood. In so doing, we examine possible changes in the meaning of cohabitation and explore the future of two-parents families.

Women, but also young...
Madeleine Gauthier

This article favours an ages of life and «period effect» approach to study the population of young contemporary women under the age of 25. A number of questions structure the article, among them the impact of labour market restructuration on professional integration. Are the gains of young women here to stay? Will the «social effect» of increased education be sustained in the long term? Do the professional choices of young

women explain their relative gains despite an unfavourable economic context for youth as a whole? Do gains in private life follow those obtained in work activity? Under the effect of increased levels of education and their impact on work activity and professional choices, a movement of ascending social mobility might differentiate this cohort of young women from older women. The conciliation of work activity and maternity will perhaps contain the most important challenges for young women. However, it must also be considered that these challenges will be taken up within this same cohort where the effects of schooling are instilling differentiations between women which are just as important as those observed between men and women.

About the « uses » of maternity in the history of feminism
Louise Toupin

The history of the first phase of North American feminism (1850-1960) is presently undergoing a new interpretation: « maternal » feminism would be more appropriate to describe the early history of feminism than the so-called « equal rights feminism ». In this paper, the author examines a concept which is at the basis of this reinterpretation: maternalism, the concept most frequently postulated, and hence largely ahistorical. The author argues that the lack of an historical examination leads a certain kind of « revisionist » historiography to extend to the whole feminist movement of this earlier phase a particular use of « maternity », an ideological one. Distinguishing between the different uses of maternity, she argues, should be part of the historiographical reassessment currently under way.

Retired women and men: profiles of urban mobility
Monique Haicault and Sylvie Mazzella

Current research carried out by the authors on «young» retired women and men's urban movements aims at enhancing, by combining them, three contemporary research trends in France: the contributions of urban sociology to the study of mobility and of the sociology of female and male social actors as well as recent analyses in age groups sociology. This working paper suggests a daily and casual multimobility theory through an analysis of actual space/time practices of women and men in the Marseille urban area. Within the large category of people over 60 years of age the authors study the group of those under 70, a generation between working life and old age. Agregating qualitative and quantitative data enables them to delineate the main characteristics of this generation and its urban practices, and to present a few female and male urban profiles of retired people.

Sport and aging: some results of a gender study on sport practices in Switzerland
Marie-José Manidi Faes

A quantitative and qualitative study has been carried out in Geneva (Switzerland) on sports practiced by women and men aged 55 and more within sports associations in a life course and gender methodological framework. Results show that not only does the choice of sports associations differ according to gender, but furthermore the entire sports itineraries are especially gender connotated. Explanatory hypotheses are presented in sociological, historical and aging perspectives.