

## **INTEREST IN PARENTHOOD AMONG YOUNG ANGLOPHONE AND FRANCOPHONE CANADIANS**

**Charles W. Hobart**

*University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada*

*Résumé* — Dans cette étude, on a utilisé des données d'enquête rassemblées en 1968 et 1977 pour mettre à l'épreuve un nombre d'hypothèses concernant l'influence des facteurs du milieu social sur l'intérêt dans la paternité qu'ont les jeunes célibataires canadiens anglais et canadiens français. L'intérêt dans la paternité a été repertorié selon les réponses aux questions sur le nombre idéal et le nombre désiré d'enfants. Une comparaison des données d'enquête de 1968 et de 1977 montre des déclinés parallèles en intérêt dans la paternité parmi les hommes et les femmes dans et les échantillons français et les échantillons anglais. Ce qui est d'un intérêt particulier c'est le fait que les déclinés dans le nombre idéal et le nombre désiré d'enfants étaient deux fois aussi grands parmi les répondants anglophones en comparaison avec les répondants francophones. On a constaté un peu de soutien pour les hypothèses qui prédisent un rapport entre l'intérêt dans la paternité et l'engagement de l'église, les attitudes envers l'emploi des épouses, la dimension et la religiosité des familles parentales des répondants et les sentiments d'engagement des répondants à leurs familles parentales.

*Abstract* — Using survey data collected in 1968 and 1977, this paper tests a number of hypotheses concerning the influence of social background factors on the parenthood interest of young, unmarried, Anglophone and Francophone Canadians. Parenthood interest was indexed by responses to questions regarding ideal and desired numbers of children. Comparison of the 1968 and the 1977 survey data shows parallel declines in parenthood interest among males and females in both the Francophone and Anglophone samples. Of particular interest is the fact that the declines in ideal and desired numbers of children were twice as large among Anglophone as compared

with Francophone respondents. Some support was found for hypotheses predicting relationship between parenthood interest and church involvement, attitudes toward employment of wives, size and religiosity of respondents' parental families and respondents' feelings of commitment to their parental families.

**Key Words — ideal number of children, desired number of children, fertility decline**

In a recent book entitled *Determinants of Fertility in Advanced Societies*, Andorka concludes that "A sociological theory of fertility including an explanation of the norms, values and goals concerning fertility has not been elaborated as yet" (1978:370). However, in the course of his literature review, he does identify a number of direct and indirect influences. The direct influences are just three in number: family income, rural or urban residence and the employment status of the wife. On the other hand, the more distinctively sociological "determinants of fertility treated in this book — i.e., socio-economic status (and its change, i.e., social mobility), education, religious denomination and intensity of religiousness, ethnicity and similar cultural characteristics — seem to have only an indirect impact on fertility, through shaping and changing the norms, values and attitudes held by societies and social groups concerning the number of children" (1978:381). Andorka adds that in addition to their direct effects, income, residence and employment of women may also have an indirect effect exerted through norms, values and attitudes. This paper is concerned not with fertility, but rather with the conceptions of expected and ideal fertility among Canadian young people. For economy of expression, the shorthand term "parenthood interest" is used to refer to these two indicators collectively. Expressions of parenthood interest no doubt influence the eventual reproductive behaviour of people, but these expectations may be expected to change somewhat with the influence of a spouse and as preferences between alternative goods, including babies, change (Easterlin, 1969). Where preference and expectation data have been collected from unmarried postsecondary school students, as in the present case, there must inevitably be more "uncertainty" because the respondents are not yet married, or involved in the world of work, or settled into the residential arrangements they will occupy after they leave school. Thus, the three direct influences which Andorka identified have not yet become salient.

On the other hand, these factors are certainly not without influence. The income level and the standard of living known in the parental family help to shape the expectations of offspring, as do whether or not the mother worked, the size of the community in which he/she grew up and the number of siblings. Indeed Easterlin (1969) argues that it is not current income but "potential income" which influences the fertility decisions of married couples. Such estimates are, of course, imprecise; however, unmarried young people can, and probably do, make such projections on the basis of their educational planning and the region of the country in which they live.

It may be argued that the sources of normative influences may be easier to detect in the case of unmarried students than in the case of those somewhat older who are involved in their own families and work careers. Parental and other environmental influences, denomination and religiosity may operate more directly and with less external inhibition than in the case of older people who are more enmeshed in the contradictions of life — contradictions which may make it impossible for older people to actualize their normative commitments.

### *Literature Review*

During the past decade, a relatively rich and empirically consistent Canadian literature documenting influences on fertility has emerged. Important publications include Henripin's analysis of the 1961 Canadian census data (1972), Balakrishnan, Kantner and Allingham's 1968 survey of married women in metropolitan Toronto (1975), Henripin and Lapierre-Adamcyk's 1971 survey of married women in Québec (1974), Collishaw's preliminary analysis of 1971 Canadian census data (1976), Balakrishnan, Ebanks and Grindstaff's more exhaustive analysis of the same 1971 census data (1979), Beaujot's (1975) and McDaniel's (1978) analyses of fertility expectation data collected from a sample of women residing in Edmonton in 1973-74 and Henripin, Huot, Lapierre-Adamcyk and Marciel-Gratton's resurveying of the younger members of Henripin and Lapierre-Adamcyk's 1971 Québec sample (1981). Most of these studies focus on the same set of independent variables: size of home community, education, religion, place of origin and period of immigration, mother tongue, occupation of husband, family income, labour force participation by the wife/mother, nuptiality and sometimes age of marriage and duration of marriage. All but the last three may be relevant

in shaping the strength of the parenthood interests among unmarried young people.

Balakrishnan *et al.* (1979) note that since 1961 there has been a rapid, linear decline in the number of children born in Canada, with the period rates lower in each successive year. Moreover, they found that a major difference between the 1961 and the 1971 fertility patterns reflected in the census data is the sharp increase — amounting to more than 50 per cent — in the rate of childlessness among younger women aged 20 to 30 years. More explicit yet is the fact that Henripin *et al.* (1981) found that the number of children expected by the younger members of the 1971 Québec sample had declined between 12 and 19 per cent, depending on the cohort, by the time they were reinterviewed in 1976. It is noteworthy that the decline was greater among the younger, as compared with the older women who were reinterviewed.

Of the studies listed above, only Beaujot (1975), Henripin *et al.* (1981) and McDaniel (1978) are based on data collected since 1971. This report is based on 1977 data and is thus reflective of attitudes formed during a period when small family size was becoming increasingly normative. Moreover, given that previous research indicates that depressed fertility is most characteristic of young women, this survey of young people may give a more accurate indication of expected future fertility levels than would a 1977 sampling of married respondents. On the other hand, it must be emphasized that (a) the survey does not represent a random sampling of young Canadians generally but only of those enrolled in 10 postsecondary schools, and (b) their attitudes may change once they become self-employed and married.

In common with the practice of the previously cited studies, this research investigates the influence of size of home community, education, religion, occupation (of father), income (of parental family) and expectations regarding postmarital employment of the wife. In addition, as in McDaniel's research (1978), the influence of the size of the respondent's family of orientation is explored.

Henripin (1972), Balakrishnan *et al.* (1975) and Balakrishnan *et al.* (1979) all found strong relationships, which persisted when controls were introduced, between size of home community and fertility. Rural residents, and particularly rural farm residents, had the highest fertility while those living in cities of over 100,000 people had the lowest fertility. However, McDaniel (1978) did not find such a relationship, and Balakrishnan *et al.* (1979) report that among women under 30 years of age, the differences in fertility by place of residence were relatively small.

Accordingly, it is appropriate to test the following hypothesis using data from our relatively recent and youthful sample.

Hypothesis 1. The size of the respondent's home community will negatively influence his/her parental interest.

Balakrishnan *et al.* (1979) note that historically, religion was one of the most important variables in explaining variations in fertility, and significant relationships have been demonstrated by all of the previously cited Canadian studies. However analysis of their now dated 1971 Census data led Balakrishnan *et al.* to report that while there was a significant Protestant-Catholic variation in fertility among older women, the differences between these denominations among young women were "very small and insignificant" (1979:255) and that there was convergence across all age groups and in all regions of the country. However, McDaniel's Alberta data demonstrate a relatively strong relationship. The following hypothesis was tested in the present study.

Hypothesis 2. Frequent attendance at conservative churches will positively influence parenthood interests.

Recent Canadian studies have shown that educational attainment has a particularly significant inverse influence on fertility. Balakrishnan *et al.* (1979) found this relationship to be particularly characteristic of young respondents in all regions of the country (1979). Trovato, also analyzing 1971 Canadian census data, found that educational attainment was inversely associated with fertility, though the way in which this relationship was manifested differed somewhat among the seven ethnic groups that he studied (1981). With respect to the 1971 census data, Balakrishnan *et al.* suggested that Trovato's finding was "undoubtedly" associated with the potential of better educated women to participate in the labour force (1979). More recently, one might expect that it would relate as well to the greater interest in "women's liberation" among women with more education — interests which we expect are associated with small planned families. Our data permitted testing the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3. The parenthood interests of trade school students will be stronger than those of university students.

Analysis of 1961, 1968, 1971 and 1973-74 fertility data have all indicated that, with few exceptions, foreign-born women have fewer children than those women who are born in Canada. However, the 1971

census data suggest that this finding is less consistent among younger women than among older ones (Balakrishnan *et al.*, 1979), and Beaujot (1975) found the differences to be more slight. Insignificant numbers of our student respondents were foreign-born. However, as it seemed likely that the low fertility expectations of foreign-born parents might be communicated in significant degree to their offspring, we tested the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4. Respondents' parenthood interests will be negatively influenced by having foreign-born parents.

Analyses of the 1961 and 1968 fertility data indicated that family income was directly related to fertility (Balakrishnan *et al.*, 1975; Henripin, 1972). However, analysis of the 1971 data led Balakrishnan *et al.* to conclude that "family income is not an important predictor of fertility variation" (Balakrishnan *et al.*, 1979:259), and Beaujot (1975) found an insignificant relationship with "expected wanted" family size, when controls were introduced for ethnicity. The self-earned income of our student respondents did not qualify as a valid index of the influence of income, of course. However, in testing the influence of income on parenthood interest, we posited that, as in the case of the nativity variable, parental experience would influence the expectations — in this case the income expectations — of their offspring.

Hypothesis 5. Level of parental family income will positively influence respondents' parenthood interests.

Every recently published Canadian fertility study has demonstrated the significant influence of the wife's (or the unmarried woman's) labour force participation on fertility or fertility expectations. Balakrishnan *et al.* (1979) report that the wife's participation was the most important variable in their study, particularly for women under 35 years of age. The respondents to our survey were not married, and the major role of the female respondents was that of student. However, once again it seemed probable that patterns found in the respondents' families would influence the parenthood interests of the sample members. Accordingly, the relationship of the wife's employment to parenthood interest was tested in three ways in this study.

Hypothesis 6a. Employment involvement by the respondents' mothers will negatively influence the respondents' parenthood interests.

Hypothesis 6b. Employment involvement by the respondents' married sisters will negatively influence parenthood interests.

Hypothesis 6c. Attitudes favourable towards wives pursuing careers will negatively influence parenthood interests.

Among recent Canadian fertility studies, only McDaniel's research has assessed the influence of size of the respondents' parental families on the parenthood interest of sample members. Since the focus of most of the other studies has been on a broad age spectrum of respondents, this approach was understandable. However, when the focus of interest is on young unmarried respondents — many of whom are still living in their parental homes — it may be hypothesized that just as parents influence their offspring's religious and political attitudes (Beck, 1977; Bibby and Brinkerhoff, 1973; Currie, 1976; Davies, 1977; Hyman, 1959; Yinger, 1970), so they will influence offspring attitudes and expectations with respect to fertility. Thus:

Hypothesis 7. Respondents' parenthood interests will be positively influenced by the number of children in their parental families.

Two other familial variables were explored in this study because we anticipated that they would influence the parenthood interests of our young sample members. We hypothesized that the religiosity of the respondents' parents would have a positive effect on offspring parenthood interests independent of the latter's own religiosity, that is, even though the offspring's own parentally acquired religious involvement might have weakened. We also expected that respondents who expressed strong feelings of solidarity with their parental family would have elevated parenthood interests, on the grounds that people who experience their own parental family life as gratifying and have strong emotional involvement with their parents will have stronger commitment to familism values and thus to larger families than others with less favourable feelings about their parental families.

Hypothesis 8. The religiosity of respondents' parents will positively influence offspring's parenthood interests, independently of the influence of the latter's religiosity.

Hypothesis 9. Respondents' feelings of commitment to parental families will positively influence their parenthood interests.

None of the recent Canadian publications have reported data on the relationship between attitudes toward use of contraceptives and fertility, although the data of Henripin *et al.* (1981) certainly indicate that increased use of contraception was associated with declining fertility expecta-

tions between 1971 and 1976. It would appear that favouring birth control would be negatively associated with parenthood interests. However, this relationship is not inevitable — birth control may be favoured to assist in spacing of children or to coordinate having a number of children as well as career or mobility planning. In the absence of a clear basis for prediction, no hypothesis is proposed, but the relationship between attitude toward birth control and parenthood interest indicators is explored in this study.

### *Methodology*

The data used in testing these hypotheses were taken from a survey conducted in 1977 to obtain information on attitudes toward courtship, marital role and parenthood issues. Comparable data are available from a similar survey conducted in 1968. Items from the lengthy questionnaire which are relevant here include those dealing with ideal and expected family size, birth control and the respondent's socioeconomic characteristics, as well as other attitudinal data.

In both surveys, after pretesting on an Anglophone sample, the questionnaire was translated into French and pretested on a Francophone sample in Québec, since both surveys were to include Anglophone and Francophone sample members. The pretesting did not yield reasons for making any changes in the relevant 1968 survey items from the 1977 Anglophone or Francophone versions of the questionnaire.

### *The Study Samples*

As noted earlier, the data used in this study were collected in two surveys conducted in 1968 and 1977. The 1968 survey was administered to random samples of university and technical school students enrolled in postsecondary schools in Alberta, Ontario and Québec. A total of 1,104 usable returns were obtained, including 700 from Anglophone and 404 from Francophone respondents. The procedures used in drawing samples, contacting the student members and arranging for filling out the questionnaires were identical with the procedures followed during the 1977 survey which are described below, and the response rates were similar. More information on the 1968 survey can be found in Hobart (1972).



The 1977 survey data were collected during the winter of 1976-77 from university and technical school students enrolled in postsecondary schools in the Maritime provinces (Halifax), Québec (Montréal), Ontario (Waterloo and London), the Prairie provinces (Edmonton) and British Columbia (Vancouver). Samples were drawn from one university and one trade school in each of these five regions. In seven out of ten cases, the largest institutions, universities and trade schools in the region were selected. The remaining three schools were chosen because they had been included in the 1968 survey. The sampling design called for randomly selecting 100 male and 100 female unmarried students, aged 18 to 25 years, from each of the five universities and the five technical schools. Respondents of Oriental or African extraction and those who were members of religious orders were excluded. In five cases, the sample lists were drawn by computer from undergraduate student body lists. In the remaining five cases, the sample selection involved establishing an appropriate sampling interval and manually identifying every  $n$ th student from an alphabetized list of a total undergraduate student body, since there was no reason to suspect that this systematic selection procedure would introduce bias into the sample.

Typically, in both surveys the students selected were contacted by telephone, and the purpose of the study ("a questionnaire study of changing attitudes toward courtship and marriage") was explained to them. They were asked to come to a convenient location on the university or trade school campus to fill out the self-administered questionnaire which, they were told, would take about 45 minutes. Here they were provided with the anonymous questionnaire and an unmarked envelope. When they were finished filling out the questionnaire they placed it in the envelope and dropped the envelope in a box containing a number of other similar envelopes. They then crossed their names off the appointment list for that day. Those who missed the first, or a second or third, appointment were telephoned again to ask when it would be convenient for them to come fill out the questionnaire. In three schools, some questionnaires were dropped off at the residences of sample members and picked up again at a later date by a research assistant.

The final 1977 sample consisted of 2,062 students, including 413 Francophones and 1,649 Anglophones. These figures reflect deliberate oversampling to provide for dropping ineligible respondents. In eight of the ten schools surveyed, over 75 per cent of the students contacted filled out usable questionnaires. The two exceptions were both in British Columbia, where the response rate among the trade school students was 56

per cent and among the university students, 61 per cent. While the resulting combined sample falls significantly short of the desired randomness criterion, the response rate which was achieved is deemed to be generally acceptable, given the difficulty of contacting and motivating students in very large campus settings, the competing demands on students' time, the length of the questionnaire, and the social sensitivity of some of the questions asked. The reasons for the low response rates in the British Columbia schools are not known.

Two different dependent variables — ideal number of children and desired number of children — were used as separate indicators of parenthood interest in the testing of all hypotheses. Seventeen independent variables were investigated in this study, as well as one control variable. The two dependent variable items were worded identically in the 1968 and 1977 studies, so that comparison between the two sets of responses is appropriate.

The independent variables were measured by both single item and multiple item indices. In several cases, more than one index was available per variable, but colinearity problems were avoided by using more than one only where the intercorrelations were under 0.60. More information on the composition of the multiple item indices is provided in footnotes when appropriate.

The linguistic identity of the respondent, Anglophone or Francophone, was used as a control variable. Separate analyses of the Anglophone and the Francophone data were deemed necessary because of cultural differences between Anglophone and Francophone respondents, as well as because we believe that the absolute identity of the meanings of the English and French language versions of the questionnaire cannot be assumed.

The multiple regression analysis technique was used in testing the hypotheses because this technique permits the identification of the independent contribution of each independent variable to the variance of the dependent variable. Beta weights were used to evaluate the significance of the relationships between independent and dependent variables. List-wise deletion of cases from the analysis was practiced where data were missing from individual cases because if the alternative pair-wise deletion was used, the sample size for different variables would have varied. Such variation could contribute to confusing results, since the standard error is sensitive to variations in sample size.

## Findings

### Changes in Family Size Expectations and Ideals

Table 1 shows the mean ideal numbers of children and mean numbers of children wanted after marriage, for the 1968 and 1977 Anglophone and Francophone samples. Conformably with actual birth rate differentials, the 1968 data show that among both the male and the female respondents, the Francophone sample members wanted fewer children than the Anglophones, though the differences were statistically significant only for the females.

The significant trend seen in these data is the declines in both the number of children seen as ideal and the number of children wanted by the respondents between 1968 and 1977. The declines are significant for both the males and the females in the Anglophone and the Francophone samples, and the size of the decline is comparable for the males and the females in both of these samples. However, the size of decline is not comparable for the two language samples: indeed, the decline in numbers of children seen as ideal and in numbers wanted are about twice as great among the Anglophone as compared with the Francophone sample.

TABLE 1. MEAN NUMBER OF CHILDREN, SEEN AS TOTAL,  
AND WANTED, BY SEX FOR  
ANGLOPHONE AND FRANCOPHONE SAMPLES

Ideal Number of Children								
	1968		Anglo-Franco Differences	1978		Anglo-Franco Differences	1968-77 Differences	
	Anglo	Franco		Anglo	Franco		Anglo	Franco
Male	3.33	3.30	+ .03**	2.51	2.86	-.35**	-.82**	-.44**
Female	3.54	3.30	+ .24	2.59	2.86	-.27**	-.95**	-.44**
Total	3.44	3.30	+ .14	2.55	2.86	-.31	-.89	-.44
Number of Children Wanted								
Male	3.19	3.24	-.05	2.46	2.84	-.38**	-.73**	-.40**
Female	3.42	3.24	-0.18*	2.49	2.82	-.33**	-.93**	-.42**
Total	3.31	3.24	-0.07	2.48	2.83	-.35	-.83	-.41
* Significant at beyond the .05 level.								
** Significant at beyond the .01 level.								

Thus the number of children wanted declined by 0.81 between 1968 and 1977 among the Anglophones, but by only 0.44 among the Francophone sample members, and the comparable figures in terms of children seen as ideal for the two samples were 0.89 and 0.44, respectively. These differences are significant at beyond the 0.01 level of confidence.

Perhaps one might question the accuracy of the survey findings at this point, since the Québec birth rate has been the lowest in Canada since 1968 (Canada, 1975). Accordingly, the validity of these responses was checked by ascertaining the birth rates for the appropriate provinces among women aged 20-29 years in 1980 — the most recent data available from Statistics Canada (Canada, 1982). Only birth rates in the 20 to 29 year age range were considered because the survey data suggest that influences depressing birth expectations in Québec had escalated during the period between 1968 and 1977. Accordingly, it was expected that these influences would have been strongly operative on women under 30 years of age in 1980 and would have had much weaker effects on older women. These data, found in Table 2, together with the mean numbers of children wanted by members of the 1977 sample for the same provinces, show that the Québec birth rate in 1980 for women aged 20-29 years was 111.42 per 1,000, higher than the Nova Scotia and the Ontario rates of 109.1 and 103.7, respectively, but lower than the Alberta and the British Columbia rates of 137.2 and 114.1, respectively. Thus it appears that our data — collected in 1977 at a time when the Québec birth rate was yet the lowest in the country — correctly anticipated the subsequent increase in the Québec birth rate for the cohort of women aged 20-29 years.

### Testing the Hypotheses

The data for testing the hypotheses are found in Tables 3 to 6 which present the results of regression analyses using ideal number of children and number of children wanted as the dependent variables, for the Anglophone and Francophone subsamples. The data in these tables show that many of the hypotheses were not substantiated by the data for either of the two language samples.

The first hypothesis predicted that the size of the respondent's home community would negatively influence his/her parental interest. The data in Tables 3 to 6 show that there was no support for this hypothesis in either the Anglophone or the Francophone sample for either of the parenthood interest indicators.

*Interest in Parenthood among Young Canadians*

**TABLE 2. MEAN NUMBER OF CHILDREN WANTED BY SURVEY  
RESPONDENTS AND 1980 BIRTH STATISTICS FOR  
NOVA SCOTIA, QUÉBEC, ONTARIO, ALBERTA  
AND BRITISH COLUMBIA**

SURVEY DATA				VITAL STATISTICS DATA <sup>1</sup>		
		Mean no. of children wanted	Rank <sup>2</sup> Order		Births Per 1000 Women 20 - 29 Years	Rank <sup>2</sup> Order
Nova Scotia	M	2.54	4	Aged 20-24 yrs.	103.45	4
	F	2.59	4	Aged 25-29 yrs.	115.56	1
	Total	2.57	4	Total	109.14	2
Quebec	M	2.82	5	Aged 20-24 yrs.	90.45	2
	F	2.82	5	Aged 25-29 yrs.	134.67	4
	Total	2.82	5	Total	111.42	3
Ontario	M	2.51	3	Aged 20-24 yrs.	89.81	1
	F	2.48	2	Aged 25-29 yrs.	118.31	2
	Total	2.49	2	Total	103.71	1
Alberta	M	2.53	2	Aged 20-24 yrs.	133.36	5
	F	2.51	3	Aged 25-29 yrs.	141.12	5
	Total	2.52	3	Total	137.16	5
British Columbia	M	2.26	1	Aged 20-24 yrs.	103.27	3
	F	2.38	1	Aged 25-29 yrs.	125.22	3
	Total	2.32	1	Total	114.07	4

<sup>1</sup>Source: Statistics Canada, 1982.

<sup>2</sup>Low to High.

The second hypothesis predicted that frequent attendance at conservative churches would positively influence parenthood interests. The independent variable used in testing this hypothesis was a denomination/attendance index.<sup>1</sup> The data in Tables 3 to 6 show that this independent variable was significantly associated with the ideal number of children and the number of children wanted indicators for both the

TABLE 3. MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF IDEAL  
NUMBER OF CHILDREN, FOR ANGLOPHONE SAMPLE, WITH  
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

Independent Variables	B	Beta	Std Error B	F	Simple R
Denomination/Attendance					
Index	0.1834367	0.14656	0.00404	20.622	0.24237
Wife free to have career	-0.9691911	-0.15872	0.01580	37.612	-0.19864
R's family size	0.6064711	0.12356	0.01512	16.078	0.18439
Attitude/birth control	0.9065942	0.12925	0.01856	23.859	0.19440
Family commitment index	-0.4268408	-0.06838	0.01623	6.916	-0.12048
Family income	-0.2969603	-0.05455	0.01455	4.168	-0.01124
R's religiosity	-0.3605002	0.03202	0.03952	0.832	-0.19523
Parents Ethnic Origins					
Index	0.3293057	0.03063	0.02832	1.352	0.05979
Size of home community	-0.1681846	-0.02984	0.01522	1.220	-0.08760
Religiosity of Father	-0.2354722	-0.02311	0.03312	0.505	-0.14038
Religiosity of Mother	-0.1969098	-0.01765	0.03643	0.292	-0.15288
Mother's occupation	0.1443152	0.00721	0.05158	0.078	0.06982
Married sisters work	0.7740972	0.00646	0.03527	0.048	0.06386
R attends university	-0.1058564	-0.0549	0.05049	0.044	-0.04078
(constant)	3.653822				
Analysis of Variance					
	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	P
Regression	18.	184.22961	10.23498	12.83000	0.0000
Residual	1348.	1075.35049	0.79744		

Anglophone and the Francophone samples. The respondents' religiosity self-rating was independently positively associated with both dependent variables for the Anglophone (Tables 3 and 4), but not the Francophone (Tables 5 and 6) respondents.

The third hypothesis predicted that respondents having less educational advancement (trade school students) would have more interest in parenthood than the more advanced university students. The data for the Francophones in Table 6 show that contrary to the hypothesis, university attendance was positively associated with ideal number of children. No

# *Interest in Parenthood among Young Canadians*

TABLE 4. MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF NUMBER OF CHILDREN WANTED, FOR ANGLOPHONE SAMPLE, WITH ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

Independent Variables	B	Beta	Std Error B	F	Simple R
Wife free to have career	-0.158207	-0.20951	0.01900	69.304	-0.25437
Denomination/attendance index	0.1681985	0.10850	0.00484	12.057	0.23087
Attitude/birth control	0.135066	0.15572	0.02231	36.650	0.21881
R's family size	0.6303599	0.10400	0.01828	11.894	0.16036
Family income	-0.6003353	-0.08827	0.01757	11.681	-0.05714
Family commitment index	-0.5962261	-0.07724	0.01949	9.361	-0.14044
Religiosity of Mother	-0.8284000	-0.05974	0.04374	3.586	-0.18105
R's religiosity	-0.5857008	-0.04215	0.04718	1.541	-0.21033
Religiosity of Father	-0.3517906	-0.02775	0.03958	0.790	-0.15568
Size of Home Community	0.1514705	0.02170	0.01815	0.696	-0.03377
Mother's Occupation	0.2910905	0.01175	0.06206	0.220	0.07367
Married sisters work	0.1207794	0.00814	0.04272	0.080	0.05325
R attends university	0.8011874	0.00335	0.06070	0.017	-0.01707
Parents ethnic origin index	0.3751174	0.00279	0.03393	0.012	0.03338
(constant)	45.070903				
Analysis of Variance					
	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	P
Regression	17.	340.85542	20.05032	16.82334	0.0000
Residual	1387.	1653.04778	1.19182		

other relationships of this predictor with the dependent variables were significant for either language sample.

The fourth hypothesis predicted that respondents' parenthood interests would be negatively influenced by having foreign-born parents.<sup>2</sup> This independent variable proved to be unrelated to the dependent variables for either language sample.

The fifth hypothesis predicted that the level of parental income would positively influence respondents' parenthood interests. The Anglophone data show that contrary to the hypothesis, family income was negatively

associated with both of the indicators of parenthood interest (Tables 3 and 4). Income was unrelated to both parenthood interest indicators for the Francophone data.

The sixth hypothesis predicted that employment involvement by female members of the respondent's family and favourable attitudes toward wives pursuing careers would negatively influence parenthood interests. The data show that the employment status of the respondent's mother did not significantly influence either indicator of parenthood interest for either language sample. Having sisters who worked was associated only with the ideal number of children indicator, and only for the Francophone sample (Table 5). A favourable attitude toward

TABLE 5. MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF IDEAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN, FOR FRANCOPHONE SAMPLE, WITH ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

Independent Variables	B	Beta	Std Error B	F	Simple R
Attitudes/birth control	0.8167197	0.13873	0.03212	6.466	0.13362
R's family size	0.8470948	0.17897	0.02932	8.347	0.13269
Religiosity of Mother	-0.1274438	-0.11188	0.07547	2.852	-0.11245
R attends university	0.1910045	0.10563	0.09851	3.752	0.07326
Married sisters work	-0.1286437	-0.09689	0.07809	2.714	-0.00707
Wife free to have career	-0.3952466	-0.06689	0.03321	1.416	-0.04712
Family commitment index	-0.3142869	-0.05613	0.03088	1.036	-0.06383
Size of home community	0.1409454	0.02936	0.02704	0.272	-0.02913
Religiosity of father	0.3529006	0.03500	0.06614	0.285	-0.06473
Family income	-0.1157707	-0.02350	0.02665	0.189	-0.01562
Denomination/attendance index	0.1444160E	0.01234	0.00813	0.032	0.05601
Mother's occupation	0.2153519E	0.01173	0.09933	0.047	0.04964
R's religiosity	-0.1056538E	-0.01014	0.07337	0.021	-0.06408
(constant)	3.213098				
Analysis of Variance					
	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	P
Regression	16.	22.66028	1.41627	1.78994	0.0312
Residual	336.	265.85530	0.79124		



employment of the wife was negatively predictive of parenthood interest among Anglophone respondents, as hypothesized (Tables 3 and 4), but it was unrelated to either dependent variable among Francophone respondents.

The seventh hypothesis predicted that respondents' parenthood interests would be positively influenced by the size of their parental families. Inspection of Tables 3 to 6 shows that the predicted relationships were found — for both dependent variables and with both samples — and that these relationships were among the strongest found in this study.

The eighth hypothesis predicted that the religiosity of the respondents' parents would positively influence the offsprings' parenthood interests. The data in Table 5 show that perceived religiosity of the

**TABLE 6. MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF NUMBER OF CHILDREN WANTED FOR FRANCOPHONE SAMPLE, WITH ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE**

Independent Variables	B	Beta	Std Error B	F	Simple R
Attitudes/birth control	0.9557837	0.13521	0.03749	6.498	0.15637
Religiosity of Father	-0.8284794	-0.06717	0.07709	1.155	-0.14906
R's Family size	0.9104920	0.15499	0.03567	6.514	0.11557
Denomination/attendance index	0.9507912	0.06665	0.00847	1.259	0.12364
Family commitment index	-0.4131898	-0.06026	0.103680	1.260	-0.08661
Wife free to have career	-0.5211165	-0.07136	0.03959	1.733	-0.07319
Married sisters work	-0.1308575	-0.07946	0.09471	1.909	-0.00977
Religiosity of Mother	-0.8884905	-0.06331	0.08972	0.981	-0.12527
Size of home community	0.2970310	0.05007	0.03242	0.839	-0.00839
R attends university	0.7665769	0.03451	0.11752	0.425	0.00675
Mother's occupation	0.3081667	0.01367	0.11921	0.067	0.05871
(constant)	3.333094				
Analysis of Variance					
	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean of Square	F	P
Regression	14.	26.80141	2.62867	2.22562	0.0068
Residual	351.	414.56471	1.18110		

mother positively influenced the number of children wanted by Anglophones. The Francophone data in Table 5 show that religiosity of the mother was positively predictive of the ideal number of children, while perceived religiosity of the father was positively predictive of the number of children wanted (Table 6).

The ninth hypothesis predicted that the respondents' feelings of commitment to their parental families would positively influence their parenthood interests.<sup>3</sup> This hypothesis was supported by the Anglophone data for both indicators of parenthood interest (Tables 3 and 4) and by the Francophone data in Table 6 for the number-of-children-wanted indicator.

The question posed concerning the relationship between attitudes toward contraception and parental interest is unambiguously answered. The Anglophone data in Tables 3 and 4 and the Francophone data in Tables 5 and 6 all show a strong inverse relationship between favouring use of contraception and both indicators of parenthood interest.

### *Discussion*

This paper has presented comparable data on parenthood interests among unmarried Canadian young people collected in 1968 and 1977 and has tested a number of hypotheses predicting the influences of a number of variables on the expressions of expected and ideal fertility by 1977 sample members. Predictably, the 1968-77 comparisons demonstrate a significant decline in both expected and ideal fertility among both the Anglophone and the Francophone samples, of equal magnitude among the male and the female respondents in both linguistic subsamples. It is noteworthy, however, that the decline in mean ideal numbers of children and numbers of children wanted was twice as large among the Anglophones as among the Francophones, for both the men and the women. In consequence, while the mean ideal numbers of children and the mean numbers of children wanted were slightly smaller among the Francophones than among the Anglophones in 1968, the Anglophone means were significantly lower than the Francophone means in 1977. An indication of the validity of these attitude indicators is seen in the fact that in 1980, the actual birth rate among Francophone women in the 20 to 29 years of age cohort was higher than the rate among Anglophone women of the same age. This may signal Québec's relinquishment of its position as the province having the lowest birth rate in Canada.

The tests of the hypotheses failed to support our version of two of Andorka's three direct influences for which he reports consistent support in the literature (1978). We found no evidence that parenthood interest was inversely influenced by urban background, for either linguistic sample. Our data thus suggest that the traditional positive influence of rural residence on fertility may be dying out in Canada. Balakrishnan *et al.* (1979) report finding that while their version of this variable was significantly related to fertility, the relationship in their 1971 data was much weaker among young women. That the relationship has disappeared in data supplied by our youthful sample in 1977 is thus not surprising.

With respect to the influence of income, after analyzing his 1961 data, Henripin concluded that a positive relationship was in the process of being established with fertility (1972), but the analyses of Balakrishnan *et al.* (1975; 1979) based on more recent data were inconclusive. Such a relationship would certainly be compounded by educational level and perhaps by the wife's employment status as well. Our data analysis may have been insufficiently exhaustive to reveal an existing weak relationship, but our negative findings here are consistent with those from our recent Canadian studies. Rural-urban residence and family income may thus have an attenuating influence on Canadian fertility, and, in any case, they appear to have little influence on the parenthood interest of unmarried Canadians.

All of the sources included in the literature review emphasize the strong adverse influence of wife's employment on fertility. In this study we predicted that employment of respondents' mothers and sisters would give rise to expectations that the wife would work following their own marriages, and that this would depress their parenthood interest. However, our data fail to demonstrate these relationships. Accordingly, we suggest that it may be the experience of actual involvement in a marriage where the wife works and of grappling with the contradictions between mothering and working which serve to depress fertility in such marriages. Positively favouring a career for wives is strongly inversely associated with parenthood interest among our Anglophone respondents, but not among the Francophones. We have no ready explanation for this discrepancy. Perhaps employment of the wife is more generally taken for granted by the Francophones than by the Anglophone respondents.

The only other hypothesis which was completely unsupported by our data predicted an inverse relationship between education attainment and

fertility. Balakrishnan *et al.* (1979) reported a strong inverse relationship, particularly among young respondents, in all regions of the country. Using our education index — trade school or university enrollment — we found no significant relationships with our parenthood interest criteria for either the Anglophone or the Francophone sample. Our independent variable is admittedly insensitive, since all respondents were postsecondary students. Still, the indication in our data that among unmarried young students, in training for a wide variety of work careers, the conceptions of expected and ideal fertility are very similar, is of interest.

Our data confirmed the significance of three indirect influences — religiosity of the respondent, religiosity of his/her parents and size of the parental family. Balakrishnan *et al.* (1975; 1979) generally restricted their analysis of the influence of religion on fertility to Protestant-Catholic differentials, though they gave passing attention to fertility differentials among some other religious groups. Their analysis of the Protestant-Catholic aggregated groupings showed that significant variations in fertility were found among older, but not younger, women. This finding is illuminated by the fact that no less than 83 per cent of American Catholics favour using contraceptive devices (Greeley, 1977). The religiosity index used in the present study combined an indication of denominational conservatism-liberalism and of frequency of attendance. Using this index, conservatism and frequency of attendance were found to be directly associated with parenthood interest among both the Anglophone and the Francophone samples.

Similarly, respondents' ratings of their fathers' and mothers' degrees of religiosity were significantly directly associated with respondents' parenthood interests, in the case of the mothers' religiosity for both language samples, and in the case of the fathers' for the Francophone sample only.

Our finding that size of the parental family is directly predictive of respondents' parenthood interests is corroborated in recent Canadian literature only in McDaniel's Alberta study, largely because this information is not available in census data. The strength of the relationship, in our data, suggests that the influence of this variable is deserving of continuing investigation at a time when the strength of formerly more important variables — such as rural-urban background, education and nativity — is waning.

A final index of possible parental family influence on respondents' parenthood interest was the degree of commitment to the parental family. This index was found to be positively predictive of parenthood in-

terest for Anglophones and marginally predictive for Francophones. The influence of this variable has not been investigated in other recently published Canadian research.

In view of this pattern of parental family influences, it seems remarkable that the employment status of the mother should be without significance. Possibly our data are insufficiently precise: perhaps the mother must be employed for a certain duration, during a certain period of childhood, for her employment to affect the fertility interest of her offspring. Such maternal employment may also affect the attitudes of sons and daughters in different ways.

The broadest implication of these findings may be that some of the significant influences of the past — rural-urban residence, nativity, education and perhaps income — seem to be of waning importance in predicting parenthood interest. On the other hand, several microsocial, parental family influences appear to have continuing significance, including religiosity which is typically instilled in the family, size of the parental family and the emotional commitment to this family. But such a statement is currently unjustified because these variables have been so little researched that it is impossible to say whether these parental family influences may be waning as well. Further, it must be re-emphasized that our respondents are unmarried so they have yet to come to grips with issues such as motherhood versus employment. Nevertheless, it appears from the pattern of our findings that a variety of parental family influences on the fertility of offspring is worthy of further investigation.

### *Footnotes*

1. The denomination/attendance index was devised in an attempt to take into account the effects of interaction between the traditionalism associated with some conservative denominational affiliations and with more frequent church attendance. It was computed by multiplying the denominational conservatism rating of the respondent's church affiliation (three categories) by his/her attendance frequency (eight categories). The possible range of these scores was from 1 to 24, and the obtained range was the same.
2. The nativity index used was the product of the ethnicity score for the respondent's father and his/her mother. Their countries of birth were grouped into three categories: Canada and English-speaking Caucasian countries were scored 1, other Northern and Western European countries were scored 2 and all remaining countries were scored 3.

3. The family commitment index was computed by summing the scored responses to two items. The first read "Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about your parental family?" with the following response alternatives: "I would sacrifice anything for the welfare of my family" (scored 1); "My family is one of the most important things in my life" (2); "My family is important to me, but many other things are too" (3); "I can pretty well take it or leave it" (4); "I don't like my family's claims on me and my time" (5); and "The less I see of my family, the better I like it" (6).

The second item read "Which phrase below best characterizes most of your relations with your family?" with the following response alternatives: "Very happy" (scored 1); "Happy" (2); "Somewhat satisfactory" (3); "Somewhat dissatisfactory" (4); "Unhappy" (5); and "Very unhappy" (6). The possible range of these scores was from 2 to 12, and the obtained range was the same.

### *References*

- Andorka, R. 1978. *Determinants of Fertility in Advanced Societies*. London, England: Methuen and Company.
- Balakrishnan, T.R., J.F. Kantner and J.D. Allingham. 1975. *Family Planning in a Canadian Metropolis*. Montréal, Québec: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_, G.E. Ebanks and C.F. Grindstaff. 1979. *Patterns of Fertility in Canada, 1971*. Ottawa, Ontario: Statistics Canada.
- Beaujot, R. 1975. *Ethnic fertility differentials in Edmonton*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Department of Sociology, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta.
- Beck, P.A. 1977. The role of agents in political socialization. In S.A. Renshon (ed.), *Handbook of Political Socialization*. New York: The Free Press.
- Bibby, R.W. and M.B. Brinkerhoff. 1973. The circulation of the saints: A study of people who join conservative churches. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 12:273-283.
- Canada, Statistics Canada. 1975. *Vital Statistics, Births, 1973*. Ottawa, Ontario: Information Canada.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1982. Memorandum dated 9 March 1982. 1980 tabulations on marriages and births. Ottawa, Ontario.
- Collishaw, N. 1976. *Fertility in Canada, 1971 Census of Canada, Profile Studies, Volume 5, Part 1, Bulletin 5.1-6*. Ottawa, Ontario: Statistics Canada.
- Currie, R.F. 1976. *Belonging, commitment and early socialization in a western city*. In S. Crysdale and L. Wheatcroft (eds.), *Religion in Canadian Society*. Toronto, Ontario: Macmillan Company of Canada.

*Interest in Parenthood among Young Canadians*

- Davies, J.C. 1977. Political socialization: From womb to childhood. In S.A. Ren-shon (ed.), *Handbook of Political Socialization*. New York: The Free Press, pp. 142-171.
- Easterlin, R.A. 1969. Toward a socio-economic theory of fertility. In S.J. Behrman, L. Corsa, Jr. and R. Freedman (eds.), *Fertility and Family Planning: A World View*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, pp. 127-156.
- Greeley, A.M. 1977. *The American Catholic: A Social Portrait*. New York: Basic Books.
- Henripin, J. 1972. *Trends and Factors of Fertility in Canada*. Ottawa, Ontario: Statistics Canada.
- and E. Lapierre-Adamcyk. 1974. *La Fin de la Revanche des Berceaux: Qu'en Pense les Québécoises?* Montréal, Québec: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal.
- , P.M. Huot, E. Lapierre-Adamcyk and N. Marcil-Gratton. 1981. *Les Enfants Qu'on N'a Plus au Québec*. Montréal, Québec: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal.
- Hobart, C. 1972. Sexual permissiveness in young English and French Canadians. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 34:292-303.
- Hyman, H.H. 1959. *Political Socialization*. New York: Free Press.
- McDaniel, S. 1978. *Family size expectations in Edmonton, a cohort approach*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Department of Sociology, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta.
- Trovato, F. 1981. Canadian ethnic fertility. *Sociological Focus* 14:57-74.
- Yinger, J.M. 1970. *The Scientific Study of Religion*. New York: Macmillan.

*Received September, 1982; revised October, 1983.*

