

# Recherches sociographiques



## Abstracts

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## ABSTRACTS

Gérard BOUCHARD et Richard LALOU: *La surfécondité des couples québécois depuis le XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, essai de mesure et d'interprétation*

Using many different measurements, as finely tuned as possible, and on the basis of various comparisons with English-Canadian, American and European data, the authors attempt to verify the hypothesis of exceptionally high birth rates among French-speaking couples in Québec between the seventeenth century and the mid-twentieth century: a hypothesis that is generally referred to as the «*revanche des berceaux*». The following observations are made:

- a) Before the last third of the seventeenth century, fecundity in Québec was quite high indeed, but could not be considered as exceptional;
- b) Exceptional fecundity was seen during the last third of the nineteenth century, when there was a time-lag in the adoption of contraception in comparison with the English-speaking populations of North America;
- c) Several European populations showed levels equal to or greater than those of the Québec model.

The hypothesis of nationalism as a basis of this phenomenon thus does not appear to be well substantiated. It is laid aside in favour of other models and avenues of analysis.

Charles CASTONGUAY: *Mesure de l'assimilation linguistique au moyen des recensements*

Through Canadian census data, linguistic assimilation can be measured not only on an individual basis, but also intergenerationally, in terms of the language transmitted to children, or, more globally, of the replacement of generations within a language group. The relationship between these various types of assimilation is examined, as well as the difficulties encountered in comparing the available data. In particular, it is found that since 1971, individual anglicization appears to have remained at the same level among Canada's French-speaking population. At the same time, however, the latter has become solidly engaged in the process of aggregate assimilation, the drastic decline in francophone birth rates having more than offset improved transmission of French to upcoming generations.

Jean LAMARRE: *Les représentations du devenir de la société canadienne-française dans Le Canada sous l'Union, 1841-1867, de Louis-Philippe Turcotte*

Louis-Philippe Turcotte, first historian of the Union, succeeds in giving a comprehensive interpretation of this period by presenting the Responsible Government as an ideal. According to Turcotte, the exercise of this new type of government, while putting an end to racial antagonisms and the prejudices which uphold them, paves the way for progress and prosperity and enables the two founding peoples to discover profound affinities which, through Confederation, will convince them that they are first and foremost Canadians. This interpretation adds strength to the argumentation that the conservative

and religious elites of French Canada used in order to justify and consolidate their newly gained positions of power between 1840 and 1870.

Guy FRÉCHET: *Professionalisme et tentations corporatistes chez les informaticiens*

In recent years, computer scientists have been increasingly affirming their presence in a great variety of different fields. Wedged between the fields of engineering and administration, not to mention cognitive psychology or information engineering, they claim the status of professionals as designers of information systems. The steps taken toward professional recognition are based on the social demands for a higher quality of professional act. They also fit into the context of an environment that is beginning to threaten their specificity. They are therefore increasingly motivated to adopt a classical corporatist strategy.

André TURMEL: *Folie, épidémie et institution; contrôle et régulation sociales de l'enfance*

On the basis of two historical works, one on mental illness in Québec and the other on an epidemic of smallpox in Montréal, the author raises the question of institutions. Over and above the conceptual vagueness that surrounds social control, and if so, then what type of behaviour do they seek to control? A distinction between control and the regulation of behaviours is introduced, in the framework of the emergence of a concept of normality.