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Article

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Claire Durand, *Université de Montréal*

Yves-Emmanuel Massé-François, *Université de Montréal*

Michael Smith, *McGill University*

Luis Patricio Pena Ibarra, *Université de Montréal*

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Claire Durand
Université de Montréal

Yves-Emmanuel Massé-François
Université de Montréal

Michael Smith
McGill University

Luis Patricio Pena Ibarra
Université de Montréal

Abstract: *Over the last 50 years, censuses have shown very substantial increases in the estimated sizes of Aboriginal populations in settler states such as Canada. Since these increases cannot be explained by demographic factors alone, authors have proposed that, as the situation of Aboriginal people has been under increasing public scrutiny, it has become more socially acceptable to report that one is Aboriginal. This may be an explanation for increases between censuses that are conducted five or ten years apart, but is such an explanation plausible when comparing answers provided within six months of one another? This article explores the factors associated with short-term fluidity in Aboriginal identification. In order to do so, it uses Canadian data collected twice from among the same members of the defined "population of Aboriginal identity" over a six-month period, in 2006 and in 2011–2012. Close to a third of all Canadians who "identified" as Aboriginals in the Census long form or in the National Household Survey (NHS) changed their answers when asked the same question in the Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS). Fluidity in identification depends on methodological factors such as mode of administration and question wording. It also depends on individual and contextual factors. Socioeconomic status and residence in an urban area or in specific regions of Canada are the main factors that differentiate the three groups analyzed here—the Fluid Indian/Métis, the New Métis and the New Indians—from the group that has a stable identification. In light of this finding, we think that statistics produced on Aboriginal peoples in Canada from the standard sources should be treated with some caution. Using the APS identification numbers, for example, instead of those of the Census/NHS would likely reduce the estimated differences between "non-Aboriginals" and "Aboriginals," at least in terms of education.*

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Introduction

Over the last 50 years, censuses have shown very substantial increases in the estimated sizes of Aboriginal populations in settler states such as Canada (Goldmann and Siggner 1995; Guimond, Robitaille and Sénécal 2007; Siggner and Costa 2005), Australia (O'Donnell and Raymer 2015), New Zealand (Carter, Hayward, Blakely and Shaw 2009; Goodyear 2009), and the United States (Eschbach, Supple and Snipp 1998; Passel 1997; Snipp 1997). Since these increases cannot be explained by demographic factors alone—births, deaths and immigration—other explanations of such "explosions" in the count of Aboriginals are proposed. Most of them revolve around a core argument: As the social, political, and economic situation of Aboriginal people and groups has come under increasing public scrutiny, it has become more socially acceptable to report that one is Aboriginal (Andersen 2014a). This may be a plausible explanation for increases between censuses that are typically conducted five or ten years apart, but is such an explanation relevant when comparing answers provided within six months of one another? This article explores the factors associated with the short-term fluidity in Aboriginal identification. In order to do so, it uses Canadian data collected twice from among the same members of the defined "population of Aboriginal identity" over a six-month period, in 2006 and in 2011–2012.

We first look at definitions and measurement of Aboriginality in order to place the Canadian situation in context. We give specific attention to the Métis "category," and the ways in which different countries have dealt with intermixing, which is essential to understanding fluidity in self-identification among Aboriginal people. Then we examine the specific situation of Canada in order to understand why the fluidity in answers to indicators of Aboriginality varies according to type of indicator, to categories of self-identification, and to individual as well as contextual factors.

We conclude by discussing the possible consequences of this variability for research using the Census, the NHS, and the APS, particularly as research examines the differences between "Aboriginals" and "non-Aboriginals."

Is There a Consensus Regarding Who Is Aboriginal?

International organizations encourage specific policies aimed at "Indigenous people," following the United Nations Declaration on the rights of Indigenous People in 2007. Consequently, one would expect that there is a commonly used, agreed-upon definition of the term. The UN, however, states:

> Considering the diversity of indigenous peoples, an official definition of "indigenous" has not been adopted by any UN-system body. Instead the system has developed a modern understanding of this term based on the following: self-identification as indigenous peoples at the individual level and acceptance by the community as its member; historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies; a strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources; distinct social,

> economic or political systems; a distinct language, culture and beliefs; the forming of non-dominant groups of society; and a resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities. (United Nations 2006)

If all the listed elements had to be present in order for someone to be classified as an Indigenous person, this "modern understanding" of the term would be quite restrictive, or at least ambiguous. It retains those Indigenous people who maintain a "traditional" way of life and live in specific territories and it excludes those who live within "mainstream" society. It emphasizes both a large, inclusive self-identification criterion, and a homogenizing, stereotypical conception of Aboriginality that insists on the inferior economic and political status of many Indigenous groups as an intrinsic feature of their condition. Many countries have adopted definitions that pick up at least some elements of the UN definition (De Costa 2014). Despite the fact that they are continuing to struggle to define *Aboriginal*, some countries, including Canada (Guimond 1998), nonetheless try to quantify their Aboriginal populations.

The Measurement of Aboriginality: Different Indicators

The UN definition hardly leads to a standard operational definition across countries, to say nothing of how to deal with people of mixed origins and with the large share of Indigenous people who live outside Indigenous communities. This definition can be translated via two rather subjective indicators—the "form[ing of] non-dominant groups" and the resolution "to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments," which cannot easily be operationalized for purposes of counting—and five "objective" indicators referring to self-identification, origin/ancestry, links to specific territories, language/culture, and legal status.

Among the 21 countries in the Americas for which data are available—to which we add Australia and New Zealand, two countries that share a common history of British colonial rule with the US and Canada—there are thirteen countries that adopt *self-identification* in their censuses. These questions take two forms: "Are you..." (four countries), and "Do you consider yourself..." (eight countries). We could also classify among the self-identification questions those that ask, "Do you belong to..." (twelve countries). The last form usually refers to the notion of a group or nation.

Only five countries, including Canada, refer to *origins/ancestry* as an indicator of Aboriginality. This indicator is closely related to the concept of "race"; it alludes to "lineages" of descendants coming from a common ancestor (Antón, Bello, Del Popolo, Paixao and Rangel 2009; Simon 1997). Seven countries refer to physical traits either in question wording or in the categories themselves, while only four formally mention the term "race"—including the United States until the 2010 Census.[1]

1 The United States Census Bureau announced in June 2015 that it would cease to use the term "race."

As for *territory of residence*, four countries, including Canada, formally record whether respondents live in an Indigenous community. Thirteen countries ask whether respondents currently speak a native *language* or learned one in childhood. In Canada, questions regarding Aboriginal languages are part of the Census long form/National Household Survey. Three countries use the general term *culture* in the wording of the self-identification question. In addition, five use questions on *type of housing*, and one uses *Indigenous spirituality* as a category in the question on religion. Answers to these questions, however, may be more useful for understanding the character of Aboriginal groups than for counting them.

Finally, two countries refer to *legal status*. In Canada, the *Indian Act* specifies a legal status for First Nations—that is, North American Indians, excluding people referred to as Métis and Inuit—together with the conditions for entitlement to that status.

In short, there is no agreement on how Aboriginality should be measured and, more importantly, to whom it refers. Self-identification, a subjective measure, is the most widespread indicator across censuses, and also in research (Guimond, Robitaille and Sénécal 2009). In addition, the boundaries of each type of measure are not as clear-cut as it may seem. According to Stevens et al. (2015), when confronted with difficulties with the existing categories, the countries that they studied, i.e. Canada, Australia and the United States, tried to solve the problem by adding indicators. The US, for example, added a question on Hispanic origins in 1980. Canada appears to be the country that uses the largest number of indicators—origin, self-identification, status, and band membership. The two last indicators are used to quantify the population of First Nations[2] people entitled to live in First Nation communities and to specific resources provided under the *Indian Act*, but according to Goldmann and Siggner (1995) and Guimond, Kerr, and Beaujot (2004), these population estimates differ substantially from the Indian Register.

The Measurement of Aboriginality: Categories and Boundaries

Measurement requires a quantification of attributes that have well-defined boundaries. For example, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's terminology states that 'Indians, Métis and Inuit … are *three separate peoples* with *unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs* (INAC 2012, emphasis added). But are they as mutually exclusive as we tend to think?

Intermarriage has been widespread in the colonies since the beginning of the modern colonial era, even more so in settler states where Europeans "took over" territories formerly occupied by other people, i.e., in the Americas (Snipp 1997), Australia (Luke and Luke 1999), and New Zealand (Kukutai 2007). And intermarriage accelerates the blurring of existing categories (Stevens et al. 2015) and the emergence of new ones (Stoler and Cooper

2 In Canada, the term *First Nations* is preferred to "North American Indians." The term "Indian," however, appears in the *Indian Act*, which partly governs First Nations' status and rights. It does so by establishing a Register of Indians, which serves to determine the resources to which each band is entitled. Inuit, who live mostly in Northern Canada, are not covered by the *Indian Act*.

2013). Being at the intersection of the legal and political fields (Simon 1997), censuses have played a crucial role in the shaping of such categories through their influence on decisions on how to measure, handle, include, or exclude those of "mixed race" (Andersen 2014b). Thus, the handling of mixed origins in censuses has varied over time and from country to country (De Costa 2014; Yashar 2015) in reaction to international and national sociopolitical contexts. Solutions have included providing a specific category or categories for the intermixed (e.g., Métis/half-breed/Mestizo), allowing the selection of multiple answers (e.g., White and North American Indian), or requiring respondents to select one and only one category (Snipp 1997) on the basis of cut-off rules related to blood quantum or to sex. This last option has become rare, since, as most censuses went to self-enumeration, a growing number of respondents reported multiple ancestries or ethnicities, or refused to choose just one.

In Latin America, six countries include a Métis category in a census question. However, in Costa Rica, "Métis or White" is a single category; in Cuba, Mulattos are grouped with Métis; and in Nicaragua, "Métis of the Caribbean Coast" is considered an Indigenous group. According to Latino Barometro's data for 2001 to 2013, close to 50 percent of the total Latin American population identifies as Métis; that figure is higher than 60 percent in many countries.

Other countries have opted for the multiple-response solution. In Australia, people can declare up to two different ancestries (but not more than one ethnic identification). In New Zealand, it is possible to declare membership in multiple ethnic groups. The US Census started allowing multiple responses to the race question in 2000. People of mixed origins could therefore select both White and Native American, and 40 percent of American Indians did so, compared to five percent of Blacks, six percent of Hispanics, and fourteen percent of Asians (Lavaud and Lestage 2005).

In Canada, categories aimed at counting those of mixed First Nations and European origins appear in the censuses conducted in 1901, 1941, and continuously since 1981. In 1901, census enumerators were instructed to "more precisely identify all origins of the Métis" such as, for example, Ojibway French Breed (Hamilton 2007, 68). Gaps in information between censuses are due to the absence of instructions to enumerators on how to classify such people (Goldmann and Delic 2014; Goldmann and Siggner 1995). According to Andersen (2008), in 1941, after forty years in which the Métis category had disappeared from the Census, Métis had either become Indians, denied their background, or chose to identify as French.

The Canadian Census started to record multiple origins in 1981. In 1996, the question on ancestry/origins took its current form. It asks about the ethnic or cultural origins of each person's ancestors. A number of examples are provided, Aboriginal origins being grouped together and included in the middle of the list according to frequency counts for First Nations. Four write-in lines are provided, and up to six different origins are recorded. Compared to Australia (where only two origins are recorded) and the United States, the Canadian question and situation lead to the highest proportion of respondents with

multiple ancestry—thirty-five percent in 2006 (Stevens et al. 2015). Since 1986, the Métis category has also been present as an Aboriginal category of its own in a self-identification question. Therefore, with both a Métis category and the possibility of multiple origins, Canada has opted for the most comprehensive solution to the quantification of Aboriginals of mixed origins.

However, the self-identification question regarding Aboriginals, present in its current form since 1996, requires those who identify as Aboriginals to skip the self-identification question that is asked of other Canadians with categories like "white," "black," Chinese, etc. Therefore, unlike US residents, Canadians cannot be both North American Indian and White. And unlike Canadians, Americans are not given the choice of being Métis/half-blood. In summary, people with multiple origins may either identify with each of their origins, choose one origin or another, or identify with their own mixed category.

Indicating multiple "races" is not necessarily the same thing as indicating a unique "mixed race" (Goldstein and Morning 2000), and this is even more obvious in the case of Canada. The gender-based provisions of the *Indian Act* of 1869 conferred full status on the descendants of any male Status Indian, regardless of his wife's status, while on the other hand, any female Status Indian who "married out" lost her status, and could not transmit it to her children. Therefore, most people currently identified as Métis come from the latter situation, even though their "quantum of Indian blood" may be similar to that of many "Pure Indians" (Giokas and Chartrand 2002). Consequently, even though the meaning of the two categories—Indian and Métis—has crystallized and been adopted by Aboriginals themselves (Lawrence 2003, 2004; Sawchuk 2001; Simpson 2009), the terms still carry inherent ambiguities due to their origins (Andersen, 2014b).

In addition, the term "Métis" encompasses two broad meanings. In Canada, it refers to a specific national identity (Frideres and Gadacz 2012) adopted by people of mixed European and Aboriginal heritage—often Cree and French—at colonial settlements that developed around the fur trade economy in the Great Lakes region in the early seventeenth century, and later at the Red River Colony in what is today Manitoba (Andersen 2011; O'Toole 2013). Second, in French, the term *Métis* denotes any person of mixed origins (Chartrand 1991). In this meaning, it has no specific territorial or historical roots; it simply means being of mixed Aboriginal and European descent (Frideres and Gadaczs 2012). Since both usages refer to mixedness (Giokas and Chartrand 2002), territorial and historical factors are the only valid and relevant avenue for differentiating the two groups.

So who should be counted as Aboriginal? Anyone with Indigenous ancestors? That is the most inclusive criteria, adopted by New Zealand, for example, and it was the solution adopted by Canada before 1981. However, if all people of mixed Indigenous and European origin were counted as Métis (this assumes that all such people would be aware of their heritage) (Guimond et al. 2009), the result would be a very large number of Métis. The estimates would probably be similar to what is seen in Latin America (Yashar 2015), since there is no reason to believe that similar levels of intermixing did not happen and are not happening presently in Canada. Therefore, one may conclude that the number of

declared Métis—or people of mixed origin—in a given country or region depends not only on the level of intermixing but even more on historical and social acceptance as well as legal recognition of intermixing, and therefore on the inheritance of the denomination by succeeding generations. This question is relevant since, as we see below, the Métis category is responsible for a high proportion of the increase in the estimated Aboriginal population, in Canada as elsewhere.

The Explosion of Aboriginal Populations since the 1970s

In many countries, the number of people declaring Aboriginal origins or identifying as Aboriginals has increased tremendously in the past fifty years (DeCosta 2014; Guimond 1998). These increases greatly exceed what could be explained by demography—that is, by births, deaths, and immigration. An explanation for this, common among researchers, is that change in the sociopolitical environment has encouraged Aboriginals to be proud of their origins; this in turn is associated with an increased tendency of people of multiple origins to identify as Aboriginals. Aboriginal identification has also been encouraged by legal interventions, including allocation of resources. In practice, censuses' shift from in-person to self-enumeration has also been associated with increases in identification.

Canada's current method of quantifying the Aboriginal population is the result of a long process in which existing measures were modified and new measures appeared and in which categories themselves appeared and disappeared (Goldmann and Delic 2014; Goldmann and Siggner 1995). It is an interesting case study of a quest to find an appropriate and accepted way of quantifying the Aboriginal population, a quest that became particularly important in the context of a number of consequential events: the recognition in the 1982 Constitution of three distinct Aboriginal peoples, and therefore the official inclusion of Métis among Aboriginal people; the modification of the *Indian Act* in 1985 in order to respect the newly adopted Charter of Rights and Freedom and its prescriptions regarding equality of treatment for men and women (Bill C-31); a major court decision on Métis rights (R. vs. Powley 2003); and a further modification of the *Indian Act* that came into force on January 31, 2011, just before the Census started, to allow grandchildren of Indian women who had lost their status to regain it (Bill C-3).

However, substantial increases in the estimates of the population of Aboriginal origin had started from 1971, when the Census went from enumeration to self-report. As can be expected, growth rates vary according to the type of indicator, and they are affected by changes in question wordings. From 1971 on, the total population declaring Aboriginal origins started to increase at an average annual rate of around seven percent, a rate that was far higher than the overall increase in the general population, which was around one percent per year (Goldmann and Delic 2014). From 1991 to 1996, however, when the question on origins was changed to a completely open-ended question,[3] there was almost no increase in the number of persons declaring an Aboriginal origin. The self-identification question was asked in 1986 for the first time, and since then, growth rates have been somewhat

3 Before 1996, the question on origins proposed a number of categories from among which to choose, providing boxes to check. There were categories proposed for Aboriginals, usually North American Indian, Métis, and Inuit, and up to three spaces for write-in answers.

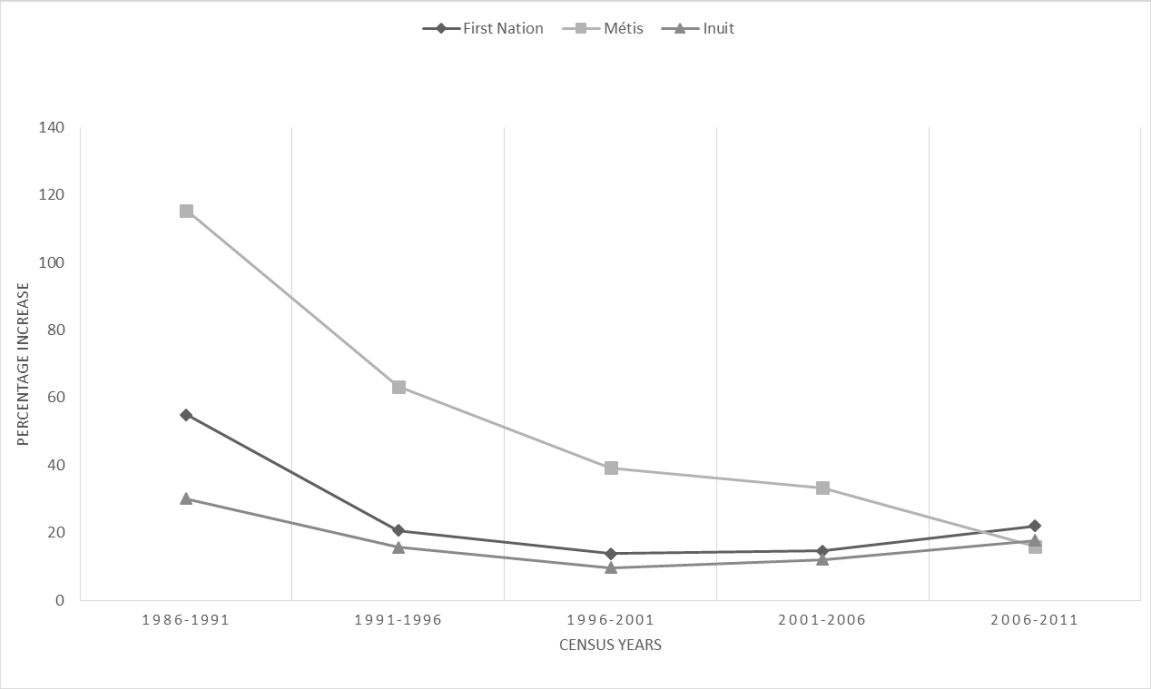
lower than they were for origins, i.e., three to five times (3.38 to 5.58) those of the general population, including in 1996 (Goldmann and Delic 2014).

Though lower than for self-identification, the growth rates for Indian status and band membership have also been much higher than should be expected when taking into account births, deaths, and immigration. However, part of that increase can be explained by the legal interventions that occurred during that period. According to Goldmann and Siggner (1995), following Bill C-31, 85,000 persons regained their Indian status. The total population of declared Status Indians went from 365,000 in 1991 to 461,000 in 1996, an increase of twenty-six percent. In the following years, the growth rate decreased steadily, from 20.9 percent between 1996 and 2001 to just over two percent between 2006 and 2011.

Growth rates differ also according to each category (Caron-Malenfant et al. 2014). After the self-identification question appeared with the three categories included in the Constitution, the Métis category saw an increase of 120 percent in its declared population over the next five years. Figure 1 shows that, until 2011, the Métis category was responsible for the major part in the increase in Aboriginal self-declaration. For example, the Métis, who comprised thirty-one percent of the self-identifying Aboriginals in 2001, constituted thirty-four percent of the population in 2006, because their group accounted for fifty percent of the overall increase of twenty percent. And according to Andersen (2008), the "Métis-as-mixed" meaning has played an important role in the demographic explosion of the Métis category in Canada over the preceding three decades. This is attested to by the fact that the explosion in the Métis self-declarations happened in regions outside the cradle of the Métis nation, like New Brunswick and Nova Scotia (Andersen 2010). Conversely, the growth rate for the Inuit population is much lower. However, this may be at least partly due to the fact that Census data is collected in person by Statistics Canada's staff in the remote communities, which include all the northern communities in which the Inuit population is concentrated.

Since 1996, the "measurement" of Aboriginality in Canada has stabilized in its current form, with the same four questions asked. Only the examples provided in the question on ancestors have been updated. The numbers continue to increase steadily—by amounts greatly in excess of what could be expected from normal demographic increase (Caron-Malenfant et al. 2014). However, this increase varies across Canada. It is systematically lower in the northern territories, British Columbia, and the Prairies. Eastern Canada—the Maritimes, Quebec and Ontario—stands out. This is where the growth rates are highest, with some variation according to sub-region.

FIGURE 1. Increase in Aboriginal self-identification in the Census according to category, 1986–2011



Ethnic Mobility, Fluidity, and Categorical Mobility

The previous section illustrated the huge increase in Aboriginal populations in Canada, an increase that is generally higher than can be explained by demographic factors. The only possible explanation for the non-demographic substantial increase from one Census to the next is that some respondents change their Census answers over time and those who report an Aboriginal affiliation but did not do so before are more numerous than those who did the reverse. These shifts have been called ethnic mobility (Guimond 2003; Siggner and Costa 2005) and, sometimes, fluidity (Caron-Malenfant et al. 2014; Goldmann and Siggner 1995; Saperstein and Penner 2012). The term *ethnic mobility* assumes that the categories that are presented to respondents have clear boundaries and are meaningful to them, but this is not necessarily the case (Andersen 2014a; Lavaud and Lestage 2005). Andersen (2014a) proposes the term *categorical mobility* instead, using the ambiguity of census categories to explain the shift. Ambiguity is likely to be a particular problem for the term *Métis*. In this article, we use the term *fluidity* (Caron-Malenfant et al. 2014; Goldmann and Siggner 1995; Harris and Sim 2002; Saperstein and Penner 2012) to describe the variation in answers given by the same individuals. This term does not presume any explanation of the phenomenon. We also speak of *identification* rather than *identity* in order to convey the fact that the information provided by respondents is an expressed identity, which may be influenced by both the context and the questions used to elicit a response (Harris and Sim 2002).

The most fruitful way to study variability in answers is to have repeated responses from the same individuals, a type of information that is rarely available. In Canada, Caron-Malenfant et al. (2014) managed to match part of the Census public data file (20 percent sample) for Census respondents from 2001 and 2006. In Australia, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) produced a matched file for the period 2006–2011 for five percent of Census respondents (Biddle and Crawford 2015; O'Donnell and Raymer 2015). This allows for analysis of the mobility process over a five-year period. A few other authors use longitudinal or panel data—not a census. Harris and Sim (2002) compared answers to the question about race in the US by the same young individuals in different contexts over a short period; Carter et al. (2009) compared answers to a question about ethnicity over a three-year period in New Zealand; and Saperstein and Penner (2012) analyzed two instances of self-identification by the same individuals in 1979 and 2002, and a time-series of 20 instances of identification by an interviewer between 1979 and 1998 in the US.

What influences the probability of fluidity? Previous research suggests that, not surprisingly, respondents with more than one origin are more likely to switch their identification (Caron-Malenfant et al. 2014; Harris and Sim 2002). In Canada, being legally recognized as an *Indian* reduces the likelihood of a switch out of Aboriginal self-identification and increases the likelihood of a switch into the category (Caron-Malenfant et al. 2014; Goldmann and Delic 2014).

It is also clear that responses are influenced by the categories and options presented to respondents. In its main question on Aboriginal status, the ABS severely limits options. It allows three categories: Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, or neither. That question does not allow multiple identifications, though another question—on ancestries—allows two options. New Zealand lists five indigenous groups. Canada provides three major categories—First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. Most research uses data from the whole population, and shows that multiple responses and variability in answers are both higher for Aboriginals than for any other group (Biddle and Crawford 2015; Caron-Malenfant et al. 2014; Carter et al. 2009; Harris and Sim 2002; Saperstein and Penner 2012).

We chose self-identification as the focus of our study of variability for a number of reasons. It is the indicator that the UN considers the most appropriate and the most widespread as a measure of ethnicity in the Americas. It is the indicator that is the most frequently—indeed, almost uniquely—used in academic and governmental research (Andersen 2013). It is an indicator whose wording has not changed over time and, unlike origins, it is present in both APS surveys. Finally, unlike status or band membership, it includes all Aboriginals, not just First Nations.

Four types of factors may explain fluidity in identification. First, respondents' individual characteristics, such as age, sex, and spouse's origins, may be associated with fluidity. In Canada, since the Indian Act had gender-based provisions and women who married out before 1985 lost their status, it is conceivable that women may be more inclined to change their declarations. Indeed, Caron-Malenfant et al. (2014) show that changing from non-Aboriginal to Aboriginal is more likely among women. However, the findings of others

(Biddle and Crawford 2015; Carter et al. 2009) show no relationship to sex. Age reflects individual characteristics as well as cohort/period effects related to the changes that have occurred over the last fifty years. Research show that fluidity over five years is higher among younger respondents (Biddle and Crawford 2015; Caron-Malenfant et al. 2014; Carter et al. 2009). Similarly, marrying a non-Aboriginal person is also associated with more fluidity (Biddle and Crawford 2015).

The socioeconomic status of individuals is an important factor in predicting change in identification. Saperstein and Penner (2012), for example, show that there is a tendency for those who have improved their socioeconomic status to choose to be white —"whitening" or "passing"—when they can do so. Conversely, research shows that those who change their identification from non-Aboriginal to Aboriginal are less likely to have a higher education and income (Biddle and Crawford 2015; Caron-Malenfant et al. 2014; Saperstein and Penner 2012).

Generally, the more ethnically heterogeneous the place of residence, the more fluid the identification (Biddle and Crawford 2015). For example, living in an urban area is generally associated with greater variability (Biddle and Crawford 2015), but with lower odds of switching to Aboriginal identification (Caron-Malenfant et al. 2014). In addition, fluidity is associated with certain regions of the country due to their historical and social characteristics (Biddle and Crawford 2015; Caron-Malenfant et al. 2014; Harris and Sim 2001; Saperstein and Penner 2012). Caron-Malenfant et al. (2014) show that, for Canada, the odds of changing one's self-identification to North American Indian are higher in Ontario than everywhere else in Canada, and the odds of revealing a Métis identification are higher in the Prairies and British Columbia and lower in Eastern Canada than in Ontario.

This article aims first to identify the factors associated with variations in the fluidity of answers according to indicator and to categories. Second, it aims to identify the individual and contextual factors that are associated specifically with variability in self-identification. Following the literature review, we expect origins and self-identification to be the most fluid indicators, and we expect Métis and First Nation to be the most fluid categories of self-identification. However, living—and consequently having lived—in a First Nation community should be associated with stability among First Nations. As for fluidity in self-identification, it should be higher among women and younger respondents. Having a non-Aboriginal spouse is known to be related to fluidity; however, this variable was not available in the data file. A high socioeconomic status should translate to less change in the direction of an Aboriginal identification. As well, residents of urban areas should be less likely to switch to Aboriginal identification. Finally, changing specifically to a Métis identification should be more frequent in the Prairies, and changing to North American Indian should be more frequent in Ontario.

Methodology

The Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) is a post-censal survey administered six months after the Census. The sampling frame for the survey is provided by the Census. Answers to the

APS can therefore be linked to those given by the same individuals in the Census. This provides an unusual opportunity to study fluidity. Because similar questions are asked of the same persons (conditional on them belonging to the "Aboriginal identity population") twice in a six-month interval, broader changes in the sociopolitical environment are unlikely to explain observed fluidity, and any relevant changes would be easily identifiable.

For this research, Statistics Canada gave us access to the responses provided by APS respondents to the four questions tapping Aboriginality that they had asked in the Census/NHS. This provided us with panel data that allowed us to study variability in identification at the individual level. Unlike the data used by Caron-Malenfant et al. (2014) and Biddle and Crawford (2015), these are not files in which records are matched as closely as possible according to the similarity of answers to a number of variables, and provided that people did not change address, but instead, here, individual data are linked; and contrary to Harris and Sim (2002), Carter et al. (2009), and Saperstein and Penner (2012), the data are both census and post-census data. However, and contrary to all these authors, the data are restricted to Aboriginals. Finally, contrary to other researchers, we look at change among Aboriginal categories and not just between non-Aboriginals and Aboriginals; as well, contrary to Caron-Malenfant et al. (2014), we include Inuit.

Data

The compulsory Census long-form questionnaire was sent to one in five households in 2006. In 2011 the Canadian government decided to discontinue the compulsory Census long form. Statistics Canada replaced it with the National Household Survey (NHS), administered to one in three households. The response rate for the NHS was deemed "acceptable": 77 percent overall, ranging from 70 percent in Prince Edward Island to 84 percent in the Northwest Territories (where it was conducted by interviewers). These "long-form" questionnaires were given to every household in First Nation communities (that is, on reserves) and to Inuit communities.

Anyone who declared or was reported as having an Aboriginal origin or identification, or as being a Status or Treaty Indian or a band member in the 2006 Census long form or in the 2011 National Household Survey, was categorized as a member of the *Aboriginal population*. This was the sample frame for the APS, conducted six months later. It was administered to one in five members of the Aboriginal population, but excluded those living on First Nations communities, often called reserves. Statistics Canada derived two concepts (Statistics Canada 2012) for the purpose of deciding who should answer the APS: the population of Aboriginal origin only—those who declared Aboriginal origins but no identification, status, or band membership; and the population of *Aboriginal identity*, which encompassed all those who either declared identification as Aboriginal or had legal First Nation (FN) status or membership in a band.

The 2006 APS was administered to those who belonged to the *Aboriginal population*. In 2012, however, respondents had to belong to the *population of Aboriginal identity* in the APS in order to be eligible. Therefore, those who had declared an Aboriginal identity

in the NHS but not in the APS were dropped in 2012. In order for both surveys to be comparable, we excluded all those who did not identify as Aboriginals in the 2006 APS.[4] This reduced sample is the *comparable 2006 sample*. Given our interest in self-identification, we restricted our analysis to respondents 15 years and over.[5] There were originally 29,520 respondents fifteen years and over to the 2006 APS, representing a total of 1,038,390 people. Excluding those who did not identify as Aboriginals in the 2006 APS[6] leaves us with 24,660 respondents, representing 749,200 persons. There were 20,720 respondents of the same age group to the 2012 APS, representing 795,180 persons. The analyses were performed on the comparable samples.

In interpreting the results, we must bear in mind the following. First, the census form is completed by a "primary respondent" who answers for other members of the household, while the APS is completed by the selected individuals themselves.[7] This means that the same person may not have answered both surveys. In 2006, 44.2 percent of the APS comparable sample respondents were Census primary respondents; and in 2012, this figure was 48.2 percent. Second, the Census/NHS is self-administered, while the APS is conducted by an interviewer over the telephone for the most part. However, in remote communities, both surveys are administered in person by an interviewer. These methodological features may explain some of the variability. Being contacted to participate specifically in the Aboriginal People Survey may induce greater identification as Aboriginal. Conversely, the fact that both the Census/NHS and the APS are conducted in the same way in remote communities, i.e., in person by an interviewer, may lead to lower variability among residents of these communities. Third, a few communities in Yukon and in the Northwest Territories[8] were excluded in 2012 but not in 2006. Therefore, the two surveys sample slightly different populations. Fourth, values were imputed for 1.3 percent of weighted respondents who did not identify in one or the other group of Aboriginals in 2012.[9] In 0.8 percent of the

4 Those who declared that they were status Indians or members of a band but did not identify as Aboriginals were kept in the 2012 APS but not in the comparable APS 2006 sample. These respondents represent a tiny proportion of the population (in 2012, 1.3 percent). Our decision was justified by the fact that, in 2012, part of the answers to the self-identification question were imputed using the answers to the questions on status and band membership (see text).

5 APS is also conducted among five-to-fourteen-year-olds. The questions are answered by a parent or by the adult in charge in the young person's household.

6 They account for 16.5 percent of the unweighted sample and 27.8 percent of the weighted sample. Most of them did not identify as Aboriginal in both surveys. Those who did identify as aboriginal in the Census but not in the APS comprise 4.6 percent of the whole sample.

7 The APS is answered by a proxy for half of the fifteen-to-seventeen-year-olds, and exceptionally for adults who cannot answer for health-related reasons.

8 In 2012, these communities were excluded in order not to interfere with another survey that was conducted at about the same time (Statistics Canada 2012).

9 Information provided by Statistics Canada staff upon request.

cases, imputation used the NHS answer. This can only reduce variability, but the impact is negligible. In the other cases (0.5 percent), those who reported a legal status or band membership but did not identify as Aboriginals have been reassigned to the FN category of self-identification. This prevents us from having strictly comparable samples, but the possible impact is negligible.

Finally, since the only data available are those pertaining to Aboriginals living outside of First Nation communities, the results represent most declared Métis and Inuit people, but only about half of First Nations. The proportion of Status Indians living outside First Nations communities varies considerably by region, nation, and band. In 2011, it ranged from 28 percent in Quebec to 97.9 percent in the Northwest Territories (Amorevieta-Gentil, Bourdeau and Robitaille 2015). It is around forty percent in the Atlantic Provinces and the Prairies, around fifty percent in Alberta and British Columbia, and sixty-three percent in Ontario. Since residents of First Nations communities have to be Status Indians and are more likely to have a stable identification (Goldmann and Delic 2014; Caron-Malenfant et al. 2014), this exclusion is likely to increase the overall figures for fluidity and may have an impact on the differences according to place of residence.

Measures

The Measurement of Aboriginality and of Fluidity

The 2006 Census long form and the 2011 National Household Survey use the same four indicators to categorize Aboriginal people. The first question pertains to origins. Respondents are asked: "What were the ethnic or cultural origins of this person's ancestors?" The following then clarifies that "An ancestor is usually more distant than a grandparent." Respondents are provided with the following list of examples in 2006: *Canadian, English, French, Chinese, Italian, German, Scottish, East Indian, Irish,* ***Cree, Mi'kmaq (Micmac), Métis, Inuit (Eskimo****), Ukrainian, Dutch…, etc*. In 2012, the list included "Salish" after "Mi'kmaq." The position of the Aboriginal sub-categories is determined by the frequency count of the total population of First Nations in the preceding Census. All the Aboriginal categories are grouped together with, for First Nations, the names of the most frequently mentioned Nations. In remote communities, however, the list of examples is different, and Aboriginal categories are at the beginning of the list. The positioning of categories on the list may have consequences for the answers given to the question. There was a "Count me Canadian" campaign in 1991 which led to four percent of respondents writing in "Canadian." Consequently, the category "Canadian" was put fifth on the list of examples in 1996. The proportion selecting that category that year jumped to twenty percent (Stevens et al. 2015, 28).

The second question asks whether the respondent considers him/herself—or the person for whom he/she is answering—Aboriginal. Respondents may select one or more of the three proposed categories: North American Indian, Métis, or Inuk (Eskimo). When respondents identify as or are reported to be Aboriginal, as stated earlier, they are asked to skip over the

question on self-identification that is asked of other Canadians. Therefore, those of mixed origins may either identify as Métis, combined or not with another Aboriginal category, or they can choose to identify according to only one of their origins—i.e. First Nation or "White"—but not both.

Two more questions are asked of all Canadians, including those who did not identify as Aboriginals: whether the person is a Status Indian and whether he/she is a member of an Indian band (and which band). These two questions are highly correlated. In 2006, only 2.1 percent of Status Indians were not members of a specific band, and in 2012, 3.9 percent.

In the 2006 APS, the question about origins directly asked whether the respondent had ancestors who belonged to an Aboriginal group. The respondent could select one or more of the three categories already mentioned. In the 2012 APS, this question was not asked.

The self-identification question, asked in both surveys, differs from the census question mostly in the order of the answers. In the census, no comes before yes, while in the APS, it is the opposite. As well, in 2012, the question was divided into two separate questions, one relative to identifying as an Aboriginal person and the other relative to the category or categories with which the person identified.

Finally, the questions pertaining to legal status and band membership are the same as in the Census except that the name of the band is not requested. The two measures are somewhat less correlated in the APS than in the Census. In 2006, five percent of those who reported being Status Indian in the APS did not report being band members, and in 2012, 5.4 percent.

In order to answer the research question regarding fluidity in self-identification, we computed a new variable that allowed for differentiating the type of fluidity in the declarations. We grouped the respondents who vary their declarations into three types.

1. The *fluid Indian-Métis*: Those who identified, or who were identified, with a different category in the APS than in the census/NHS (Indian/First Nation in one and Métis in the other or vice-versa) *or* who added or subtracted a category (Indian in one and Indian and Métis in the other or the reverse). This category includes twenty-five different combinations, and involves mostly respondents who shift between the Indian/First Nation and Métis categories. They make up 10.3 percent of the sample in 2006 and 8.9 percent in 2012.
2. The *new Métis*: Those who did not report—or for whom the primary respondent did not report—an Aboriginal identification in the census but who did identify as either only Métis—in the majority—or as Métis and Indian or Inuit. These people "come out," i.e., they reveal themselves as mixed. They make up 9.2 percent of the respondents in 2006 and 8.3 percent in 2012.
3. The *New Indians*: Those who did not report—or for whom the primary respondent did not report—an Aboriginal identification in the census but identified as Indian/First Nation or Inuk (a much smaller group) in the APS. They make up 12.5 percent of the 2006 respondents and 9.7 percent of the 2012 respondents.[10]

10 The *New Métis* and New Indians are essentially people who are part of the *population of Aboriginal origin only*, according to their answers to the Census questions. However, since they identified as Aboriginals in the APS, they were included in the sample.

The fourth group comprises those for whom exactly the same identification was reported in both surveys; they comprise 68 percent of the sample in 2006 and 71 percent in 2012.

Factors Related to Fluidity in Identification

Following the literature review, four main groups of factors are included in the analyses. The two first groups of factors are at the individual level. The first group comprises sex and age group. There are three age groups: fifteen to thirty-four, thirty-five to fifty-four, and fifty-five and over. The second group of factors comprises indicators of socioeconomic status, i.e., years of schooling in four categories (less than high school, high school, college, and university) and quartiles of income. The third group is related to the context in which people live. The first indicator is the Metropolitan Influence Zone (MIZ), which comprises four ordinal categories of urbanness, from the Census Metropolitan Area itself (CMA) to "none or weak." The second is region, which comprises the usual regions of Canada, i.e., the Maritimes, Quebec, Ontario and the Prairies. However, we grouped the northern territories, including Yukon and Nunavut, together with British Columbia in order to have sufficient variation in terms of the Aboriginal groups and places of residence and large enough sample sizes in each category. This latter grouping serves as a reference category to which all the other regions are compared.

Finally, we added being primary respondent in the census in both the 2006 and 2011–2012 analyses in order to control whether some of the variability could be due to the fact the same person did not necessarily answer both surveys.

We took advantage of the questions asked in the 2012 APS to add two variables related to life experience: having previously lived on a First Nation community, and having attended a residential school. We do not include other indicators of Aboriginality among the predictors of variability since these factors are quite endogenous and therefore produce very high and possibly unstable coefficients in a multivariate regression analysis.

Analysis

In order to examine variability according to indicators, descriptive data and tables of the relationship between self-identification and the other indicators are presented. In order to examine the factors associated with variability in identification, we conducted multinomial logistic regressions. The stable group is the reference category to which the three types of fluidity are compared. The predictors were entered hierarchically in order to check for possible mediation effects, i.e., substantial variations in the coefficients upon entering new predictors. Since entering the blocks hierarchically did not reveal any major mediation effect, the results presented are those of the final analyses.

Results

Variability in Indicators

Table 1 presents first the number of Aboriginals estimated by the APS and the estimates computed from APS respondents' answers to the Census.[11] It shows that for the indicators that are present in both cycles, the APS estimates are always higher than the Census/NHS estimates.[12] As expected, the larger increase over the six-month period comes from the self-identification question; it shows a net increase of 27.8 percent in 2006 and 21.9 percent in 2012. The increase is high, in the range of thirteen to eighteen percent, even for indicators that are deemed "objective" such as legal status and band membership. In 2006, the increase for origins is close to fourteen percent. Part of this increase may be attributed to the effect of switching from an open-ended question, in which one may feel free to write in or not his/her Aboriginal origins, to a direct, closed one, in which the respondent is asked whether he/she has Aboriginal origins—yes or no.

Table 1. Comparison between APS and Census answers according to indicators

	2006 (comparable sample)				2011-2012			
	CENSUS	APS	Increase	Variability	NHS	APS	Increase	Variability
Aboriginal Origins	650800	741330	13.9%	40.9%	694200	Not Asked	N/A	N/A
Aboriginal Self-Identification	586430	749200	27.8%	32.0%	652300	795180	21.9%	27.0%
Legal Indian Status	242890	287000	18.2%	10.7%	263150	297140	12.9%	10.1%
Band Membership	239230	277830	16.1%	9.8%	252730	294690	16.6%	10.6%
Unweighted N	24660				20720			
Weighted N	749200				795180			

How do these increases compare with intra-individual variability? For the 2006 comparable sample, 40.9 percent had a different answer for origins between the Census and the APS: 32 percent changed their identification, 10.7 percent changed their answers regarding whether they were Status Indians, and 9.8 percent changed their answers regarding band membership. In 2012, the situation was quite similar, with 26.9 percent varying their response to the self-identification question, 10.1 percent varying their response to the

12 The APS is weighted in order to match the estimates for the whole Census in terms of origins in 2006 and of population of aboriginal identity in 2012. The figures presented are different from Census figures because of the variability in answers (Statistics Canada, 2012).

13 These estimates are based on answers to the Census by APS respondents. The respective Census estimates for self-identification, for example, are 631,280 for 2006 and 699,750 for 2012 according to the complete Census data, not far from the APS-Census estimates i.e., 634,140 and 652,300.

status question, and 8.3 percent varying their response to the band membership question. Therefore, as expected, fluidity is higher for self-identification and for origins, though information on origins is only available from 2006. Although fluidity is undoubtedly associated with the increase in estimates, the relationship between the two is not similar for the different indicators for a number of reasons, including methodological ones. The higher fluidity in the origins and self-identification questions is related to the fact that, for these indicators, there are three main categories of Aboriginality, while status and band membership are yes-or-no questions.

Table 2. Fluidity in self-identification according to origins

	2006 (comparable sample)						2011-2012		
	ORIGINS - CENSUS			ORIGINS - APS			ORIGINS - NHS		
Type of fluidity	Indian	Métis	Inuit	Indian	Métis	Inuit	Indian	Métis	Inuit
Fluid Indian/ Métis	57.5%	33.2%	2.5%	79.5%	60.7%	6.4%	56.8%	26.3%	Estimates too small for publication
New Métis	51.8%	44.9%	0.8%	51.6%	92.0%	2.0%	56.5%	42.2%	
New Indians	84.1%	6.7%	1.9%	94.9%	7.6%	3.4%	89.0%	4.9%	
Stable	53.0%	30.3%	6.0%	64.0%	47.5%	7.0%	53.0%	70.3%	

Table 2 shows the relationship between variability in self-identification and declared origins. If we look at the Census figures for 2006, the profile of the *Fluid Indian/Métis* is close to the profile of stable respondents and not much different from that of the *New Métis*. A little more than half declared a First Nation origin, and close to a third declared Métis origin. However, if we compare these numbers with similar numbers in 2012, they are similar for the *Fluid Indian-Métis* and the *New Métis* groups, but are quite different for the stable group. This group is much more likely to have declared Métis origin in 2012 (70.3 percent) than in 2006 (30.3 percent). In addition, the report of different Aboriginal origins in the 2006 APS is much higher than in the Census for most categories. Among the *New Métis,* for example, the Métis origin more than doubles, from 45 percent in the Census to 92 percent in the APS, for the same individuals.

Table 3. Fluidity in self-identification according to legal status and band membership

	2006 (comparable sample)				2011-2012			
	Legal Status		Band Membership		Legal Status		Band Membership	
	Census	APS	Census	APS	Census	APS	Census	APS
Fluid Indian/ Métis	33.7%	39.3%	32.8%	37.2%	28.1%	31.3%	25.2%	30.7%
New Métis	1.5%	8.0%	1.0%	6.8%	1.2%	4.0%	0.6%	4.5%
New Indians	6.8%	19.4%	8.1%	22.2%	6.2%	13.9%	5.6%	17.8%
Stable	41.0%	46.0%	46.4%	43.8%	41.0%	45.0%	39.6%	44.1%

As expected, one of the major distinctions among the different types of fluidity is in the proportion of people with First Nation legal status or band membership. As shown in Table 3, in 2006, people in the *Fluid Métis-Indian* group are almost as likely as the stable respondents to have legal status or to be band members, i.e., between thirty percent and forty percent of the *Fluid Métis-Indian* group had legal status or were band members compared to forty to forty-six percent of stable respondents.

However, in 2012, the proportion is somewhat lower among the *Fluid Indian-Métis*, i.e. between twenty-five and thirty-one percent. These same proportions go down to one percent in the Census and to four to twenty percent in the APS for the *New Métis*; they reach five to eight percent in the Census and fourteen to twenty-two percent in the APS for the *New Indian* group. Conversely, more than forty percent of the stable group is either a Status Indian or a band member.

These results suggest three conclusions. First, as expected, legal status and band membership are associated with more stability in identification. However, these statuses are also associated with fluidity among aboriginal categories, a new finding from this analysis. This information is in line with the literature that stressed the fuzzy boundaries between the Indian and Métis categories (Andersen 2014b; Lawrence 2004). Second, APS data show more coherence than Census data. Respondents align their identification with their origins and status. Third, we have to keep in mind that there are substantially more people of Métis origin in the stable group in 2012 than in 2006 because this difference in composition may have an influence on the factors that differentiate stable respondents from the others.

Variability in Categories of Self-Identification

Who are these respondents who report a shift in identification across Aboriginal categories, or who switch from no identification to an identification as Aboriginal? Table 3 presents the results of the multinomial regressions conducted on the 2006 and 2012 APS data. Overall, the Nagelkerke pseudo R^2, which allows for comparison of the models with and without predictors, gives a value of 13.1 percent in 2006 and 10 percent in 2012.[13] Adding, in 2012, the variables for having lived on a First Nation community and having attended a residential school increases the Nagelkerke pseudo R^2 to 13.2 percent.

The Fluid Métis-Indian Group

The odds[14] of being in this fluid group rather than in the stable group are higher for men than for women. This runs counter to our hypothesis, which stated that either women would be more likely to be fluid or there would be no difference according to sex. Since

13 The Nagelkerke pseudo R^2 is a revised version of Cox and Snell pseudo R^2, adjusted so that the maximum value is 1 (Tabachnick and Fidell 2012, 462). Hosmer and Lemeshow (2013, 185) notice, however, that pseudo R^2values obtained in logistic regression are generally low compared to R^2 values in linear regression.

14 The odds ratio, presented here, is "the change in odds in being in one of the categories of the dependent variable when the value of a predictor increases by one unit" (Tabachnick and Fidell 2012, 463).

previous researchers did not examine movements within the Aboriginal group separately, this finding is new. The odds of being in the fluid group rather than in the stable group are also higher for those over 55 years old than those in the fifteen-to-thirty-four age group (significant in 2006 only). This also runs counter to our hypothesis stating that fluidity is expected to be higher among younger people. Regarding socioeconomic status, the odds of being in the *Fluid Indian-Métis* group rather than in the stable group are lower if one is better-educated, and, according to the 2012 APS, lower also when respondents benefit from an income higher than the median. Since previous research largely neglected this group, we did not have specific hypotheses.

Table 4. Factors related to fluidity in self-identification

Reference category: stable declarations	*2006*			*2011-2012*		
	Fluid Métis/Indian	*New Métis*	*New Indian*	*Fluid Métis/Indian*	*New Métis*	*New Indian*
	EXP(B)	EXP(B)	EXP(B)	EXP(B)	EXP(B)	EXP(B)
Intercept (B)	- 2.537 ***	- 3.358 ***	- 3.255 ***	- 2.240 ***	- 2.968 ***	- 3.074 ***
Individual Characteristics						
Being a man	1.356 ***	.936	1.013	1.125 *	1.083	1.037
Age ***(Ref= 15 - 34 years)***						
35-54 years	.982	.980	.988	.884	.917	1.189 ***
55 and more	1.340 ***	1.284 ***	1.085	1.134	1.312 ***	1.243 ***
Socio-economic Characteristics						
Schooling (*Ref=less than high school*)						
High school diploma	1.034	1.511 ***	1.285 ***	.955	1.350 ***	1.099
College diploma	.878 *	1.216 **	.957	.911	1.128	1.092
University diploma	.803 *	1.283 **	1.017	.663 ***	1.403 ***	1.324 ***
Income (*Ref=below the 25th percentile*)						
Between 25th & 50th percentile	1.041	.885	1.189 *	.865	.969	.941
50th to 75th percentile	.882	1.177 *	1.160 *	.748 ***	.942	.957
75th percentile and over	.897	1.548 ***	1.369 ***	.659 ***	.947	.783 ***
Urbanity (Ref= MIZ[1] - weak & none)						
MIZ Strong & Moderate	1.391 ***	2.283 ***	2.540 ***	1.447 ***	1.412 ***	2.661 ***
CA (Census Agglomeration)	1.205 **	1.844 ***	2.361 ***	1.325 ***	1.233 *	1.890 ***
CMA (Census Metropolitan Area)	1.305 ***	2.655 ***	3.220 ***	1.622 ***	1.410 ***	2.661 ***
Region (*Ref=Northern Canada & BC*)						
Prairies	1.421 ***	.909	.506 ***	.857 *	1.500 ***	.446 ***
Ontario	1.321 ***	1.203 *	2.108 ***	1.237 ***	1.745 ***	2.019 ***
Quebec	2.931 ***	3.688 ***	4.512 ***	2.427 ***	4.362 ***	3.640 ***
Provinces of the Atlantic	1.371 **	2.263 ***	6.637 ***	1.333 ***	1.764 ***	4.067 ***
First Nation experience						
Has lived in a FN community				.623 ***	.190 ***	.170 ***
Has attended a boarding school				.925	.444 ***	.290 ***
Was first respondant in Census	.972	1.100 *	.937	.999	1.001	1.048
Statistics						
N (rounded & unweighted)	24660			20720		
Pseudo R-squared (Nagelkerke)	.131			.132		
Thresholds: *=0.05, **=0.01 and ***=0.001						
[1] Metropolitan Influenced zone						

The results show that the odds of being in the *Fluid Indian-Métis* category are higher if one lives in any zone of urban influence rather than in zones of weak or no urban influence—that is, in remote or isolated communities. Since both Métis and First Nations—and presumably those who shift between the two—are historically less-present in the north, where most remote communities are located, and since Inuit, a very stable group, are more present in this area, this result is expected.

The odds of being in the fluid group are higher for those living in Eastern Canada—in Ontario, in the Maritimes and especially in Quebec—than in British Columbia or northern Canada. So at first glance, this group may be more likely to include Métis-as-mixed respondents rather than "Métis of the Red River". However, for the Prairies, the results of 2012 and 2006 go in opposite directions. In 2006, the odds of being in the *Fluid Indian-Métis* group were forty percent higher (1.42) when living in the Prairies rather than in BC/Northern Canada, while in 2012 they were close to seventeen percent lower (.857). Descriptive statistics (not presented here) confirm these results. The fluid group accounts for 11.6 percent of Aboriginals in the Prairies in 2006, but only 7.7 percent in 2012. This may be explained by the differences in the composition of the stable group between 2006 and 2012. All the other coefficients, however, are quite similar across the two cycles. Events that occurred between 2006 and 2102 (which we have not identified) may explain this situation.

Finally, the fact of the APS respondent being a primary respondent—or not—in the Census has no impact on the odds of being in this category. For 2012, as expected, the odds of being in the fluid group rather than stable are 1.6 times lower (.623) among those who have lived in a First Nation community before. However, having attended a residential school is not a significant factor in predicting the odds of being among the fluid category.

Entering the Métis Category or Multiple Categories: The New Métis

The *New Métis* and the stable group have a similar distribution of men and women. The literature on this question was contradictory, but Caron-Malenfant et al. (2014) found that "becoming" Aboriginal was more common among women. In the context of this study, these results are not confirmed. The odds of being a *New Métis* rather than remaining stable are higher in the 55-and-over age group than in the younger group in both cycles. This also runs contrary to our hypothesis, based on the literature, which shows higher fluidity among younger people.

The odds that respondents will be in the *New Métis* category increase among all those who have a diploma—high school, university, or anything in between. This is also the case for those who have an income above the median according to the 2006 data. However, income does not contribute significantly to explaining the odds of entering this category in 2012. This goes against our hypothesis, which was based on previous research.

The odds of being a *New Métis* also rise when respondents are living in or close to cities rather than in rural/remote communities. This confirms our hypothesis: the more heterogeneous the place of residence, the more fluid the identification. Respondents in

this group were more likely to live in Ontario, the Maritimes, and particularly Quebec (3.7 times more likely in 2006 and 4.3 times more likely in 2012) than in British Columbia or northern Canada. This further confirms that the *New Métis* are more likely to be *Métis as mixed*. These results do not confirm the hypothesis based on the results presented by Caron-Malenfant et al. (2014). As is the case for the *Fluid Indian-Métis*, there is an inconsistency between the 2006 and 2012 results for the Prairies: the 2012 data show that the odds that Prairie residents will be in this group increase 1.5 times compared with residents of BC and the north, while the coefficient for 2006 is not significant. What happens with this group is almost the mirror of what happens with the *Fluid Indian-Métis* group. Since both have to do with mixedness, there may be some fuzzy boundaries between the two groups; the results may also be explained by compositional differences between 2006 and 2012, or by events that occurred between 2006 and 2012 that may have influenced the situation and identification of the Métis in the Prairies.

Finally, the 2012 data show that having lived in a First Nation community decreases substantially the odds of being a *New Métis* (an odds ratio of .19, which means 5.3 times lower than those who never lived in a First Nation community). The odds are 2.2 times lower for those who attended a residential school. Since the policy on residential schools applied mostly to Status Indians and Inuit living in remote communities, this is consistent with expectations.

In 2006 only, the odds of being in this group are slightly *higher* when the APS had been completed by someone who was a primary respondent in the Census.

Entering the Indian or Inuk categories: The New Indians

The odds of entering the *New Indians* group differ between 2006 and 2012 in terms of individual characteristics. As with the preceding group, sex is not related to entering the category. There is no difference by age when using the 2006 data, but, according to the 2012 data, the odds are higher for older respondents, i.e., those who are older than 35 years. Again, the literature shows that entering the Aboriginal group is more likely among the young people. So our results for 2012 run contrary to those of other researchers.

The 2006 data show that the odds of entering the *New Indians* group increase with a high school diploma compared to no diploma, but do not differ with a higher diploma, while the 2012 data show that the odds increase only with a university degree. While the 2006 data show that the odds of being a *New Indian* increase for respondents who are in the higher percentiles of income, the 2012 data show the reverse. As for the *New Métis*, the results do not confirm our hypothesis regarding education. However, the 2012 data confirms our hypothesis regarding income, contrary to the 2006 data.

The 2006 and 2012 data present the same picture for the impact of place of residence. They reveal that the odds of entering the *New Indian* group compared to being stable are clearly higher for those who live in urban areas. They are also higher for those who live in Ontario (twice as high), Quebec (4.5 times and 3.6 times as high respectively) and especially the Maritimes (6.6 times and 4.1 times as high). This confirms Caron-Malenfant

et al.'s (2014) results for Ontario, but not for the other regions. In addition, the odds are twice as low among those who live in the Prairies than among those who live in BC and in northern Canada. Our results are, for most regions, quite different from those of Caron-Malenfant et al. (2014).

Finally, the 2012 data show that the odds of being a *New Indian* rather than remaining stable are much lower among those who have ever lived in a First Nation community (.17) and who have attended a residential school (.29). In short, living in FN communities and having attended residential schools are associated with a stable identification. Those who were primary respondents in the Census do not differ from those who were not.

Summary

The main blocks of variables—age and sex, education and income, urban residence, region—all contribute significantly to the explanation of fluidity. However, the individual-level variables explain no more than 1.8 percent of the variance according to Nagelkerke pseudo R^2, which is very low. The Metropolitan Influence Zone explains 1.8 percent of the variance in 2006 and one percent in 2012. The main contributor to the explanation is region, which contributes 9.2 percent to the total variance in 2006 and 7.7 percent in 2012. The second-largest contributor to the explanation, present only in 2012, is First Nation experience. It accounts for 3.2 percent of the variation. Finally, fluidity was not higher in instances in which the APS was answered by someone other than the Census's primary respondent.

The results of the effects of individual characteristics reported here differ from what previous research has found. This may be because there are major methodological differences between our study and those of both Caron-Malenfant et al. (2014) and Biddle and Crawford (2015). These authors compared reported Aboriginal status over the five-year period between Censuses. The Censuses were conducted in similar ways with the same questionnaire. In contrast, we have two different modes of survey administration and somewhat different question wordings. Our design is better compared to Harris and Sim (2002), who showed that identification varies with the mode of administration (self-administered vs. in-person), the presence or absence of others when the in-person interview is conducted, and the question asked—particularly whether or not it is possible to report belonging to multiple "races."

One way to make sense of our results and reconcile them with Caron-Malenfant et al. (2014) and Biddle and Crawford (2015) is to consider that, for example, the higher the socioeconomic status (i.e. greater education, income, etc.), the higher the tendency not to declare an Aboriginal identification in the Census. The *New Métis* and the *New Indians* in our sample do indeed have higher education level and, in 2006, higher income. Our results point to the fact that, faced with the forced choice to be either Aboriginal or white, and in the absence of social pressure as a result of the fact that the Census was self-administered, a number of Aboriginals—apparently those with the higher socio-economic status—in conformity with the literature (Biddle and Crawford 2015; Caron-Malenfant et al. 2014;

Harris and Sim 2002; Saperstein and Penner 2012) chose the "white" option. In the APS, their Aboriginal identification is activated by the context of the survey, and they are not offered the possibility of being "white"; they can only choose not to identify as Aboriginals and therefore, in 2012, be dropped from the survey.

It is also possible that we tap into something different from other authors: the complexity of identification and, especially, the reality of fuzzy boundaries among categories, particularly for people of mixed origins, along with the problems associated with the "forced choice" in the Census self-administered questionnaire. It is, in our view, likely that a substantial proportion of Aboriginals feel that they can choose in which circumstances they identify as Aboriginals.

Caron-Malenfant et al. (2014) and Biddle and Crawford (2015) attribute the change in identification that they observe to sociopolitical changes between the two Censuses. We also note differences in the results for 2006 and 2012, particularly in the variation in the presence of the *Fluid Indian/Métis* and the *New Métis* groups in the Prairies. This may also reflect sociopolitical change in the situation related to the Métis as a Nation in that region during that period. The composition of the stable group in 2012 tends to confirm that the people with a stable identification were much more likely to be of Métis origin in 2012 than in 2006.

Isolating a *Fluid Indian-Group* separate from those who switch from non-Aboriginal to Aboriginal allows for a first insight into the fluidity of identification among Indians, possibly of multiple origins. This group shows different characteristics from the two other fluid groups, in that they are more likely male, have less formal education, and are more likely to reside in Quebec than in other regions. This fluid group was, in a way, the missing block in the study of the consequences of intermixing for identification. It shows that the blurring of the boundaries is ubiquitous. However, the impact of a *Fluid Indian/Métis* group on estimates of the population may be neutral because similar numbers are going from each category to the other (Caron-Malenfant et al. 2014).

The substantial fluidity in the answers to the two different questions on origins in 2006 hint at problems with the Census write-in open-ended question and its examples. This question is very imprecise: it does not give any time-frame within which ancestry should be considered, and the examples that are given may induce people to choose among the categories or feel less involved when their own Nation is not listed.

The study presented here is not perfect. We compare answers to questions that are asked, sometimes in different ways, and that are sometimes answered by different respondents, using measures aimed at the same concept but asked in a different context. This may have a number of consequences, which we have tried to point out and control for to the fullest extent possible. Nevertheless, some of the results that emerged directly contradict what is generally concluded in the literature. We tried to make sense of these differences, but further analysis would perhaps allow for a more in-depth understanding of the situation. It would be appropriate to replicate the results in the next rounds of the Census and the APS, or using previous rounds.

Conclusion

In view of the UN's "modern understanding" of who is Aboriginal; in the absence of a definition of who should be included in this population and why; and given the wording of the questions asked, it is not surprising that some people provide different answers in different contexts. Counting Aboriginals requires a delineation of boundaries, but those boundaries will inevitably be blurred. There are the standard methodological decisions to be made on survey presentation, question wording, and allowed response categories discussed above. We think it is impossible to come up with a single right resolution to these methodological issues, though some decisions are certainly better than others.

At least as important is the character of the Aboriginal population itself. After centuries of intermixing with settler populations, people's self-identification as Aboriginal will very often involve choice. That choice is, in turn, influenced by the various factors identified in our model. The growth in the number of self-identified Aboriginals shows that choices change over time. All this suggests that the use of Aboriginal counts for both policy design and general research should always be accompanied by some discussion of both likely methodological effects and social determinants of the numbers a count reveals.

This paper has shown that close to a third of all Canadians who "identified" as Aboriginals in the Census long form or in the National Household Survey changed their answers to the self-identification question when asked the same question in the Aboriginal People's Survey. The shifts in reported Aboriginal status are not random; they are related to some important characteristics of the relevant population. In light of this finding, we think that statistics produced on Aboriginal peoples in Canada from the standard sources should be treated with some caution. Using the APS identification, for example, instead of that of the Census/NHS would likely reduce the estimated difference between "non-Aboriginals" and "Aboriginals," at least in terms of levels of formal education.

The variability in responses we have identified suggests that Statistics Canada might usefully undertake an in-depth inquiry into the phenomenon. Comparisons between Aboriginals and other Canadians are complicated by the fact that the self-identification questions designed by Statistics Canada are different for the two groups. It is unfortunate that it is too late to implement changes to the 2016 Census that would allow those of Aboriginal origins to elect as many identifications as they want, like any other Canadians. A long, shared history means that a very large number of Canadians can be considered, to some degree or another, Métis. What we see in these data is most probably a prelude to what will be seen for many other settlers who have come to Canada (or elsewhere) more recently. As such, more and more Canadians will be expected to have multiple affiliations, and we will need to decide how to ask questions on self-identification that are meaningful for respondents as well as useful for social statistics.

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