



CRDCN webinar series in partnership with the QICSS

**The making of Racial and Ethnic Categories:  
Official Statistics Reconsidered**

**with Patrick Simon**

October 15, 2015

# The Canadian Research Data Centre Network

- 1) **Improve access** to Statistics Canada's confidential microdata: numerous surveys, censuses and an increasing number of administrative datasets
- 2) **Expand the pool of skilled quantitative researchers**
- 3) **Make research count**



Visit our websites:

[www.rdc-cdr.ca](http://www.rdc-cdr.ca)

[www.ciqss.umontreal.ca/](http://www.ciqss.umontreal.ca/)

and follow us on Twitter



# Our speaker today: Patrick Simon



- Research Director at the Institut national d'études démographiques (France)
- Associate researcher at the Centre d'études européennes (Sciences Po)
- Currently visiting Professor, Advanced Research Collaborative, City University of New York Graduate Center (2015-2016)
- His research interests include: immigration, discrimination, ethnicity and sociodemography of minorities
- His presentation today is based on *Social Statistics and Ethnic diversity: Cross-National perspectives on classifications and identity politics*, co-edited with Victor Piché and Amélie Gagnon, Springer, 2015.

# THE MAKING OF ETHNIC AND RACIAL CATEGORIES: OFFICIAL STATISTICS RECONSIDERED

Patrick SIMON – INED and CEE (Center for  
European Studies, Sciences Po)

Visiting Professor, CUNY, ARC Program

# Outline

- Statistics as conventions: the critical turn in official statistics
- Challenging the disqualification of race and ethnicity: from the ban on essentialization to antidiscrimination strategies
- Case studies of official statistics
- For a post-constructivist post-racial agenda in statistics

# Why data on national, racial or ethnic origin have been collected?

- To describe groups of population in a substantive approach with different “regimes of identification” (Rallu, Piché, Simon, 2004):
  - ▣ **Counting to dominate:** minorities have been identified in relation with a hierarchical stratification, data are used for subordination and segregation
  - ▣ **Counting in a multinational/multiculturalists' design:** data are collected to acknowledge diversity within
  - ▣ **Not counting for National integration:** unification of the population through assimilation requires invisibility of ethnic divisions in statistics
  - ▣ **Counting for positive action:** a new regime with new data (although they look similar)

# What's the problem in collecting ethnic data ?

- Crude essentialization which conveys the legacy of scientific racism
- Post WWII strategy to consider that race is a scientific fallacy and ethnicity has been ill used: *semantic elusion* as a strategy [UNESCO (1950)]
- Concepts of race and ethnic affiliation are not legally defined, in contrast with citizenship : fuzzy, inconsistent and fake categories
- A threat to the unity of the nations : politically irrelevant in « post-ethnic » Nation States
- Reification and stigmatization of (so called) minorities by imposing identities and making them categorically different
- BUT ...

# What's the problem in not collecting ethnic data ?

- Identity politics can be observed **in full** by assigning ethnic and racial labels as well as **by default** by not recognizing these labels
- Describing ethnic diversity as a threat against unity and cohesion is fuelling stereotypes and prejudices
- Statistics are crucial to implement positive actions : antidiscrimination laws and policies requires statistical monitoring
- Ethnic statistics are also required by the framework convention for the protection of national minorities and more generally to account for diversity in a globalized world



# New challenges, new political framing

- Ethnic diversification of the world through migration, legacy of slavery and national and ethnic minorities within.
- Clash of strategies and political philosophies in post 1945 illegitimacy of “race” and ethnicity: revealing racial and ethnic divisions or keeping the veil of ignorance
- Post colonial migration to Europe and Latinos in the US: the Empire strikes back
- Different usage of official statistics on ethnicity and race: community cohesion, recognition of identities and acknowledging multiculturalism, tackling discrimination, dealing with the memory of slavery and colonialism, revising national identities in an era of post-mass migration

# What's new with the anti-discrimination paradigm?

- Affirmative action or positive action in more countries than ever: US, UK, Canada, Brazil, Malaysia, Ireland, India, South Africa
- Indirect discrimination or systemic discrimination refer to group, or more precisely to CATEGORIES, which are exposed to stereotyping, prejudice and thus unfair treatment (comparison and assessment)
- Antidiscrimination puts the burden on societies (which have to treat fairly every person without consideration of ethnic and racial origin, sexual identity and gender, religion, sexual orientation, etc), integration puts it on the immigrants or ethnic and racial minorities (who have to prove adaptation to the system)
- Protection of National Minorities (Convention Framework) relies on a *substantive* approach of ethnicity (language, culture, political rights)
- Most if not all Human Rights and Equality international bodies ask for more statistical data collection ( OHCHR, CERD, ECRI, FRA, etc)

# Key concepts in Equality policies

- Direct and indirect discrimination, disparate or adverse impact or treatment
- Systemic discrimination
- Duty to promote equality, equal treatment
- Reasonable accommodation
- Statistical proof
- Under-representation, uneven distribution, disparities, proportionality

# The use of ethnic monitoring

- Statistics provide facts on discrimination : they make visible the invisible
- Awareness raising of public opinion and decision makers
- Measuring the extent and impact of discrimination
- Identifying targets, setting goals, evaluating policies
- Legal requirements
- Equality policies : monitoring is not only a tool, but the policy itself
- Providing proofs in lawsuits

# Legal, political and methodological issues behind ethnic categorization

- Data protection and privacy : confusions between misuses and sensitive data
- Revealing racial and ethnic divisions or keeping them in the shade : universalism, reification and “groupness”
- A methodological challenge:
  - ▣ Subjective vs objective (substantive) definition
  - ▣ Moving identities : reliability issues
  - ▣ Misclassification: gap between self and third party identification
  - ▣ Multiple identities

# Ethnic and racial classifications

- For policy purpose, categories can be specified by laws and policies:
  - guidelines and standards, CRE, UK
  - standards of classification, OMB, US
  - list of visible minorities in the Employment equity law, Canada
  - list of designated groups in South Africa
  
- In censuses :
  - huge disparities of categorisation in a cross-national perspective
  - Ethnicity and race are optional topics
  - Each country have its own list of categories : a reflection of the history and of the political model of integration (slavery, colonisation, immigration, national minorities)
  - Census classification: a compromise between categorical distinctions (for policy uses) and identities (for representation and recognition)
  
- How to disentangle race and ethnicity ?

# Ethnicity and Race in Census around 2000

- 87 countries in 138 are collecting data on « ethnicity » (A.Morning, 2005)
- Most common terminology (a selection) :
  - ▣ Ethnicity 49
  - ▣ Nationality 20
  - ▣ Race 13
  - ▣ Color 2
  - ▣ Ancestry/origin 6
- In 42 countries of the Council of Europe, ethnicity or nationality are collected in 22 countries, religion in 24 and country of birth of the parents in 6 (Simon, 2007 and 2012).

# Recommandations of UN for the 2010 census round (2nd revision 2006)

“Ethnicity can be measured using a variety of concepts, including ethnic ancestry or origin, ethnic identity, cultural origins, nationality, race, colour, minority status, tribe, language, religion or various combinations of these concepts.(...) The subjective nature of the term (not to mention increasing intermarriage among various groups in some countries, for example) requires that information on ethnicity be acquired through self-declaration of a respondent and also that respondents have the option of indicating multiple ethnic affiliations. “



# Methods of collection

- **Self-declaration :**
  - Open-ended question
  - Pre-coded list of categories
- **Third party identification**
  - EEOC form in the US (until 2005)
  - Claims from Roma organizations in central and eastern Europe
- **Group recognition**
  - Aboriginal in Australia and Canada, American Indians in the US and Supreme court decision on race in the US (Mallone case)
- **By proxy**
  - Country of birth and citizenship of parents, spoken language or mother tongue, name and surname

## Reproduction of the Questions on Hispanic Origin and Race From the 2010 Census

→ NOTE: Please answer BOTH Question 5 about Hispanic origin and Question 6 about race. For this census, Hispanic origins are not races.

5. Is this person of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

- No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
- Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
- Yes, Puerto Rican
- Yes, Cuban
- Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin — *Print origin, for example, Argentinian, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on.* ↴

6. What is this person's race? Mark  one or more boxes.

- White
- Black, African Am., or Negro
- American Indian or Alaska Native — *Print name of enrolled or principal tribe.* ↴

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian Indian   | <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese  | <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese  | <input type="checkbox"/> Korean  | <input type="checkbox"/> Guamanian or Chamorro |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Filipino   | <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese  | <input type="checkbox"/> Samoan                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Asian — <i>Print race, for example, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on.</i> ↴ | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Pacific Islander — <i>Print race, for example, Fijian, Tongan, and so on.</i> ↴ |  |

- Some other race — *Print race.* ↴

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census questionnaire.

# Revision of the race and hispanic question in the US

8. What is Person 1's race or origin? Mark  one or more boxes AND write in the specific race(s) or origin(s).

White — Print origin(s), for example, German, Irish, Lebanese, Egyptian, and so on. ↴

Black, African Am., or Negro — Print origin(s), for example, African American, Haitian, Nigerian, and so on. ↴

Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin — Print origin(s), for example, Mexican, Mexican Am., Puerto Rican, Cuban, Argentinian, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on. ↴

American Indian or Alaska Native — Print name of enrolled or principal tribe(s), for example, Navajo, Mayan, Tlingit, and so on. ↴

Asian — Print origin(s), for example, Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on. ↴

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander — Print origin(s), for example, Native Hawaiian, Guamanian or Chamorro, Samoan, Fijian, Tongan, and so on. ↴

Some other race or origin — Print race(s) or origin(s). ↴

- ❑ Conflating the Hispanic and race question to avoid misclassification
- ❑ Collecting more details about ancestry
- ❑ Reflecting better self-identity
- ❑ Introducing a « MENA » category (Middle-Eastern and North African)

## Population by Hispanic or Latino Origin and by Race for the United States: 2000 and 2010

(For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/pl94-171.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/pl94-171.pdf))

Hispanic or Latino origin and race	2000		2010		Change, 2000 to 2010	
	Number	Percentage of total population	Number	Percentage of total population	Number	Percent
<b>HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN AND RACE</b>						
<b>Total population</b> .....	<b>281,421,906</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>308,745,538</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>27,323,632</b>	<b>9.7</b>
Hispanic or Latino .....	35,305,818	12.5	50,477,594	16.3	15,171,776	43.0
Not Hispanic or Latino .....	246,116,088	87.5	258,267,944	83.7	12,151,856	4.9
White alone .....	194,552,774	69.1	196,817,552	63.7	2,264,778	1.2
<b>RACE</b>						
<b>Total population</b> .....	<b>281,421,906</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>308,745,538</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>27,323,632</b>	<b>9.7</b>
One Race .....	274,595,678	97.6	299,736,465	97.1	25,140,787	9.2
White .....	211,460,626	75.1	223,553,265	72.4	12,092,639	5.7
Black or African American .....	34,658,190	12.3	38,929,319	12.6	4,271,129	12.3
American Indian and Alaska Native .....	2,475,956	0.9	2,932,248	0.9	456,292	18.4
Asian .....	10,242,998	3.6	14,674,252	4.8	4,431,254	43.3
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander .....	398,835	0.1	540,013	0.2	141,178	35.4
Some Other Race .....	15,359,073	5.5	19,107,368	6.2	3,748,295	24.4
Two or More Races <sup>1</sup> .....	6,826,228	2.4	9,009,073	2.9	2,182,845	32.0

Table 2.  
**Population by Hispanic or Latino Origin and Race for the United States: 2010**

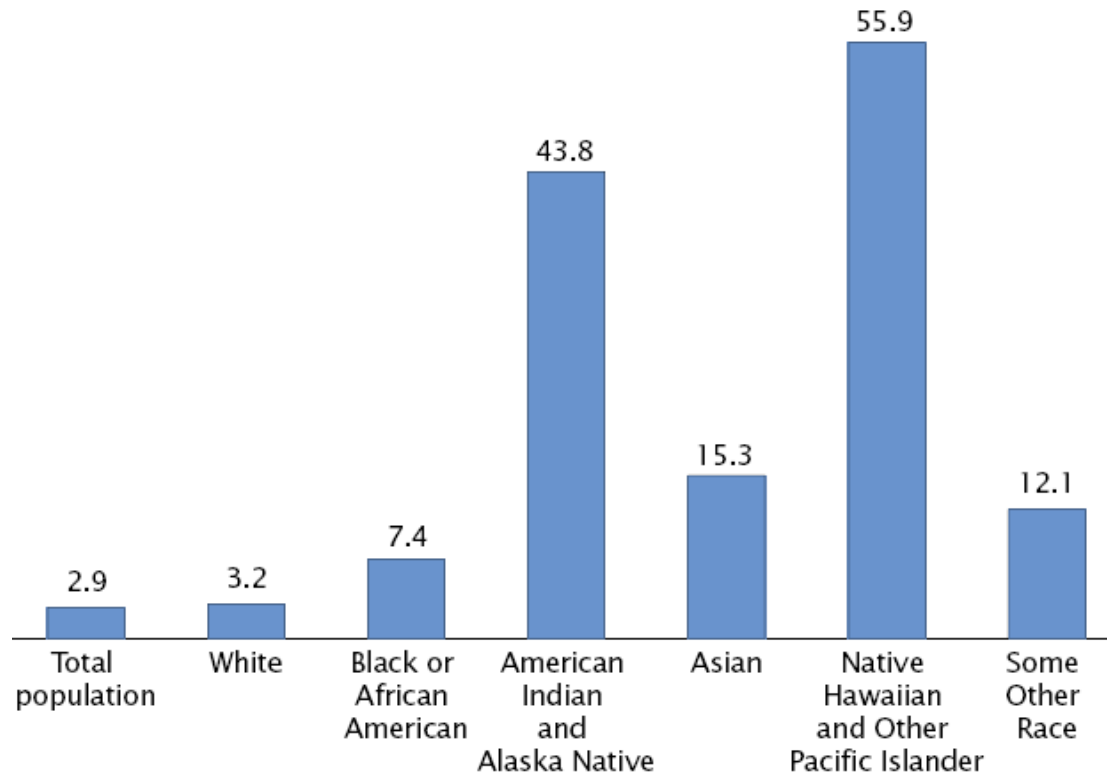
(For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/pl94-171.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/pl94-171.pdf))

Hispanic or Latino origin and race	Number	Percent
<b>HISPANIC OR LATINO</b>		
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>50,477,594</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Race</b>		
One Race .....	47,435,002	94.0
White .....	26,735,713	53.0
Black or African American .....	1,243,471	2.5
American Indian and Alaska Native .....	685,150	1.4
Asian .....	209,128	0.4
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander .....	58,437	0.1
Some Other Race .....	18,503,103	36.7
Two or More Races .....	3,042,592	6.0
<b>NOT HISPANIC OR LATINO</b>		
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>258,267,944</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Race</b>		
One Race .....	252,301,463	97.7
White .....	196,817,552	76.2
Black or African American .....	37,685,848	14.6
American Indian and Alaska Native .....	2,247,098	0.9
Asian .....	14,465,124	5.6
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander .....	481,576	0.2
Some Other Race .....	604,265	0.2
Two or More Races .....	5,966,481	2.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *2010 Census Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171) Summary File*, Tables P1 and P2.

Figure 2.  
**Percentage of Major Race Groups Reporting Multiple Races: 2010**

(For more information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/pl94-171.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/pl94-171.pdf))



Note: Specified race group refers to the alone or in-combination population.  
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *2010 Census Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171) Summary File*, Table P1.

# Canada 2011 Household survey Ethnicity

*This question collects information on the ancestral origins of the population and provides information about the composition of Canada's diverse population.*

**17. What were the ethnic or cultural origins of this person's **ancestors**?**

*An ancestor is usually more distant than a grandparent.*

*For example, Canadian, English, French, Chinese, East Indian, Italian, German, Scottish, Irish, Cree, Mi'kmaq, Salish, Métis, Inuit, Filipino, Dutch, Ukrainian, Polish, Portuguese, Greek, Korean, Vietnamese, Jamaican, Jewish, Lebanese, Salvadorean, Somali, Colombian, etc.*

*Specify as many origins as applicable using capital letters.*

---

---

---

---

# Canada, 2011 Visible minority

19. Is this person:

*Mark more than one or specify, if applicable.*

*This information is collected in accordance with the Employment Equity Act and its Regulations and Guidelines to support programs that promote equal opportunity for everyone to share in the social, cultural, and economic life of Canada.*

- White
  - South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.)
  - Chinese
  - Black
  - Filipino
  - Latin American
  - Arab
  - Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Malaysian, Laotian, etc.)
  - West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan, etc.)
  - Korean
  - Japanese
  - Other — *Specify*
-







# Ireland 2011

## 11 What is your ethnic or cultural background?

Choose ONE section from A to D, then  the appropriate box.

### A White

- 1  Irish
- 2  Irish Traveller
- 3  Any other White background

### B Black or Black Irish

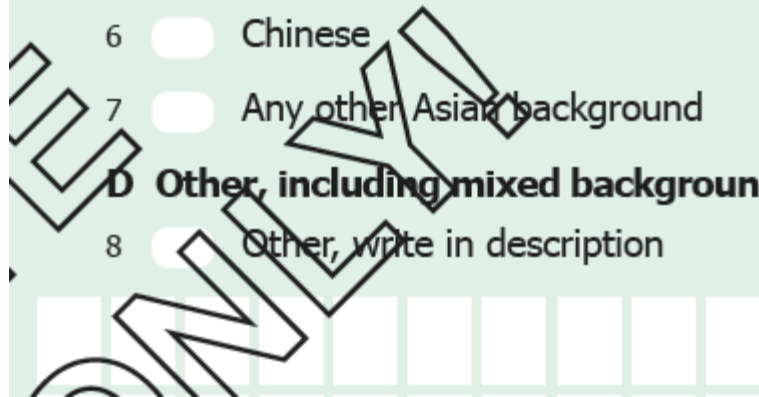
- 4  African
- 5  Any other Black background

### C Asian or Asian Irish

- 6  Chinese
- 7  Any other Asian background

### D Other, including mixed background

- 8  Other, write in description



# Brazil 2010

6.06 - A SUA COR OU RAÇA É:

1 - BRANCA     2 - PRETA     3 - AMARELA     4 - PARDA

(SE TERRA INDÍGENA NO TIPO DE SETOR E CÓDIGOS 1 A 4 NESTE QUESITO SIGA 6.07)

(SE TIPO DE SETOR DIFERENTE DE TERRA INDÍGENA E CÓDIGOS 1 A 4 NESTE QUESITO PASSE AO 6.12)

5 - INDÍGENA  
↘ (Passe ao 6.08)



# Albania, 2011

**39 To which ethno-cultural group do you belong?**

Self-declaration, not obligatory

1  I belong to ethno-cultural group:

Specify


2  Prefer not to answer

Albania 2011: Raw data on ethnicity had 430 different answers, reduced to 16 categories which ended up to 8 main groups

### 1.1.13 Popullsia banuese sipas përkatësisë etnike dhe kulturore

#### 1.1.13 Resident population by ethnic and cultural affiliation

Përkatësia etnike dhe kulturore Ethnic and cultural affiliation	Popullsia banuese Resident population	Përqindja e popullsisë banuese Percentage of resident population
<b>Gjithsej Total</b>	<b>2 800 138</b>	<b>100</b>
Shqiptare Albanian	2 312 356	82,58
Greke Greek	24 243	0,87
Maqedonase Macedonian	5 512	0,20
Malazeze Montenegrin	366	0,01
Arumune Aromanian	8 266	0,30
Rome Roma	8 301	0,30
Egjiptiane Egyptian	3 368	0,12
Tjeter Other	2 644	0,09
Preferoj të mos përgjigjem Prefer not to answer	390 938	13,96
E pavlefshme /e papërcaktuar Not relevant/not stated	44 144	1,58



# Controversies



# Categorization's controversies: the French case

- Colourblind statistics : No race nor ethnic groups
- Categories in the Census (and thus in public debate and social science): Foreigners (citizenship), immigrants (place of birth and nationality)
- In some surveys, place of birth and citizenship at birth of parents have been introduced: “second generation” (native born from immigrants parentage)
- Consequences in defining the groups :
  - Connection with immigration
  - Misleading explanation for discrimination: the return of the assimilationist argument
  - Third generations, Caribbeans : Invisible ethnic minorities

# The basis for Colorblindness: Article 1 of the Constitution of 1958

- France shall be an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic. *It shall ensure the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction of origin, race or religion.* It shall respect all beliefs. It shall be organised on a decentralised basis.

Statutes shall promote equal access by women and men to elective offices and posts as well as to professional and social positions.



## Conflicts on Burma census

Last census in 1983, but questions on ethnicity and race raise concerns about free self-identification for Rohingya, an ethnic minority whose existence is denied by the central government

# A new regime of classification

- UNESCO post 1945's strategy to dismiss Race to erase racism has failed
- European countries are facing the “return of race” with migration from former colonial countries: can discrimination be tackled by ignoring race and ethnicity?
  - ▣ **How to become post-racial without being racialized?**
- A new design for statistics: reflexivity, subjectivity, constructivist approach
- 4 major issues:
  - ▣ Terminology (race and ethnicity simply don't fit in non English speaking language)
  - ▣ Data protection
  - ▣ Self-perception and ascription
  - ▣ Reflecting identities or categorical distinctions

## Webinar with Patrick Simon The making of Racial and Ethnic Categories: Official Statistics Reconsidered

### To know more:

- *Social Statistics and Ethnic diversity: Cross-National perspectives on classifications and identity politics* (2015) <http://www.springer.com/us/book/9783319200941>
  - All our webinars are available on You Tube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/TheCRDCN/playlists>
- Visit our websites to browse online bibliography and download our publications, subscribe to our newsletter, *The Networker*, and much more: [www.rdc-cdr.ca](http://www.rdc-cdr.ca)  
[www.ciqss.umontreal.ca](http://www.ciqss.umontreal.ca)

### Acknowledgements:

- The services and activities provided by the CRDCN are made possible by the financial or in-kind support of the SSHRC, the CIHR, the CFI, Statistics Canada and participating universities which we gratefully acknowledge.

Thank you for joining in!