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(1953)

"The Changing Social Structures."

Texte d'une intervention
au Symposium du centenaire de l'Université Laval.
Les 6 et 7 juin 1952.

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Jean-Charles Falardeau

"The Changing Social Structures."

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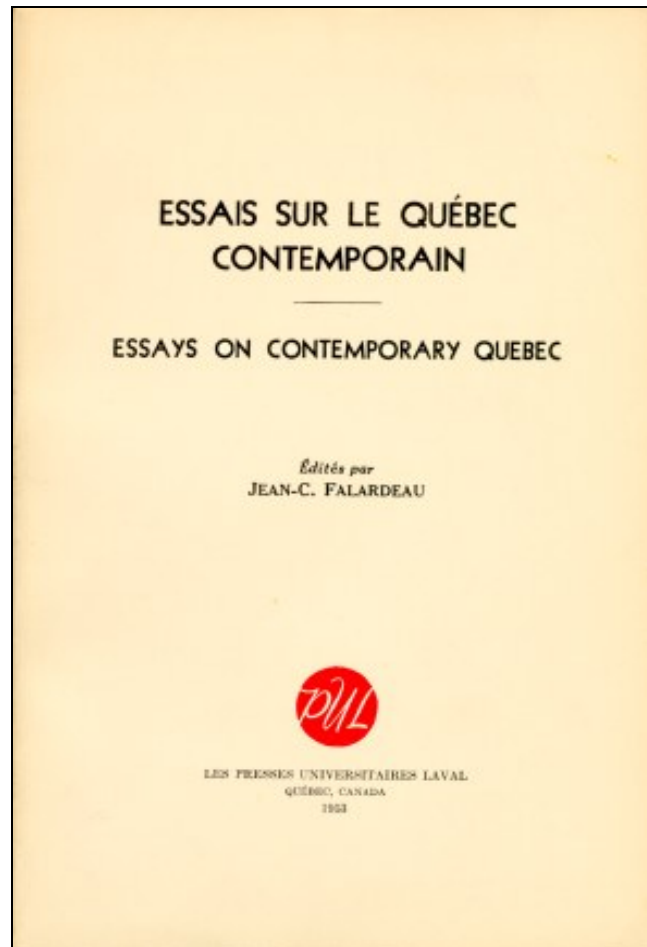
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Table des matières

"The Changing Social Structures".

Jean-Charles Falardeau

Introduction

1. Changes in the ecological structure of the communities

Types of communities
Ecological structure of urban communities

2. Changes in social organization

Occupational diversification
The family
Relations between clergy and society
Class structure

3. Changes in values and attitudes

Comments.

Aileen D. Ross.

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ESSAIS SUR LE QUÉBEC CONTEMPORAIN.

Essays on Contemporary Quebec.

Symposium du centenaire de l'Université Laval, 6-7 juin 1952.

"The Changing Social Structures."

Jean-Charles FALARDEAU

Introduction

[Retour à la table des matières](#)

Few of the valuable historical and economic studies of French Canadian society describe the main patterns of its culture and the characteristic elements of its structure. Well-intentioned accounts by visiting observers have often suffered from an exotic slant that distorted otherwise penetrating intuitions. The pioneer Canadian sociologist Léon Gérin has left us the only valuable monograph on the rural French Canada of the past ¹; more recently, Horace Miner has systematically analysed a rural community of the present ². For the past ten years, almost any one commenting on or writing about contemporary urban and industrial French Canada has made use of Everett-C. Hughes' admirable *French Canada in transition* ³ which hits at many

¹ *L'Habitant de Saint-Justin*, in *Mémoires de la Société royale du Canada*, 2^e série, vol. IV, 1898, pp. 139-216; also, *Le type économique et social des Canadiens*, Montréal, Éditions de l'Action canadienne-française, 1937.

² *St. Denis, A French-Canadian Parish*, University of Chicago Press, 1939.
http://classiques.ugac.ca/contemporains/miner_horace/miner_horace.html

³ Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1941.

essential aspects of our changing society beyond the perspective of the individual town of *Cantonville*. A certain number of research projects undertaken at the University of Montreal and at Laval during the last decade reflect the first consistent attempt by French-Canadian scholars to study their society, as part of the Canadian whole and as part of the North American continent.

This essay summarizes what is now known, on the basis of such research about the social organization of French Canada⁴. More precisely, it ascertains the extent to which the process of Industrialization [102] has been associated with changes in the historically important structures of our society. An investigation of this problem centers around a few general questions : What traditional institutions, if any, have remained untouched ? Which have been transformed ? Which have been forgotten or utterly discarded ? What new structures have been imported or created in anticipation of, and in response to new situations ? All that one can hope for at this stage is to clear a path toward a broad vista. Yet, these questions cannot be ignored ; answers to them can be found only by examining our society as a whole, as it was and as it is.

Since the data on certain fundamental problems has not even been gathered, we have to rely upon a great number of tentative generalizations. Our task consists more in stating research problems than in presenting a definite picture. Even so, we must distinguish between at least three levels of phenomena that constitute the totality of social life : the ecological structure of the local communities ; the division of social labour within the society and the new trends in family life, in parochial organization, in the relationships between the clergy and the urban population and in the patterns of communication between the English and the French ; finally, the many ways in which the traditional symbols and values of our society have been modified and the corre-

⁴ This chapter is particularly indebted to a research seminar conducted by the Department of Sociology of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Laval University during the second semester of 1951-1952. To the graduate students who participated in the seminar : Fernand Dumont, Gilles Beausoleil, Yves Martin, Gérald Fortin and Luc Lessard, the author expresses his gratitude for their valuable cooperation and suggestions.

sponding motivations, attitudes and outlook that have recently developed among significant groups of the population.

1. CHANGES IN THE ECOLOGICAL STRUCTURE OF THE COMMUNITIES

[Retour à la table des matières](#)

In Quebec as elsewhere, new industries have burst existing communities and have brought new ones into being. Yet, there are still many urban communities, even cities of appreciable size, whose chief function is far from industrial. There are others in which industry and other economic activities are equally important. As Faucher and Lamontagne indicate in their historical essay, typical geographical-industrial complexes have been created at successive stages in our industrial development. The growth of industries, especially since the 20's, has determined a compartmentation of the province into new economic regions. The most [103] accurate of the recent studies recognize the fifteen areas referred to by Keyfitz and it is the task of the economic geographer to delineate and to describe them more fully. We need only recall here that the types of urban or semi-urban communities vary from region to region and, within regions, according to the type of dominant industries.

Types of communities

Most of the existing schemes of classification of the urban communities of Quebec are based on criteria such as population, juridical status or administrative functions, that have only secondary or indirect significance. A new, meaningful typology is needed and it should be established with regard to the degree of industrialization. Two leading questions should guide the choice of the criteria of classification : 1. Which was there first, industry or the community ? 2. At what period in the history of the province has industry given rise to, or transformed the community ? The first question, as will presently be

shown, has an important bearing on the ecological structure of the communities. The twofold classification which it suggests lends itself to a cross-classification based on whether industry is single or multiple in the communities. The second question, while referring to the general economic evolution, will help to determine the important criteria for further cross-classifying the communities by types of dominant industries, such as pulp and paper, textile, mining, etc. Whatever the degree of its final refinement, such a classification would ultimately be polarised around three main types of communities : 1. those where one or more industries have exclusive importance ; 2. those where the importance of industry is shared with other economic activities ; 3. those where industry is nonexistent.

Professor Everett-C. Hughes was not far from this conception when, in 1936, he proposed the following five-class typology of French-Canadian communities : 1. the old, settled agricultural parishes ; 2. the new agricultural and fishing communities ; 3. the old, small French towns which, of late, have been invaded by industry ; 4. the new frontier-towns where industry came first ; 5. the former English towns where French farmers have moved in as labour. Montreal and Quebec were considered as special [104] cases ⁵. More recent research enables us to submit the following scheme which envisages all the Quebec communities as located somewhere along a continuum, one extreme being the single industry, company-town type of community, like Arvida, the other extreme being the non-industrial, administrative or educational center, such as, perhaps, Nicolet or L'Assomption. The classification is as follows :

⁵ *Bulletin of the Society for Social Research*, University of Chicago, June 1936, pp. 1, 2, 8.

1. Single-industry, company-owned communities
2. Single, dominant industry centers, which are subdivided into:
 - a) Pulp and paper centers ;
 - b) Textile communities ;
 - c) Mining towns ;
 - d) Hydro-electric and chemical centers ;
3. The mixed, industrial-commercial towns ;
4. The predominantly trading centers ;
5. The non-industrial towns, which may themselves be subdivided into many sub-categories.

Montreal and Quebec are also considered as special cases.

This typology is only tentative, but in our opinion, points in the right direction by assuming that the most telling feature of contemporary communities is the extent to which their existence and social organization depend on industry. It is in the light of this basic factor that comparisons between the population volume, the ecological structure, the occupational and ethnic distribution and the complement of institutions of different categories of communities assume their full meaning.

Ecological structure of urban communities

The church building marked the center of the territorial pattern of the former French-Canadian rural community or small « provincial » town. Around the church clustered other ecclesiastical, educational and public buildings, while the general stores and the offices of the few local professional men extended from there along one main artery. In medium-sized towns, these features were magnified into more complex combinations which often involved [105] some territorial dis-

tribution of the local population into areas differentiated by occupational and social status.

In the more recent communities of the frontier areas or of the older regions which have been created by industry, this pattern has been drastically altered. It is now with reference to the factory, the plant or the mining pit that the workers' houses, the service establishments and other community institutions have successively located themselves. The beverage or the gambling house, the grab-bag drug-store and the department store often chronologically preceded the parochial churches or at least competed with them as interest centers. In communities invaded by industry, either the factories were established at the periphery or outside the existing settlement and acted as new poles of human concentration, or they were located within the boundaries and determined a geographical re-distribution of the residential districts and of their service institutions.

The rural community of former days had not been planned in the modern sense of the word but it had an organic unity of its own. It had esthetic as well as functional interest. Our new urban communities have grown without much planning. Many of them look as though the slum districts of metropolitan cities had been superimposed overnight over large villages. The workers' areas of most of these communities have been built like temporary settlements. Here is, for example, the description which a recent observer gives of them : « One needs only walk through these districts to realize that they look improvised. Dwellings look like camping houses. One would guess that they are provisional, only built to shelter seasonal workers : no planning, no architectural preoccupation... only sad streets edged by ugly-looking houses. » ⁶ The saddest part of the story is that this type of cheap, distressing architecture has now spread from the periphery of our mushrooming urban communities into the countryside, along the formerly picturesque roads of even the most secluded rural areas of the province. A motor-car trip between Montreal and Quebec, or down the south shore of the Saint Lawrence from Levis, gives one the impres-

⁶ Gérard PELLETIER, *D'un prolétariat spirituel*, *Esprit*, n^{os} 193-194, août-septembre 1952, p. 194.

sion of driving through a perpetual extension of the worst-looking areas of Valleyfield or Drummondville.

[106]

From such districts, generally well marked-off from the rest of the community, one passes on to the residential areas of the well-to-do French-speaking middle or bourgeois classes, generally still in the shadow of the mother-church of the community. Then, somewhere beyond, segregated either by parks, by a river or by the company golf course, one discovers the residential area of the English-speaking managers, technicians and often foremen of the industries. Very frequently, the spatial distribution of the French and of the English in our urban communities reproduces their respective position in the industrial hierarchical order. There is, within each city, an English community with its two or three protestant churches, its school, its community center and the like, and a French community subdivided into characteristic areas. On this basic theme, there are indeed many variations. Whatever the variation, the overall impression is that most of our urban communities are beginning to look more and more like any urban community on this continent. As a correspondent from the *London Times* recently remarked : « The west End of Montreal might be in an American metropolis, the main shopping street of Quebec city in a middle-sized American town... » ⁷

⁷ *The Times*, London, 20 March 1952, *Progress in Quebec : French Canadians' adoption of new industries*.

2. CHANGES IN SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

[Retour à la table des matières](#)

It is within the matrix of such changing communities that French-Canadian society has been gradually transformed, at times with sudden outbreaks, at times at a slow, often unnoticeable tempo. The complete story of this transformation cannot be known before we are in possession of intensive monographs that will fully report what has actually happened in some crucial areas of our social life. The most fundamental of these is the occupational structure. The embedding of industry in any society immediately brings about new life activities for all those whom it calls to its service in one way or another. Changes at the level of occupations are thus the origin of a chain reaction of changes throughout the social order : in the organization of the family ; in the relationships between society and the Church ; in the lively [107] area of contact, communication and cooperation between French and English.

Occupational diversification

The shoe factories of former days ; the textile and the pulp and paper mills of the turn of the century and of the early 20's ; the frontier mining concerns of Abitibi, the heavy metallurgical centers and the hydro-electric and refining centers of more recent date, - all these, as they established themselves at various stages, absorbed growing segments of a working population consisting either of former rural farmers and artisans, or of urban craftsmen, day laborers and inexperienced young adults. The statistical literature on the typical stages of this evolution is well known and Keyfitz' study sums up the tell-tale signs of the present trends. Between 1871 and 1951, about 400,000 rural young men left the farms on which they were born and, whereas the absolute number of people engaged in non-agricultural

industry increased by 748,000, the absolute number of those in agriculture decreased by 17,000. ⁸ In 1951, only 17 per cent of the total gainfully employed population is engaged in agriculture. There are, in the province, approximately 12,000 industrial establishments employing over 400,000 salaried workers who represent one third of the total salaried population of Canada and about 30 per cent of the total Quebec population. ⁹

This re-orientation has involved women as well as men. The female industrial hand-worker has been a familiar social type in Quebec for many years. Her immediate ancestor is the country girl who, back in the 1860's or 70's, migrated to the New England states with her family or her husband and settled there as textile weaver. Leather and shoe industries, corset and garment factories have, for over fifty years, made use of women's work in this province and they were followed by the textile mills which attracted a great number of women from the country. World War II intensified this process tremendously. Ammunition factories and expanding wartime industries depopulated the country of thousands of women, [108] married and unmarried, and automatically absorbed the total force of domestic servants. It has been estimated that a total of about 60,000 women in Quebec left the country for the factory between 1941 and 1944 and the data available indicate that very few of them returned to the country after the war ¹⁰. From what we know, the greatest proportion either married workers in the cities or moved along to larger industrial centers, particularly Montreal and even Toronto.

⁸ See chapter IV, *Population problems*; also, chapter II, *Recent industrial growth*.

⁹ Aurèle GAGNON, *Étude des occupations de la population canadienne-française de la province de Québec*, in *Contributions à l'Étude des sciences de l'homme*, édité par le Centre de recherches en relations humaines, Montréal, n° 1, pp. 147-160.

¹⁰ Madame Henri VAUTELET, *Mémoire sur l'orientation du travail féminin d'après-guerre*, publié sous les auspices de la Fédération nationale Saint-Jean-Baptiste, Montréal, p. 13 ; Gonzalve POULIN, o.f.m., *Orientations nouvelles de la femme canadienne*, *Culture*, vol. V, n, 4, décembre 1944, pp. 403-414.

But statistics, elaborate as they may be, reflect only the superficial part of the more deeply interesting story. Many observers, including Miner and Hughes, have suggested that one function of industry in Quebec has been to absorb the constant overflow of farm population at each generation which formerly had to migrate to new colonization areas or outside the province. Most likely, the history of many of these migrants, especially those of an older generation, must have a content and a shape similar to the adventures of the old Euchariste Moisan, the pathetic key character in Ringuet's novel *Thirty acres* who, after a lifetime on a prosperous Quebec farm, ends up as night watchman in a New England garage. We still have to learn what have been the psychological and sociological consequences of such uprootings. We would also like to know what have been the typical sequences of occupations of individuals and families who had to shift from farm to factory during the last three or four decades. It is fairly well recognized that most French-Canadians entered the industrial market at the lowest level of unskilled work. They had to learn and to master unknown skills on the job, the hard way and the slow way. It was to provide their sons with specialized training that technical schools, arts and crafts schools were eventually founded, although at a relatively recent date. ¹¹

Becoming an industrial worker meant, for the French-Canadian, not only learning new skills but entering the highly competitive struggle of a new impersonal work world for which his traditional education had not equipped him. It meant moving into a status [109] of occupational subordination to a culturally-alien employer, whether anonymous or individualized. He was used to social relationships of a highly personal and emotional character and felt like a stranger in the bureaucratic, hierarchical social universe of the factory or the plant where most English and Protestant foremen and managers put a premium on technical efficiency and communicated with him in a language he did not master. New values as well as new goals of life ambition were imposed upon him. The almost inevitable result was frustration, loss of self-confidence and a growing consciousness of alienation. These feelings breed occupational instability. Actually, one leitmotiv that recurs ob-

¹¹ See chapter VIII, by Léon LORTIE, *Le système scolaire*.

sessingly throughout the greatest number of case histories of French-Canadian workers that have already been gathered ¹² is the litany of the successive occupations held by the family head in the course of his lifetime.

These remarks emphasize certain aspects of what could be called the « French Canadian differential » in the system of division of social labour in Quebec. Within this system, the English perform especially the financial, managerial and technical functions while the French are rather concentrated around the services, clerical, small industry, commercial and professional activities. The latter have striven, for the last thirty years, to ascend the higher rungs of the industrial ladder. The specialized occupations associated with modern technology such as chemistry, civil and mining engineering, physics, have become possible fields of vocational orientation over against law, medicine and priesthood which traditionally constituted the exclusive trilogy of professional ambition. The emergence of these occupations also influenced the re-orientation of university teaching and research. Yet, it seems that the actual achievement of French-Canadians in the new scientific professions remains of a modest order and Professor Hughes pertinently indicates some of the deep cultural reasons that may explain this reluctance. ¹³

Among a total of 9,304 students who, between 1939 and 1950, graduated with their B.A. degree from the classical colleges in the province, 3,447 or 37 per cent entered the priesthood. Of the [110] remaining 5,857, 40 per cent chose the medical profession, 16 per cent engineering, 11 per cent law, 8 per cent commerce and only 7 per cent « applied sciences. » ¹⁴ A recent monograph on the engineering

¹² By the Department of Sociology at Laval.

¹³ See chapter X, *Regards sur le Québec*.

¹⁴ The fact that the students coming out of the classical colleges are still largely attracted by the traditional university Faculties is interestingly confirmed by the remarks of Arthur Tremblay on the present vocational trends among young French-Canadians (in his *Commentaires* of chapter VIII, *infra*). The data just reported have been gathered by the monthly review *L'Enseignement secondaire* and are cited by Huet MASSUE in *Premier supplément à l'étude de la*

profession shows that in 1949 the two French universities of Montreal and Quebec produced only 3 per cent of the total 3,300 students graduating as engineers in Canadian universities and that, in 1951, the 1,800 engineers of French origin in Canada constituted only 5.1 per cent of the total number (35,000) of Canadian engineers and about 25 per cent of all the engineers in Quebec. ¹⁵ At a symposium organized in 1947 by the ACFAS on « The position of French-Canadians in scientific careers », our colleague Cyrias Ouellet estimated that about only 5 per cent of the Canadian physicists and mathematicians are French-speaking and that the universities of Montreal and Quebec turn out a total annual production of only ten to fifteen. Six per cent of the memberships of the Canadian Institute of Chemistry are French and, whereas 15 per cent of the Montreal area chemists are French, the percentage is still lower in such industrial centers as Arvida, Shawinigan and Beloeil. ¹⁶ The French-Canadians' own invasion of the higher technical occupations offered by the invading industries is still a timid and slow process.

The family

The daughter of Maria Chapdelaine who was an ammunition-factory worker at Valcartier during the war now lives with her own family of five children in the Rosemont ward of Montreal. Maria's married brothers are employees of the Aluminum Company at Arvida and Shipshaw after having been workers at the Jonquière [111] pulp plant. This fictitious epilogue to Louis Hémon's classic on French-Canadian family life on the frontier corresponds to thousands of actual histories. On

contribution de Polytechnique au Génie canadien, Revue trimestrielle canadienne, Montréal, 38^e année, numéro spécial, janvier 1952, pp. 47, 49.

¹⁵ Huet MASSUE, *op. cit.*, pp. 7, 14.

¹⁶ Cyrias OUELLET, *Mathématiques, physique et chimie*, in *La situation des Canadiens français dans les carrières scientifiques*, Symposium tenu à l'Université de Montréal, le 13 octobre 1947, lors du XV^e Congrès de l'Association canadienne-française pour l'Avancement des sciences, *Document n° 4 de Pédagogie et d'Orientation*, publié par l'École de Pédagogie et d'Orientation de l'Université Laval, Québec, juin 1948, pp. 6-14.

the basis of the family cases already referred to, it seems that a great number of French-Canadian families do move geographically to an amazing degree during their lifetime as families. The greatest proportion of them is now three or four generations away from rural experience. Yet, their behaviour reflects a mixture of a strict adherence to the traditional mores and of impatience to conform to exaggerated forms of emancipation.

Enid Charles' studies have shown that there is a « French-Canadian culture complex » with regard to family and that, if the size of families still remains rather high in more recent urban communities, it tends to decrease in larger cities, and strikingly so in upper-class suburban areas ¹⁷. Keyfitz' study has elaborated these data. In 1950, the discussions at the Laval Department of Industrial Relations Sixth Annual Conference on the « Social security of the workers' family » brought out the extent to which families of French-Canadian industrial workers have shifted away from the spirit of familism and from the internal solidarity that was characteristic of our rural families. The family whose head is a wage-earner, and more particularly, a factory wage-earner, is economically unstable and vulnerable ¹⁸. A survey made in 1945 in Quebec City showed the great fragility of the economic cycle of such families : the per capita income of the family, highest when the family is formed, constantly decreases till it reaches a low point at the time when the head of the family is between 45 and 49 years of age ; it increases slightly during the next ten years, then decreases again ¹⁹. The material and non-material heritage which the

¹⁷ Enid CHARLES, *The changing size of the family in Canada*, Eighth Census of Canada, 1941, Census monograph No. 1, Ottawa, 1948.

¹⁸ See, in particular, Maurice TREMBLAY, *Sécurité de la famille ouvrière : Position du problème et principes de solution*, dans *Sécurité de la famille ouvrière*, Sixième Congrès des Relations industrielles de Laval, Québec, Les Presses Universitaires Laval, 1951, pp. 13-14 ; see also, Gonzalve POULIN, o.f.m., *Problèmes de la famille canadienne-française*, published by *Le Centre de culture populaire de Laval*, Les Presses universitaires Laval, 1952, ch. II, *Transformations de la famille canadienne-française*.

¹⁹ Maurice LAMONTAGNE and Jean-C. FALARDEAU, *The life cycle of French-Canadian urban families*, *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, Vol. XIII, No. 2, May 1947, pp. 233-247.

family can give its children is drastically limited. Most [112] families can select only a few of their children for advanced studies in classical colleges. In general, girls have priority over boys at the time of this selection. The other children must remain satisfied with commercial studies or work their way somehow through higher schools. On the other hand, wage-earning children become economically adults as far as their family relationship are concerned. The novels of Roger Lemelin and Gabrielle Roy suggest what this re-orientation of relationships between father, mother, and working children, implies in terms of frustrations of the former and emancipation of the latter. Equalitarian and democratic-minded family units have substituted themselves for families of the traditional authoritarian, quasi-patriarcal type.

Relations between clergy and society

It is difficult to understand French-Canadian society past and present without reference to the Catholic Church. For it is the clergy which has historically integrated, dominated and controlled our society. It has molded its basic institutions, its traditions, its mentality. Given the importance of the priests in parochial life as well as the initiatives which they were the first to take in the field of education, their autonomy in spiritual matters expanded into a considerable influence on all planes of intellectual, professional, economic and social life. Two essential features of the relationship between the Church and French-Canadian society are not generally given enough attention. First, the French-Canadian clergy has never been recruited from any particular upper-class of society. Its members have always come from all walks of life, mostly from rural and urban middle-class families. Almost every French-speaking family has one of its members or a close relative in the clergy or in the religious orders and congregations. Similarly, any former college student remains bound by the old school tie to an impressive cluster of priests. The clergy is neither above nor beyond but within the community. This, as Lord Durham noted in his famous Report, makes for a strong, personal type of relationship between the people and the priests. The same personal char-

acter can be observed in both the informal and the formal relationship between the Church as such and the State, federal or provincial. Although there is no written legal covenant or concordat [113] defining the status of the Catholic Church in Quebec, - perhaps because there is no such formal definition, - the relationship between Church and State has always taken for granted the fullest and most intimate co-operation. The actual situation is one of unwritten, global alliance.

The spiritual and social functions of the clergy have been historically concentrated in the parish, which is the ultimate, microcosmic, organizational unit of the Church. In rural French Canada, the parish was also the integrating unit of local community life. As Léon Gérin, Miner and others have pointed out, the role of faithful parishioner totally absorbed that of citizen and the whole social life of the rural *habitant*, till very recently, was completely motivated by his participation in a parochially-defined religious system of action. The clergy still owns or controls, directly or indirectly, teaching institutions at the primary, secondary and university levels. It has organized or sponsored hospitals and social welfare institutions, professional associations, such as the Catholic Syndicates, economic reform movements, such as the Co-operative movement, and adult education.

The way in which urban life as such and more especially the way in which the invasion of hitherto stabilized urban communities by industrial workers transformed the traditional parochial equilibrium are well enough known. Everett-C. Hughes, for example, has described how the former single parish of *Cantonville* was eventually broken up into three new parochial units. The phenomenon of the social differentiation and ranking of urban parishes according to the socio-economic areas of which they are parts has been described for Quebec City, Montreal and elsewhere ²⁰. The sophisticated French-Canadian urbanite tends to be parochially an extraterritorial. The attachment which he may feel for a parish church, not necessarily *his*, is determined by prestige motivation of a secular, not of a religious character. An observer already quoted remarks that « there are no significant bonds between the (urban) faithful and their pastor any more... The rural

²⁰ Jean-C. FALARDEAU, *The parish as an institutional type*, *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, Vol. XV, No. 3, August 1949, pp. 353-367.

farmer could, in all confidence, go to see and talk with his pastor and submit his problems to him. The urban worker has to ring at a rectory, on the door of which office hours are posted, and where all he can expect are [114] impersonal relations with the priest who happens to be *on duty* ... The parish is no longer a centre of life ... The attitude of the workers toward the Church is more and more similar to the attitude which they adopt toward the industrial institutions which employ them ... Like the factory, the parish is now interchangeable.²¹ » In other words, the parochial religious universe of the French-Canadian worker is becoming disenchanting. It is already impersonal and bureaucratic.

Further questions remain to be answered if one seeks to evaluate the actual degree of such disenchantment. For example, under what social conditions does the parish as an institution cease to be the main local integrating unit in a Catholic society such as ours? Which social groups and classes are first to dissociate themselves from the parish? To what social sanctions are they submitted, or with what admiration are they viewed by others? What other forms of religious behavior do they adopt and to what extent do they remain in actual contact with the larger Church? Actually, the Church, in Quebec, as in other countries, has been aware of this spiritual alienation of urban masses in our time and, for the past thirty years or so, has been active in developing new institutional systems of apostolic action. One thinks, in particular, of the modern Catholic Action movement, the philosophy of which is that the Church, over-looking the parochial framework, must reach the members of professional groups and socio-economic classes. Hence, the emergence of numerous age, sex and occupational associations such as the *Jeunesse ouvrière catholique*, the *Jeunesse étudiante catholique*, and the like. These movements flourished in Quebec chiefly between the thirties and the Second World War, but close observers point out that the successful formula for attracting young workers has still to be found.

The most fascinating development has been that of the Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour, more popularly known as the

²¹ Gérard PELLETIER, *op. cit.*, pp. 195-196.

*Catholic Syndicates*²². Far from all French-Canadian workers are unionized, nor do all those who are union members belong to the Catholic Syndicates, although nearly all the Syndicate [115] members are Catholic and French-speaking. There is no information about the union affiliation of the Quebec French-speaking workers in particular. Nonetheless, a thumb-nail sketch of the total organized labour force in the province provides a useful frame of reference. In 1953, out of an estimated total of 265,000 union members in Quebec, more than 100,000 were claimed by the Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour, about 115,000 by the Canadian Trades and Labour Congress, and 50,000 by the Canadian Congress of Labour.

The history of Catholic unionism in Quebec has been written only in part. What we know tells of a meritorious effort to create, within the existing social order, institutions specifically intended to meet the needs of the French-Canadian industrial workers²³. The development shows three distinctive stages : from 1900 to 1921, the first phase of gestation, stimulated by Church-inspired study groups in Montreal and Quebec from 1921 to about 1943, the second phase of integration and « promising realizations » ; finally, the contemporary re-orientation of the movement. Formally established in 1921 under the stimulus and sponsorship of the Church, the Catholic Labour Confederation has been typically a Quebec movement. Through the intermediary of unit chaplains who were the representatives of the Church, leadership came from above and the ideology of the Syndicates remained for a long time static and paternalistic. The Syndicates developed a paradoxical complex of submissiveness to employers and xenophobia against « alien » management as well as against « alien » viz. non-French and non-Catholic workers. Most often, the Catholic Syndicates were close equivalents of company unions. Whenever an important conflict arose between a company and a syndicate, the informal pattern

²² See chapter VI, *L'Évolution juridique* by Jacques PERRAULT, and the Rev. Jacques COUSINEAU'S *Commentaires* on chapter IX.

²³ See, Gérard TREMBLAY, *Le syndicalisme catholique à Montréal*, in *L'Organisation ouvrière catholique au Canada*, Montréal, L'École sociale populaire, pamphlet no. 105, 1922 ; H. A. LOGAN, *Trade Unions in Canada*, Toronto, The Macmillan Company, 1948, ch. XXIV-XXV ; Jean-Pierre DESPRÉS, *Le mouvement ouvrier canadien*, Montréal, Éditions Fides, 1946, ch. II.

of reaching a solution, notwithstanding the formal procedure stated by the written law, involved personal negotiations between the representatives of the Church, management and government. Of late, the Catholic labour movement has found from within its ranks [116] militant lay leaders inspired by a mature rationale ²⁴. In our opinion, the significant *rite de passage* of the Catholic Syndicates to adulthood and maturity happened a few years ago, at the time of the famous Asbestos strike. For the first time, the tradition of tripartite discussions was broken. The Syndicates decided to speak for themselves. They also took upon themselves to state what was the issue in this particular labour conflict. Organized Catholic labour actually fought for and obtained the recognition of a new status. From then on, it would be an equal partner with Church, State and Industry. The feeling of solidarity between all the labour organizations in the province was considerably reinforced. It was the end of an era, perhaps the most important date in the social history of Quebec's twentieth century. ²⁵

Class structure

One irreversible transformation of contemporary Quebec has been the creation of a French-Canadian urban demo. Long before this demo became noticeable, the structure of social classes had been changing. In order to realize it, we can refer to the homogeneous and relatively classless rural communities of the type described by Miner. There, far below the small group consisting of the *curé* and a few persons of high political and ancestral prestige, most families and individuals enjoyed an identical status associated with the ownership of equally-

²⁴ See Jean MARCHAND, *Quelques aspects idéologiques des relations ouvrières patronales* paper given at the twenty-fifth annual meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, University of Western Ontario, June 3-5, 1953 published in *Hermes*, vol. III, No. 9, Quebec, Fall 1953.

²⁵ An overall study of the Asbestos strike is now in preparation by a group of jurists, economists and labour specialists. It will be published shortly under the auspices of the Canadian research foundation known as *Recherches Sociales*.

valued lands. We may also refer to the class system of the whole French-Canadian society as it appeared at the turn of the century. As in many minority societies, the criteria of social prestige were those connected with a high degree of education and with any expression of achievement of a moral, intellectual or political order. At the highest level of society were the clergy who enjoyed the prestige associated with the Church. The next highest stratum was that of the professional men, the politicians and other public figures and those recognized as intellectuals of one variety or another. At a relatively [117] lower level were the merchants and businessmen who constituted the mobile upper segment of an otherwise ill-defined French-Canadian middle-class, from whose lower ranks the workers were gradually marking themselves out as a socially identified group.

This class system has expanded in many directions. In fact, there is hardly one system now but a congeries of contrasting local systems. These vary from area to area, depending on the volume and heterogeneity of industry, the degree of occupational diversification, the intensity of urbanization and the pattern of ethnic relations in each area. Proximity to Montreal is also an important factor. Consequently, until more research is done, one must remain satisfied with describing the class structure of a few communities which have been recently investigated because they were tentatively considered as typical.

The first is a community which was a prosperous pulp town in the 20's and which now lies at the periphery of the Chicoutimi-Arvida conurbation. Amazingly enough, its class structure, with one variation, appears to reproduce the traditional pattern in which one finds, in a descending order : the clergy, the professional men, the merchants and the working population of commuters to Arvida. The case of Chicoutimi itself is of a new character. There, the « big merchants » are on the same social level as the professional class, whereas a sensitive upper-middle class of bank managers and insurance executives struggles to be socially dissociated from the large core of an ill-defined bourgeois-like, highly sophisticated mass of clerical, highly-skilled and even semi-skilled workers. Two areas of the town are solidly of working-class status.

A blossoming light-industry town, north of Montreal, exhibits similar features. Prior to World War II, the class structure of this town showed a neat dichotomy between the professional class, managers of industry and tradesmen on the one hand, and workers on the other. In contrast, the post-war structure reveals vivid class distinctions, in the following descending order : managers of industry and professional men, merchants and civil servants, white-collar workers, foremen and workers. Finally, the class structure of an Eastern township mining community reflects the uncertainty of the population, first, concerning the relative prestige of the local politicians and of the English managers of the industries, [118] then, concerning the relative prestige of professional men and big merchants. The significant criterion for distinguishing between the two main social categories is the distinction between the *occupations salissantes* and the *occupations non salissantes*, the latter being associated with an assumed high degree of education.

From these and other recent observations in Quebec and Montreal a few provisional generalizations can be suggested. First, it seems that at the upper level of our society, the hitherto untouched prestige of the old professions is now transferred to other occupations and social activities as a criterion of social ranking. Recently imported professions, such as architecture, engineering, chemistry, have become as highly-valued as medicine and law. Economic professions such as bank and corporation management, investment banking, factory ownership, and the like, are also enjoying almost the same social prestige as the older professions. More precisely, these professions are now looked upon by young men and their fathers as life goals as worthy as the older ones. Secondly, the farmers, except in the poorer or frontier re-settlement areas, are now thinning out into a residual, well-to-do and business-like social category. The most universally felt social cleavage is that between white-collar workers, as a whole, and industrial and unskilled workers, as a whole. Workers are themselves sensitive to imperious class distinctions within their social universe, on the basis of : *a)* skill ; *b)* closeness to management ; and, *c)* the proved ability to provide one's children with advanced education. It goes without saying that labour unions have been potent in determining and emphasizing class-consciousness among workers.

An acute feeling of social distance and social discrimination does now exist between these two levels of our society and it is checked only by the feeling of moral and social superiority shared by the thousands of families of all classes who have members in the clergy. Then, notwithstanding this new cleavage, one finds, especially in urban communities of recent development as well as in large French-speaking areas of Montreal, a great uncertainty about the precise level of one's rank. If French-Canadians were, in the past, reputedly less socially ambitious and mobile than the rest of North America, they are now at the other extreme, in a state close to social nervousness.

[119]

In many of the larger communities, the behaviour of French-Canadian middle-class families can be characterized as that of erratic *nouveaux riches*. Indeed, it seems that we now have two overlapping scales of social stratification, each oriented toward a set of values which is in conflict with the other. One of the scales perpetuates the traditional ideal. It recognizes the clergy as the supreme social group and gives priority to spiritual and intellectual achievement. The other also takes the clergy for granted but it is closer to the secular, economic scales of prestige prevalent in the remainder of the North-American « money society. » If one wanted a fruitful general research hypothesis, it could be suggested that two main significant criteria of class rank in Quebec today are *a*) identification with, and closeness to the ecclesiastical power *b*) and identification with and closeness to the political power ²⁶.

We must not overlook a third important criterion of status evaluation. It is closeness to, and identification with the English. Wealth, and the social success of which it is evidence, have often had an « English » and « Protestant » connotation in Quebec. More exactly, economic success has been evidence of an ability to master skills and dominate institutions which were historically the almost exclusive privilege of the dominant ethnic group. Economic success is the ambivalent sign of a revenge and of close professional or social associa-

²⁶ Jean-C. FALARDEAU, *Reflexions sur nos classes sociales*, *Nouvelle Revue Canadienne*, vol. 1, n° 3, juin-juillet 1951, pp. 1-9.

tion with the English, since money can be made only out of institutions or activities originally controlled by the English. Actually, it must be realized that Everett Hughes' statement, quoted by Keyfitz, must now be supplemented with the remark that French-Canadians have the rewarding feeling of being now more and more active, and not only passive, as in the past, in the industrial process. They are now found in somewhat increasing numbers among the owners and managers of great industries, and correspondingly, they have less of an inferiority complex towards the English.

Attitude towards the English have also changed considerably because of more numerous and closer contacts not only among colleagues within the industrial hierarchy, but through membership in scores of professional or service associations. The history of the development of French-English relations in Quebec will, to a great [120] extent, have to be the history of the social clubs and of the professional associations. I suppose one could justly remark that Quebec, having fabricated its *Middletowns*, is now producing its own *Babbits*. Yet, if industry accounts chiefly for the blossoming of these types of associations, an inevitable by-product of urban life has been the multiplication of groupings of all sorts in which urban newcomers or emancipated workers seem to have found interests and social rewards which they could no longer obtain from parochial or other traditional institutions. This becomes more manifest when one observes the changes in the attitudes of our population.

3. CHANGES IN VALUES AND ATTITUDES

[Retour à la table des matières](#)

The foregoing sketchy analysis suggests the direction towards which and the extent to which the way of life of the French-Canadians has been modified. Actually, they are in the process of painfully improvising a whole urban culture of their own. The Industrial Revolution in Quebec abruptly disturbed a pastoral symphony. New themes and new leitmotifs were brought in which did not have meaning for the local culture. This clerical-rural culture could not adequately prepare the people to meet the expectations and the demands of industrial urban life. When they came to the factories, they found embryonic communities or no community at all, and no existing urban culture into which they could integrate themselves. Or rather, they found institutions and expectations of behaviour that were dominated by the values of the past. They reacted as though they had become estranged or entrapped. We have noted that many groups and many classes still act according to a trial-and-error pattern, undetermined between conflicting norms. On the whole, it would seem that the new worldly ambition of French-Canadian workers and middleclass deviants remains tempered by a deep-rooted drive for stability and security. The career-line of the Quebec industrial or clerical white-collar worker is chiefly determined by a quest for security and involves expectations of occupational advancement through personal relationships. In contrast with this, the familiar North American glamorous symbols of male and female success as well as the myths and standards of the social gospel according to [121] Hollywood are becoming ingrained in our mores. The dreams of the younger and the frustrations of the older are patterned through the channels of escapism created by the North American culture.

Organized labour and particularly the Catholic Syndicates have offered to the workers a broad and politically coherent outlook. They have developed a sense of identification with workers of the whole

country, the satisfaction of cooperating within the framework of national and international associations, and a new definition of their ambitions in terms of socio-economic interests, welfare programs and political responsibility. The greater sophistication of the urban bourgeoisie and of the sponge-like upper middle-classes is also apparent in the fact that these classes are providing fewer recruits for the clergy. Since most of the recruits for the clergy and the orders now come from families with a working-class background and fresh urban experience, it may very well be that the way in which this new type of clergy will define the goals and the needs of the French-Canadian society will, for the coming years, share the uncertainty now typical of our lower classes. Our clergy seems less sure of the pertinence of certain of its ancient forms of action within the community. As it has been strangely unaware of clericalism in the past, it also seems hardly aware of recurring subtle or striking forms of anti-clericalism. The continuance of its traditional authority, still formally acknowledged, may depend on its ability to formulate with clarity a liberal, long-range labour policy and on its ability to re-orient the pattern of its relationships with larger segments of the population who have developed a stronger sense of responsibility.

As a last indication of the self-destructive character of some of these cultural and spiritual changes in Quebec, a brief reference must be made to the way in which intellectuals state the problem. One of them recently submitted that the main element of our intellectual drama is that our writers are either embarrassed, unable or not free to express the true nature of our social situation.²⁷ With Ringuet's novel, *Thirty acres*, our literature reached the sociological level and came to the end of a long era focussed on country life. With Gabrielle Roy and Roger Lemelin, this sociological interest is, for the first time, focussed on urban life. Almost [122] all our essayists and writers seemingly rejoice in moral, philosophical or facile psychological topics. It is further suggested that they are escapists who, while pretending to embark upon introspection, actually talk about something else. They

²⁷ Maurice BLAIN, *Sur la liberté de l'esprit*, *Esprit*, n- 193-194, août-septembre 1952, pp. 201-213.

are blocked by social pressures and sanctions which prevent the free expression of the real problems.

For these reasons, it may be that the first really great writer of French Canada will have to be someone of the caliber and type of James Joyce. Our social milieu is quite similar to the Dublin society where Stephen Dedalus had to forge the esthetic instrument of a total definition of himself and ... to accept the inevitability of exile. When our James Joyce will reveal himself and what will happen to him is anybody's guess. Let us hope that when a French-Canadian Leopold Bloom is presented to us, we shall recognize him as a not too disintegrated man in a not too disorganized world.

Jean-C. FALARDEAU

[123]

"The Changing Social Structures."

COMMENTS

Aileen D. Ross

[Retour à la table des matières](#)

Professor Falardeau has presented a comprehensive analysis of the effects of industrialization on the people of Quebec. He has had comparative studies of the effect of industrialization on social behaviour in other societies at his disposal to aid him in this monumental task, but very little material from actual studies of the Quebec scene. This latter consideration emphasizes not only the importance of his work, but the skill with which he has drawn together many separate studies and scattered ideas. In fact, his analysis is so impressive that the remarks I have to make will be concerned with sins of omission, rather than sins of commission.

One of the serious omissions, in my opinion, is that there is no reference to the rise of different types of informally organized groups during this change in the basic economic structure of the province. Sociologists have found that groups such as *cliques* are a universal phenomenon of industrialization. They are now considered to be so

important for the participants that it is felt that they enable us to understand much behaviour that was formerly ignored as being « irrational » by the man in the street. For example, the conviction in our society that economic gain is the chief incentive to work has closed the eyes of many business men and social scientists concerned with « rational activity » to the importance of the opinion of the informal group in shaping man's motivations. Thus it cannot be too strongly stressed that the essence of the change in man's attitudes and actions cannot be understood without taking these groups into consideration.

It could perhaps even be maintained that the rise of informal groupings could be used as indices of fundamental change in social structure in a more telling and instructive way than changes in formal organizations. In this respect, it would be important to take into consideration the effect not only of *work-cliques*, but of many other types including even such phenomena as the rise of the French-Canadian equivalent of the « bobby-soxer ».

Another very important point which Professor Falardeau has not emphasized, although it is brought out in many essays of this book, is that the industrialization of Quebec cannot be understood [124] in isolation, but must take into account a larger Canadian picture. For there are many indirect social effects of the impact of English Canada on French Canada which are pertinent to the final analysis of social change which has been summed up under the term of industrialization. In this context, Professor Everett-C. Hughes has repeatedly pointed out that many studies of minority groups are ineffective in that they are concerned only with the minority group point of view, and fail to take into account the effect of the minority group on the dominant group. For example, it was quite evident in my own research of the English reaction to the steady movement of French population into the Eastern Townships that, in such areas, the English Canadians feel themselves to be the minority, and display attitudes and behaviour similar to French Canadians confronted by English-Canadian economic competition and encroachment elsewhere. Thus the relationships between French and English are quite different in the Eastern Townships from those in other areas of Quebec where the English consider

themselves to be the dominant group. And the impact of one group on the other is correspondingly different.

This means that a study of the adjustment of either one group to changing condition must always take the other group into consideration within a much more flexible framework of thought than is usual when one group is assigned a position of complete dominance and the other complete minority status.

Aileen D. Ross

Fin du texte