

Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

ERIC W. SAGER and PETER BASKERVILLE, *Household Counts: Canadian Households and Families in 1901*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 476 p., index.

Household Counts is an edited collection which focuses on the work of those involved with the analysis of the information contained within the 1901 Census of Canada under the umbrella of the Canadian Families Project. The project members have created a book which offers a comprehensive study of family life at the turn of the twentieth century. Data on 5,371,315 individuals was obtained from the census, and from this population the researchers used a random sample of approximately 51,000 dwellings and 265,000 individuals to create a computerized database for study. Many of the authors have attempted, through statistical analysis, mapping, comparative analysis, and theoretical and descriptive commentaries, to highlight the patterns and trends revealed by their work with the various categories or topics included in the census. As such, the research results provided by the authors within the fourteen chapters are quite complete and cover a wide range of topics from household structure and family dynamics to religion, health, language, rural/urban mobility patterns, and working class configurations.

While each of the authors reports information that increases our understanding of family life at the turn of the twentieth century, I found several of the chapters to be particularly insightful, thought-provoking, and worthy of note. In "Canadian Fertility in 1901: A Bird's-Eye View" Peter Gossage and Danielle Gauvreau offer an intriguing analysis of fertility and reproduction. Not only do the authors take the differences in provincial sex ratios into account, but they go further in their analysis and discuss the impact of gender imbalance on marriage patterns, the age distributions of children across the country, the influence of cultural diversity and religious belief on fertility, urban/rural birth rates, the effect of education (i.e., literacy rates), employment (i.e., occupational classes of both men and women), and child-woman ratios. They conclude by emphasizing the fact that given the differing social and economic structures of Canadian society, it is virtually impossible to produce a single theoretical model of fertility and reproduction which would aptly describe the Canadian situation in its entirety.

The two chapters written by Larry McCann, Ian Buck and Ole Heggen, titled "Family Geographies: A National Perspective" and "Family Geographies: An Urban Perspective," are unique as emphasis is placed on

the family patterns that become evident when statistical information is mapped. In their first chapter they offer a series of visual depictions using such variables as the average size of families (including the rural/urban familial situation), the predominance of nuclear, extended, and solitary families by region (including widowhood), and fertility rates across the country. They also map the family economy (based on the economic contributions of family members in both rural and urban environments). Their second chapter delves more deeply into the urban situation by geographically identifying average family size, types of families (i.e., nuclear, extended, and solitary), the fertility of urban families, earnings of family heads, the labour force (male labourers as well as the labour involvement of women and children) and households which contain lodgers and boarders.

Gordon Darroch's chapter "Families, Fostering, and Flying the Coop: Lessons in Liberal Cultural Formation, 1871-1901" was also appealing given that the author compares the residences of children (living at home or living with others in informal fostering locations or apprenticeship situations as domestic labourers or for educational purposes) using two census samples: one from 1871 (which included the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, and Ontario) and the other from 1901. By having two sets of data to compare, the author was able to identify and compare the residential arrangements of both boys and girls over time. His results countered the commonly held belief that children needed a long period of nurturing in the parental home. Rather, he found that "binding out, fostering, and boarding children and youth was common in 1871 [and that it] did not much decline even by the turn of the century" (234).

Bettina Bradbury's chapter on "Canadian Children who Lived with one Parent in 1901" not only compliments the work of Gordon Darroch, but also provides a detailed analysis of how many children tended to live in this form of familial arrangement. She also identified reasons explaining why children tended to be in one-parent situations (through the death of a parent, desertion, divorce, adoption, illegitimate birth, or because of the restraints associated with immigration law). While most of the children that she referred to lived with their mother, she presents an example of why some children were in male-parented households (Chinese children tended to live with their father as the head tax limited the ability of men to bring their wives to Canada). In this chapter, Bradbury also highlights the economic and social difficulties faced by single-parent women, and the fact that single-parent men tended to remarry more quickly after a spouse's death than their female counterparts. She also analyzes the one-parent arrangement by region, residence and race, points out the challenges for women with regard to employment, and studies the schooling and housing situation for boys and girls.

Finally, Eric Sager's chapter on "Inequality, Earnings, and the Canadian Working Class in 1901" is compelling as he sets out to test two hypotheses: urban areas are more prone to inequality of income, and individuals' earnings are associated with their specific position within the

family cycle. Sager's analysis of these two issues is wide-ranging in that he covers a number of factors. For example, he points out gender differences with regard to employment, the various skills, experience, and knowledge levels of workers, the hierarchical status position that exists in the labour market, and the cost-of-living differentials between regions. He also reveals some interesting facts (that per-person earnings rose when there were more boys in a family than girls) and that "among working-class families a large proportion were vulnerable to poverty, and vulnerability increased as one moved through the family cycle" (359).

This edited collection was enjoyable to read. Its strength lies in the fact that it is unique, quantitatively analyzing the 1901 Census. The editors have ensured that the chapters flow smoothly with little evident repetition, the writing style is at an acceptable level for undergraduate or graduate level courses in family or work-related courses in sociology, and each chapter provides additional insights into Canadian life at the turn of the twentieth century. While some chapters went further and compared Canadian family structures and households over the course of ninety years, or compared the Canadian situation to the American one, the book does offer a good, solid snapshot of the social, cultural and economic situations faced by individuals during an interesting period in Canadian history.

Sandra Rollings-Magnusson, MacEwan College.

© Canadian Sociological Association/La Société canadienne de sociologie