

Gordon Darroch and Lee Soltow, *Property and Inequality in Victorian Ontario: Structural Patterns and Cultural Communities in the 1871 Census* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1994).

In this book, Gordon Darroch, a sociologist at York University, and Lee Soltow, an economist at Ohio University, examine the ownership of land and homes in Ontario in 1871. Their principal evidence is a *film-manuscript-census* sample of adult male and female heads of families. Based on the information provided, one might describe it as a random cluster sample, loosely stratified by geographical area and weighted by population. The sample is well-designed, reliable, and appropriate for the stated research objectives. The authors do not report the standard confidence-interval and confidence-level statistics; the sample is large, however, and its factor distributions closely match those calculated from published-aggregate census data.

The authors carefully describe the scope of their enquiry and the limitations of their evidence. Their single-source evidence is for real property assets, not wealth in all its forms. Its comprehensiveness for Ontario lets their study transcend important limitations of single-community case studies. Multiple-source case studies, however, are better for showing complex local variations in wealth holding.

The sophisticated, effective use of quantitative methods in the book is one of its outstanding features. Through an

imaginative use of multiple-regression analysis, for example, the authors discover the relative influence of the predictor variables, not just their collective influence. The authors make abundant use of the literature to enrich their argument. Their coverage is sparse for French-language sources, however; notably missing is the rich literature for the Saguenay region of Quebec by Gérard Bouchard and his collaborators.

An efficient way to read the book is to start with the summary of the findings in Chapter 7, then go to the earlier chapters for the detail. Although the book is clearly written, its content unfolds slowly. This problem arises partly from the complexity of the subject matter and methodology. By summarizing the argument in the chapter introductions, however, the authors could have guided readers through the detail. Some literature references in the text are intrusive and should have been moved to endnotes. The book is primarily for specialists. Still, it is accessible to the determined general reader. Historical photographs lighten the reader's journey; so too does the authors' use of appendices for some of the detail.

The book's major arguments may be briefly summarized. Victorian Ontarians gave high priority to the ownership of land and home because of the importance of these assets for household production, family security, and the accumulation of capital. Home ownership also was a cultural phenomenon that favored Protestant sectarians. In this context, Ontario presented persistent structures of inequality — a sharp divide between owners and non-owners, and between those who owned much and those who

owned little or nothing. One per cent of men owned 60 per cent of the property; only 5 per cent of adult women owned property in their own right. Yet land ownership increased sharply with age, and the great majority could gain a foothold. Effectively, the structures of inequality reflected an orderly pattern of life-course acquisition by individuals.

Immigrants accurately saw Ontario as a land of opportunity for acquiring small property. Access to land was more open than in England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland and similar to northern American states. The province's landed opportunities, the authors speculate, kept urban labour costs relatively high and attenuated working-class consciousness. Illiteracy made little difference to one's chances of owning land, but acted negatively on one's chances of owning much. Ontario emigrants to the United States were below average in wealth accumulation in that country; by contrast, American immigrants to Ontario did better than most.

Ontario in 1871, the authors conclude was "an open competitive society of independent family economies" in which "fluid processes of life-cycle acquisition reproduced stable structures of inequality." This was the legacy "that the Victorian era in Ontario bequeathed to the twentieth century." This is a stretch. "An emerging industrial order represented the face of the future," and the Victorian era extended three decades into it.

Was the Ontario system as stable as the authors paint it? On the one hand, they demolish the widespread notion that Ontario had a crisis in access to land around the time of confederation. Similarly, their emphasis on family competition implicitly downplays insta-

bility arising from class struggle. On the other hand, their objectives, research materials, and methodological decisions are ill-suited to the detection of class struggle. For example, their broad occupational categories (*farmers, labourers*, and an *others* group that included artisans, masters, merchants, manufacturers, merchants, shopkeepers) mask class boundaries. They also give sparse treatment to power. Farmers, they inform us, "were numerically and socially, if not politically, the dominant class." Political dominance, however, involves relationships between classes, not just weight of numbers. One must also distinguish between *class* as an analyst's category and *class* as a socio-political historical entity.

Thus the book's scope of enquiry is more restrictive than the authors acknowledge, and readers should receive its stable-system model cautiously. Should the stable-system model hold up, what would be its implications for general theories of capitalist economic development? Would it call for a rejection of Marxist theory (i.e., class struggle was absent)? Or would it elaborate the timing of class struggle in Ontario (i.e., it happened after 1871)?

Chapter 4 repeats Harvey Graff's warning against substituting the ideology of modernization for analysis in assessing the implications of literacy. A similar risk attaches to the issue of wealth mobility (see James Henretta, "The Study of Social Mobility: Ideological Assumptions and Conceptual Bias," *Labor History*, 18 [1977], 165-78). Access to ownership of land mattered to Ontario families, but was this also true of wealth mobility? Did they aim to *get along* or *get ahead*, and in what proportions over time?

To summarize, this is a solid book based on an expert use of quantitative methods. The study findings are important, reliable, and a benchmark for future work. Its stable-system model discredits the confederation-era crisis model that informs recent literature. By declining to engage Marxist theory, the authors neglect other possibilities for instability. One awaits the rest of the story.

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David Rock (ed.), *Latin America in the 1940s: War and Postwar Transitions* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1994).

As we approach the end of the twentieth century, it seems appropriate to reconceptualize the periodization of this era within the regional context of Latin America. Unlike many national histories where the compartmentalization of decade-long divisions has been rife, this rethinking of chronological division has largely been absent from the writings of Latin Americanists who work on the recent past. The aim of this volume is to demonstrate that the decade of the Second World War formed a transitional bridge into modernity for the nations of Latin America. This anthology emerged from a series of several meetings during which a group of scholars who study contemporary Latin America proposed and then documented the period of the 1940s as a key watershed for the region. Although many of the subjects broached in this volume — nationalism, industrialization, the rise of labour movements,

populism — did not suddenly arise in the 1940s, this decade marked an intensification and acceleration of the changes already present in the region.

During this period, the nations of Latin America suffered dramatic transformations which essentially altered the very nature of the region. From primarily rural nations they became urban-based; the population itself burgeoned; the economies became predominately industrial rather than agricultural; the state expanded and became more interventionist; finally populist movements associated with industrialization and nationalism emerged as an important force on the various national political scenes. Not all these elements suddenly mushroomed everywhere in the 1940s, but David Rock argues that they were heightened during this decade in concert with international pressures.

A second theme which runs through the volume is the role of the United States. The policies and attitudes of the U.S. shaped the economy of the region as the threat of war in Europe led to a fostering of closer and more beneficial economic ties with Latin American allies. American foreign policy was also influential in both the establishment of some openness in the political regimes of several nations but also with the fluctuations of leftist movements and in particular the influence and strength of the labour movement. But the authors of the various essays are careful to not overstate the control exerted by the U.S. and argue that internal and external forces must be weighed accordingly. Although the influence of the United States was an inescapable fact in many transformations of the period, the intricacies of national characteristics and histories cannot be overlooked. This factor is well argued by