PAN-ETHNIC NATIONAL ANCESTRY OR ETHNICITY IN AUSTRALIA, CANADA, AND THE U.S.*

Sharon M. Lee and Barry Edmonston

University of Victoria

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

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Abstract

Research on pan-ethnicity usually focuses on pan-ethnicity among immigrant-based groups such as Asian or Hispanic Americans, asking, for example, whether specific Asian ethnic groups such as Chinese or Asian Indian identify with the pan-ethnic term, Asian American. A recent trend towards identifying with a pan-ethnic national ancestry or ethnicity, such as "Australian" in Australia, "Canadian" in Canada, and "American" in the U.S. has received less attention. In this exploratory study, we analyze Australian, Canadian, and U.S. census data to identify and compare factors associated with pan-ethnic national ancestry or ethnicity. Main findings show that identification with a national ancestry/ethnicity is mostly limited to the native-born European-origin population with long histories of residence in each country. We discuss four processes that may be implicated in pan-ethnic national ancestry or ethnicity identification -- simplification, social marginalization, regional or ethnic subculture, and home-grown ethnic formation -- and questions for additional research.

INTRODUCTION

While most research on pan-ethnicity has focused on the emergence of pan-ethnic identity among racial or ethnic minorities such as Asian and Hispanic Americans, another interesting but less noticeable trend in ethnic identity has emerged in recent years. There has been a recent trend of reporting a national ancestry or ethnicity,[1] such as "American" in the U.S., "Australian" in Australia, or "Canadian" in Canada (see Table 1).

- Table 1 About Here -

Between 1986 and 2001, the percentage of people in Australia reporting their ancestry as "Australian" increased from 24 percent to over 38 percent. In Canada, the percentage reporting "Canadian" ethnic origin grew from 29 percent in 1996 to 37 percent in 2001. While the levels reporting "American" ancestry are much lower in the U.S., the trend has also been increasing, from 6 percent in 1980 to 9 percent in 2000.[2]

The population in each of these three societies is largely composed of immigrants and their descendants, together with smaller indigenous populations. Increased reporting of a *national* ancestry or ethnic origin, distinct from particular immigrant ethnic origins such as "English" or "French" or "German" or "Japanese", in these three societies raises questions about shifts in ethnic identity, the development of new ethnic identities, and the meaning of ethnicity in multi-ethnic immigrant-based societies. Choosing to report a national ancestry or ethnicity implies movement away from identifying with specific ethnic origins. In this sense, national ancestries or ethnic origins are inherently pan-ethnic.

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[1] While the same word (for example, "Australian") is used to describe "Australian" as national ancestry or ethnicity and "Australian" as nationality or citizenship, this paper's focus is on "Australian" as ancestry or ethnicity. In this paper, we use the terms "ethnicity" and "ancestry" interchangeably (we discuss these terms in greater detail and explain why in a following section).

[2] Because of delays in constructing data files from more recent censuses (specifically, the 2006 Australian and Canadian censuses), we limit analysis to, and report findings from, the 2000 or 2001 censuses for the three countries.

Unlike government policies and actions to stimulate identification with a new national or political identity as part of nation-building, or government policies to strengthen nationalistic pride through ascribed ethnicity, or government guidelines on racial and ethnic categories,[3] the emergence of "American", "Australian", and "Canadian" as pan-ethnic identities in the U.S., Australia, and Canada, respectively, is *not* related to direct government efforts to encourage such identities. Indeed, in the U.S., the U.S. Census Bureau has actively sought to *discourage* reporting of "American" ancestry, encouraging the reporting of specific ethnic origins or ancestries instead. The apparently spontaneous and increased identification with a national ethnicity or ancestry in Australia, Canada, and the U.S. in recent years may therefore reflect interesting new social processes in how people understand and view their ethnic origins, and by implication, their ethnic identities.[4]

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Ethnicity is a slippery concept that defies definition, as a review of the literature will show (see for example, Barth 1969; Cornell 1996; Glazer 2000; Isajiw 1993; Sanders 2002). In addition to conceptual ambiguities, there are measurement challenges that have been noted by many (Boyd 1993; Boyd and Norris 2001; Edmonston et al. 1996; Lee 1993; Nagel 1986). Lieberson (1993) provided a cogent summary of measurement challenges in his classic piece on "some devilish principles" in enumerating ethnic and racial groups in populations. Along with other users of census-based ethnic data, we recognize that there are conceptual and measurement problems in studying ethnicity. We recognize these challenges but stress that this paper's

[3] For example, in the U.S., the U.S. Census Bureau follows federal statistical guidelines on racial and ethnic data that can be seen as promoting particular pan-ethnic labels or categories such as "Asian American" and "Hispanic/Latino Americans" (Lee 1993; Nagel 1986).

[4] While a person's response to what his/her ancestry or ethnic origin is may not completely overlap with his/her current ethnic identity, census questions on ancestry and ethnic origin directly or indirectly suggest that responses to questions on ancestry or ethnic origin also reflect a person's sense of ethnic identity (we discuss this in greater detail in the section on "Data").

central focus is *not* about conceptual or measurement issues. Instead, we examine responses to census questions on ethnic origins or ancestries to try and understand what factors are associated with pan-ethnic national ethnicity or ancestry identification.

The emergence of a national ethnic identity, for example, "Canadian" or "American" or "Australian", in multi-ethnic societies whose populations are mainly derived from immigrants and their descendants from diverse ethnic origins, is a relatively new phenomenon. Theorizing about this process is therefore relatively undeveloped. In some of the earliest discussions of this process, Lieberson and Waters (1988, 1993) described several factors related to identifying with "American" ethnicity in the U.S., including the ability to trace one's ancestral roots back to when one's ancestors first arrived in North America, the person's beliefs about what his or her ancestry is, the ethnic group that the respondent identifies with, and what others consider the person's ethnicity to be. From an analysis of responses to the ancestry question that was first asked in the 1980 U.S. census, Lieberson and Waters (1993) concluded that reporting "American" ancestry appears to be a form of simplified response among European-origin people in the United States which "would mean the formation of a growing ethnic population of 'unhyphenated whites'" (Lieberson and Waters 1993, p. 445).

In the case of "Canadian" ethnicity, the first paper to explore the idea of a new "Canadian" ethnic identity was by Pryor et al. (1992), who asked if "Canadian" had emerged as an "indigenous ethnic group" in Canada. Because of the limited data examined and exploratory descriptive methods, their answer then was not conclusive: "*Apparently* (emphasis added), Canadian *is emerging* (emphasis added) as an ethnic concept of some significance" (Pryor et al. 1992, p. 231). Analysis of more recent census data by Boyd (1999) and Boyd and Norris (2001) confirmed some of Pryor et al.'s findings and added important new knowledge about "Canadian"

as ethnic identity and confirmed many of Pryor et al.'s findings. Several characteristics were associated with higher reporting of "Canadian" ethnic origin, including being born in Canada, younger age, and less education. People with French home language and who resided in the province of Quebec were also much more likely to identify as "Canadian" (Boyd 1999; Boyd and Norris 2001; Lee and Edmonston forthcoming).

In Australia, the ancestry question was first asked in the 1986 Census but was not repeated until the 2001 Census. Khoo and Lucas (2004) described patterns of responses to the ancestry question in the 2001 Census. Characteristics associated with reporting "Australian" ancestry included generation status (higher percents among the second and third or more generation compared with low percents among the first generation), younger age, lower education, and residence in non-metropolitan areas, many of the same characteristics associated with identifying as "Canadian" in Canada (Boyd 1999; Boyd and Norris 2001; Lee and Edmonston forthcoming).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This is an exploratory descriptive study, given the relative lack of theorizing on the concept of national ethnicity or ancestry. We first describe factors associated with identifying with a national ancestry/ethnicity in each society. Second, we compare factors and discuss similarities and differences across the three contexts. Finally, we discuss processes that may be involved in identification with a national ethnicity or ancestry and questions for future research.

DATA AND METHODS OF ANALYSIS

Data for the study come from the public-use microdata files of the 2001 Australia census (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2003a), 2001 Canadian census (Statistics Canada 2001), and 2000 U.S. census (U.S. Census Bureau 2003). We restrict analysis to respondents 18 years and

older in order (that is, either adults or older youths) to limit attention to those whose reported ethnicity or ancestry is more likely to be based on self-report. This seeks to avoid the issue of whether the reported ethnic origin or ancestry represents the individual's own response or the response of the person filling out the census form, as is the likely case for an adult completing the census question for younger children. Still, we cannot tell from census data who actually completed the form and whether responses to the ancestry or ethnic origin question are the individual's own choice or that of the person completing the census form.

Differences in Census Question on Ancestry or Ethnic Origin

The question on ancestry or ethnic origin is not the same in the three censuses. For Australia, Khoo and Lucas (2004) described the history behind the decision to include a question on ancestry for the first time in the 1986 census, and again in the 2001 census, because of interest in studying the changing ethnic composition of Australia's population. An important difference between the 1986 and 2001 questions on ancestry was that, in 2001, the ancestry question was seen as reflecting the ancestry or ancestries which the respondent most closely *identified* with, whereas in the 1986 census, the emphasis was more on the ethnic or national origin groups from which the respondent descended from (see Khoo and Lucas 2004, Chapter 1). Thus, the ancestry question in the 2001 Australian census can be seen as reflecting the respondent's *current ethnic identity*. The 2001 Australian census question is shown in Figure 1.

- Figure 1 About Here -

In the case of Canada, beginning with the 1951 census, an "ethnic origin" question replaced the previous racial origin question (Boyd 1999).[5] The ethnic origin question was meant

[5] There is some uncertainty about the history of "race" and "ethnicity" questions in the Canadian censuses. An unpublished 1978 paper by Kralt (cited in Pryor et al. 1992, p. 219) stated that a specific question on ethnicity was included in every decennial census since 1901 and the 1986 census was the first mid-decade census to include an ethnic origin question.

to trace the "roots" of Canada's population. The exact wording and format of the ethnic origin question has since varied across censuses. For example, until the 1981 census, the ethnic origin question specified ethnic origin on only the male side of the respondent's family. The 1981 census was the first that did not restrict reporting ethnic origin to one side of one's family, and was also the first to capture more than one ethnic origin response per person by providing one write-in box in addition to the check-off list of ethnicities (prior to the 1981 census, multiple responses were reduced to one – see Statistics Canada 1981, pp. 56-58). The 1986 census question asked, "To which ethnic or cultural group(s) do you or did your ancestors belong?" and respondents were instructed to mark or specify as many ethnic groups as applicable, and three write-in boxes were supplied.

In more recent censuses such as the 1991, 1996 and 2001 censuses, the ethnic origin question asked, "To which ethnic or cultural group(s) did this person's ancestors belong?" and beginning with the 1996 census, there was no longer a check-off list of ethnic groups. Instead, respondents were instructed to specify as many ethnic groups as applicable in the write-in boxes provided.

The question on ethnic origin in the Canadian census appears to emphasize an individual's *roots or origins*, rather than current ethnic identity (see Kalbach and Kalbach 1999 for further discussion of this issue). While the relationship between ethnic origin and current ethnic identity can be expected to overlap for most people, it is best to consider responses to Canada's census question on ethnic origin as *proxies* of current ethnic identity. Most users of the ethnic origin data from the Canadian censuses, including us, recognize this limitation. The ethnic origin question in the 2001 Canadian Census is shown in Figure 2.

- Figure 2 About Here -

In the U.S., the 1980 census was the first to include a question on ancestry that replaced a question on birthplace of parents. The ancestry question has been repeated in censuses since then. The U.S. Census Bureau defines ancestry as "a person's ethnic origin, heritage, descent, or 'roots', which may reflect their place of birth, place of birth of parents or ancestors, *and ethnic identities that have evolved within the United States* (emphasis added)" (Brittingham and de la Cruz 2004, p. 1). This definition of ancestry is quite broad, and suggests that responses to the ancestry question may reflect *both* ethnic origins as well as current ethnic identity. What is particularly significant is the last part of the definition, which *explicitly refers to the development of endogenous or homegrown ethnic identities within the U.S. (for example, "American")*. The 2000 U.S. census's question on ancestry is an open-ended question that allows one or two write-in responses, as shown in Figure 3.

- Figure 3 About Here -

The differences in wording, format, and possibly meanings of the census questions complicate a comparative analysis. However, given overlaps in meaning – that is, each question refers to the respondent's ancestral or ethnic roots, two (Australia and the U.S.) directly refers to the respondent's current ethnic identity, and users of the Canadian data have also interpreted the data to reflect the respondent's ethnic identity, we believe it is reasonable to examine the data to understand identification with a national ethnicity in each of the three countries.

Recording of Responses

Another limitation of the data stems from the different procedures employed by each country's statistical agency in recording responses to the ancestry or ethnic origin question.

In the 2000 U.S. census data set, respondents were coded as "American" ancestry *only* if they reported "American" as their *sole* ancestry. If a respondent to the U.S. census reported

"American" in conjunction with some other ancestry, they were placed in the other ancestry and *not* coded as "American" for either of the reported two ancestries. For example, if a U.S. respondent reported two ancestries, such as "American" and "Italian", the U.S. Census Bureau recoded and reported this person's ancestry as "Italian" only. This differs from the practice and reporting of ancestry/ethnic origin data in the Australian and Canadian censuses, and leads to undercounting of "American" ancestry responses. Because of the U.S. practice, we limit attention in this paper for the most part to respondents who report only one response to the ancestry or ethnic origin question. However, in the descriptive findings below, we include discussion of single *and* multiple-origin ancestry responses from the Australian and Canadian censuses.

FINDINGS

- Table 2 About Here -

Descriptive statistics of the three samples are shown in Table 2. The mean age and percent male or female are similar. About 4 percent of the Canadian sample identified as Aboriginal. Over 1 percent of the U.S. sample identified as native peoples, and over 2 percent reported Aboriginal status in Australia.

A higher percentage of the U.S. sample is native-born (88 percent), compared with 77 percent for the Canadian sample, and 67 percent for the Australian sample, reflecting the overall higher percentage of Australia and Canada's populations that are foreign-born. Differences in marital status are small, with a higher percentage married or living common-law for the Canadian sample and a higher percentage single or never married for the Australian sample.

The educational attainments of the Canadian and U.S. samples are relatively similar. There is a higher percentage of respondents in the Australian sample that have less than a high

school education and a lower percentage with a Bachelor's degree or more education.[6] Labour force status is fairly similar across the three samples, with 60 to 63 percent employed and a third or slightly more out of the labour force. The percent that own their homes is also similar, with about 70 to 73 percent being homeowners. Mean household income is highest for the U.S. sample and lowest for the Australian sample. Finally, the majority of respondents in all three countries reside in urban or metropolitan areas.

Previous research identified several characteristics associated with identifying with a national ethnic origin or ancestry, and we examine some of these characteristics. For the Australian and Canadian samples, Table 3 shows the percentages in each category of selected characteristics that report "Australian" or "Canadian" as the only or single response and as part of multiple responses. As previously discussed (and noted in the table), for the U.S. sample, only single response as "American" is captured by the data.

- Table 3 About Here -

Age: Younger respondents are slightly more likely to identify with "Australian" or "Canadian" ancestry in Australia and Canada, respectively. This pattern holds for both those who identified with "Australian" or "Canadian" as their only response or as part of multiple responses. However, this is not the case with "American" ancestry where age variations are negligible.

Nativity: In all three samples, the native-born are much more likely to identify with a national ethnicity or ancestry: for example, comparing the "single" columns, over 36 percent of native-born Australians reported "Australian" ancestry compared with just 3 percent among the foreign-born, and for the U.S. sample, 10 percent of the native-born identified with "American" ancestry while hardly any foreign-born respondents did.

[6] The percentages for the Australian sample excludes persons who are still in school, mostly 15-19 year olds who are still in high school.

Home Language: In Australia and the U.S., English is the dominant and official language, while Canada has two official languages, English and French. In all three countries, the percentages that identify with the respective national ancestry or ethnic origin are substantially higher among those whose home language is the dominant or official language (that is, English in Australia or the U.S., and English or French in Canada). Very few respondents whose home language is an "other" language identified with a national ancestry.

Education: Education shows a similar pattern in all three samples: the percent identifying with the respective national ancestry or ethnic origin declines with increased education. For example, looking at the "single" columns, about 26 percent of the Canadian sample with high school or less education reported "Canadian" ethnic origin compared with 19 percent of those with some post-high school education and 13 percent of those with a Bachelor's degree or higher education.

Metropolitan Residence: In all three samples, a higher percentage of respondents who reside in non-metropolitan areas identify with a national ancestry: for example, about 5 percent of U.S. respondents who reside in metropolitan areas report "American" ancestry compared with 13 percent of those who reside in non-metropolitan areas.

The descriptive findings in Table 3 are generally consistent with previous findings reported for Australia (see Khoo and Lucas 2004) and Canada (see Boyd and Norris 2001; Lee and Edmonston forthcoming). We further explore these descriptive findings by estimating three logistic regression models for the outcome variable, reporting "Australian" or "Canadian" or "American" identity, coded as a binary variable. We limit this analysis to respondents who reported as *single-origin* "Australian", "Canadian", or "American" ancestry (henceforth referred to as ACA ancestry) because of limitations associated with the U.S. data on "American" ancestry

described earlier. We include as many comparable variables as possible from the three censuses in the logistic regressions.[7]

Logistic Regression Findings

- Table 4 About Here -

Results are shown in Table 4, which consists of three parts: the first part (Table 4.a) reports results for Australia, the second (Table 4.b) for Canada, and the third (Table 4.c) for the U.S. Each part of Table 4 follows the same format. The first two left columns list explanatory variables and variable categories. The next four columns report logistic regression coefficients, standard errors for the coefficients, t-test for the coefficients, and odds ratios (that is, the exponential function for the coefficient).

For the most part, multivariate findings confirm and elaborate on the descriptive findings. All explanatory variables are statistically significant at the 0.05 level, using a t-test for continuous variables or for differences between variable categories and the reference category for categorical variables. Overall, the Cox and Snell R-squared (see bottom of each table) is 17.8 percent for the Australian sample, 22.2 percent for the Canadian sample, and 6.4 percent for the U.S. sample, suggesting that the model provides a poorer prediction of "American" ancestry than for "Australian" and "Canadian" ancestry/ethnicity.

The overall percentage of outcome variables predicted correctly is another useful comparative statistic. For this statistic, we count the percentage of cases in which the predicted outcome variable, based on the estimated logistic regression equation, is the same as the

[7] As with all comparative research, it is a challenge to harmonize variables from different data sets. In addition, not all variables of interest are available in all data sets.

observed outcome variable. Using this statistical measure, 74.3 percent of the cases for Australia are correctly predicted, compared to 81.2 percent for Canada, and 91.1 percent for the U.S.[8]

Variable Effects

Age: As in the descriptive results, younger adults are more likely to report ACA ancestry. There are some variations in this relationship, with the Canadian results showing a steeper relationship. Canadian respondents less than 30 years of age are 66 percent more likely to report "Canadian" ethnicity than the reference group of persons 80 years or older. This compares with 36 percent of Australian respondents and 28 percent of U.S. respondents in the same age group.

Sex: Although females are slightly less likely to report ACA ancestry than males, the differences by gender are modest.

Nativity/Citizenship: Without exception, native-born individuals are considerably more likely to report ACA ancestry. Compared to immigrants who are not naturalized citizens, native-born citizens are 13-times more likely to report their ancestry as "Australian" in Australia, 17-times more likely to report as "Canadian" ethnically in Canada, and 88-times more likely to report "American" ancestry in the U.S. Naturalized citizens are somewhat more likely to report ACA ancestries than non-naturalized immigrants, but the differences are modest compared to the large difference from the native-born.

Home Language: In Australia and the U.S., respondents who speak mainly English at home are much more likely to report ACA ancestry: almost 14-times more likely in Australia and more than 6-times more likely in the U.S. The situation is more complicated in Canada because of a

[8] It may seem that the two summary statistics -- Cox and Snell R-squared and overall percentage of outcome variables predicted correctly – offer different interpretations. As a summary statistic, the Cox and Snell R-squared statistic is not as useful for binary outcomes in logistic regression compared with OLS regression of continuous variables such as income. In particular, the R-squared statistic is influenced by different counts for the positive outcome: there are far fewer cases reporting "American" ancestry compared to cases reporting "Australian" and "Canadian" ethnicities.

greater diversity of home languages. Compared to individuals who do not speak either English or French at home, those who speak mainly English at home are more than 5-times more likely to report "Canadian" ethnic origin, and people who speak mainly French at home are more than 16-times more likely to report as "Canadian".

Education: Respondents with more education, in all three countries, are generally less likely to identify with ACA ancestry. For Canada and the U.S., the relationship between education and ACA ancestry is fairly straightforward and linear, with lower percents identifying with ACA ancestry as education increases. In Australia, there is a curvilinear relationship between education and identification with "Australian" ancestry.

Household Income: The multivariate analysis includes household income, measured in units of $10,000 for constant 2001 U.S. dollars, and household income-squared given possible curvilinear relationships between household income and ACA ancestry. The relationship varies across the three countries. For Australia, increasing household income is associated with decreases in reporting "Australian" ancestry. For Canada and U.S., there is a slightly curvilinear relationship. For all three countries, however, household income does not appear to have as strong an association with identifying with ACA ancestry or ethnicity, compared with other explanatory variables.

Marital Status: Except in the U.S., marital status does not have a pronounced association with reporting ACA ancestry. U.S. single and separated adults have lower levels of reporting "American" ancestry, while married, divorced, and widowed adults are about 40 percent more likely to report "American" ancestry.

Labour Force Status: There are no marked differences in identifying with ACA ancestry for different categories of labour force status, with the single exception of unemployed persons in the U.S., who are 20 percent less likely to report "American" ancestry.

Religion: For both Australia and Canada, there is a similar relationship between religious affiliation and reporting ACA ancestry. Compared to Protestants, Catholics are somewhat less likely (24 percent less likely in Australia and 15 percent less likely in Canada) to identify with ACA ancestry.

Region: We include a variable that has categorical codes for various regions in order to examine possible geographical differences in identifying with ACA ancestry. There are minor variations in identifying as "Australian" for different regions in Australia, but the differences are not large. For Canada, compared to the reference category of Atlantic Provinces (that is, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island), respondents in Quebec are almost 20 percent more likely to identify as "Canadian". Residents of other regions of Canada are much less likely to identify as "Canadian".

For the U.S., compared to the New England region, respondents in all other areas are relatively more likely to report themselves as "American". Persons in the Southern states, including the South Atlantic, East South Central, and West South Central regions, are especially likely to report as "American", being about 3-times or more likely to do so.

Metropolitan Residence: Respondents living in metropolitan areas are less likely to identify with ACA ancestry, compared to persons living outside metropolitan areas. Differences are larger in the U.S., where metropolitan residents are 43 percent less likely to report "American" ancestry. For all three countries, the reporting of ACA ancestry is more likely in rural areas and smaller towns that are outside metropolitan areas.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The emergence of national ancestries or ethnic identities such as "Australian", "Canadian", or "American" in multi-ethnic immigrant-based societies is a relatively new phenomenon. While researchers have previously studied this process in each of the three countries, this paper is the first to provide a comparative examination of this phenomenon in the three countries. The analysis has yielded some interesting findings while raising many equally interesting questions. The main findings show that identifying with a national ancestry or ethnic origin in each of the three countries is associated with several common factors, including being native-born, having a home language background associated with the majority population (English in Australia and the U.S., English or French in Canada), younger age, lower education, Catholic religion in Australia and Canada, and residence in non-metropolitan areas. Some factors that have different effects include region of residence (which is unique to each country) where we observe marked regional differences in the U.S. and Canada but not in Australia.

Based on previous research and our main findings, we propose the following ideas for preliminary theorizing for identification with a pan-ethnic national ancestry or ethnic origin. We group these preliminary ideas into four dimensions of identification with a national ancestry or ethnic origin: (i) simplification; (ii) social marginality; (iii) regional and/or ethnic sub-cultures and history; and (iv) endogenous or home grown ethnicity.

Simplification Process

The effects of native birth and majority group home language suggest that identification with a national ancestry or ethnic origin exemplifies the simplification process first described by Lieberson and Waters (1993) in their analysis of ancestry data from the 1980 U.S. census.

People whose families have been in a country for multiple generations[9] and who belong to the majority cultural group (indicated by native birth and home language in this study) are more likely to simplify their reported ancestry for at least two reasons.

First, families who have been in the country for many generations may no longer identify with the original ethnic identities of their ancestors, such as "English" or "Scottish". The specific ethnicities of their ancestors may be forgotten and/or irrelevant. Instead of being hyphenated Americans, for example, "English-American", they may simply identify as "American" -- the unhyphenated whites described by Lieberson and Waters (1993).

Second, a longer history in the country is associated with higher rates of intermarriage, which expands the number of ethnicities in the family. People with multiple ethnicities as a result of generations of ethnic intermarriage may not know what all these ethnicities may be because there are so many. Having multiple ethnic origins may also reduce the importance of any one ethnic origin, leading to identification with a simplified national ancestry such as "Australian" or "American".

Social Marginality

The set of findings related to the effects of younger age, less education, and non-metropolitan residence suggests a different dimension for identification with a national ethnicity or ancestry. Could identification with a national ethnicity such as "Australian", "Canadian", or "American" reflect some aspect of social marginality? One could argue that younger people, those with less education, and those who do not live in the large metropolitan centres of the

[9] We are unable to measure generation status with the U.S. data as we know only whether the respondent is U.S. or foreign-born. Immigrant generation is available for Canada and Australia, and other studies show that identifying with either "Canadian" or "Australian" ethnicities is more likely with higher generation (see Khoo and Lucas 2004 for Australian findings and Boyd and Norris 2001; Goldmann 1998; and Lee and Edmonston forthcoming for Canadian findings).

country may perceive or feel marginalized from the mainstream. Identification with a national ethnicity may represent an effort to claim or exert membership in the larger society.

The inverse relationship between household income and identification as "Australian" provides additional support for this idea, although additional research is required to explore this possibility since, alternatively, younger people and those with less education may be less familiar with their ancestries or ethnic roots, and therefore more likely to just report as "Australian" or "Canadian" or "American". Different data that have direct measures of marginalization or alienation, and the subjective meaning of a national ethnicity for these sub-groups, would help shed light on this idea.

Regional and/or ethnic sub-cultures

The regional effects observed in Canada and the U.S. suggest a third dimension for theorizing about identification with a national ethnicity or ancestry. In Canada, residents of the Atlantic Provinces and Quebec are much more likely to identify as "Canadian", while in the U.S., residents of southern states are more likely to identify as "American". Regional variations implicate the role of different histories and regional sub-cultures in identification with national ethnicities.

In the case of Canada, previous studies have discussed the unique history of Quebec, the people of Quebec, and French background for identification as "Canadian" or "Canadien" in French (see Boyd 1999; Boyd and Norris 2001; Lee and Edmonston forthcoming). The southern states in the U.S. also have distinctive histories and cultures within the U.S. that could play a part in why people in these states are more likely to report "American" ancestry (Lieberson and Waters 1993). These regional differences are probably related to a long history in each country,

but are separate from and in addition to the effects of nativity and home language discussed above.

Endogenous or Home Grown Ethnicity

A fourth process contributing to identification with a national ancestry or ethnicity may be the evolution of an endogenous or home-grown ethnicity among the native born from groups with very long histories in the country, a process discussed by Boyd and Norris (2001) and Lieberson and Waters (1993). The culture of these groups (for example, language, religion, values, etc.) would have been central to the development of mainstream cultural identity in each country. For people with roots in these long-established groups, ancestry or ethnic origin may simply be the same as the term used to describe the nation (hence, "Australian" or "American" ancestry or "Canadian" ethnicity). The Canadian case is further complicated by the large effect of Quebec residence and history, which is related to the role of regional/ethnic sub-culture described above.

Why and how home-grown ethnic identities evolve is probably a complex process and why it would become evident at a particular time is another riddle. Period-specific factors such as the "Count me 'Canadian'" campaign discussed by Boyd (1999) play a role. So may increased levels of immigration, although we did not observe higher propensity to identify as "Canadian" in areas with higher percentages of immigrants (Lee and Edmonston forthcoming).

Taking these four dimensions together, it appears that identification with national ancestries or ethnic origins in Australia, Canada, and the U.S. is associated with different processes, including simplification, marginalization, regionalism, and the evolution of home grown ethnicity or ancestry. Each process reflects different reasons for why particular

individuals and groups in each country are more likely to identify with a national ethnicity or ancestry.

While this study has produced some intriguing findings, it also raises many questions for future research. One such question will be the analysis of additional data to see if the trend continues, and if the same characteristics continue to have similar effects. More recent data show declines in the percentages identifying with a national ancestry/ethnicity in Australia and Canada. The 2006 Australian census reported 29 percent reporting "Australian" ancestry (down from 38 percent in 2001) and the 2006 Canadian census reported 32 percent reporting "Canadian" ethnicity (down from 37 percent). In the U.S., the 2006 American Community Survey, where the ancestry question is now asked, estimated that over 20 million people (or roughly 7 percent) reported "American" as their only ancestry, compared with 9 percent in the 2000 census. It would be interesting to investigate factors associated with the declines (largest in Australia, smaller in Canada and the U.S.), including perhaps increased immigration, since few immigrants identified with these national ancestries/ethnicities, and other changes in recent years.

Additional analysis will be important to provide confirmation that identification as "Australian" in Australia, "Canadian" in Canada, and "American" in the U.S. is not temporary or artifactual, that is, because of measurement issues. Even if there are decreases in the percentages identifying with these origins, the numbers and percentages that continue to identify as "Australian" in Australia, "Canadian" in Canada, and "American" in the U.S. are still substantial. There is also evidence that a similar trend of reporting "New Zealander" ethnic origin has emerged in New Zealand (Potter et al. 2003). That this is not an isolated trend for a single country further shows that this is a development worth investigation.

Another research question is to examine the meanings that such national ethnic ancestries hold for people who identify with them. We had alluded to this process earlier in our discussion of factors related to the simplification of ancestry responses and that national ethnic ancestries or ethnicities are endogenous home grown identities with distinct meanings. What does it mean to say that one's ancestry or ethnic origin is "Australian" or "Canadian" or "American"? Are there distinctive and unique *content* and *boundaries* for each of these national ethnicities? For example, what sets a person who identifies with "American" ancestry apart from those who do not? Our analysis suggests that such a person will be native-born, most likely descended from ethnic groups that have been in the U.S. for multiple generations, and more likely to live in one of the southern states. These factors may represent boundaries for the ancestry group, "American". How about content? How do people identifying as "American" differ from those who do not, in terms of behaviour, life-style, and values and attitudes? Similar questions can be asked about "Australian" ancestry and "Canadian" ethnicity.

Additional research on the implications and potential consequences of shifts from specific ethnic or ancestry identification to a broad pan-ethnic national ethnicity or ancestry for racial/ethnic group-based government policies and programs, such as affirmative action and equal opportunity programs would also be useful. Our and other researchers' findings show that, so far, most of those who are reporting a national ethnicity are the native-born of European origins. However, if members of minority groups also join the trend of reporting a national ethnicity or ancestry over specific ethnicities, there may be concern over loss of necessary data to track the relative socioeconomic positions and progress of indigenous and minority groups.

We conclude with some cautionary notes. First, as with all comparative research, there are unique challenges. Among the more important limitations of comparative research is the

need to have harmonized variables. We tried to derive measures that are as comparable as possible. However, this is not always possible, and some measures, for example, of education for Australia, and inherent differences in measurement and meaning of region of residence, were particularly challenging. Another data limitation is the lack of some variables in some data sets, for example, data on religion are forbidden by law to be collected in the U.S. census, and so it is not always possible to compare all three countries on all variables. In addition, as we had discussed, there are differences in wording and format of the question on ancestry and ethnic origin, as well as differences in how the responses are captured and recorded. For example, the U.S. Census Bureau's approach clearly undercounts the number and percent of "American" ancestry responses.

In spite of research challenges and caveats, the findings reported here demonstrate that ethnicity, in all its varied forms and measurements, remains a highly changeable but central and meaningful concept in multi-ethnic immigrant-based populations. National ethnicities or ancestries such as "American", "Australian", and "Canadian" may represent examples of new home-grown ethnic identities in the U.S., Australia, and Canada, respectively. Such a development will no doubt challenge researchers and our thinking of ethnicity and ethnic identity.

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Table 1: Percent Reporting "Australian", "Canadian" or "American" Ancestry or Ethnic Origin

Category and Year	As Only Response	As One of Multiple Responses	Total
"Australian"			
1986	n.a.	n.a.	24.0[a]
2001	29.0	9.4	38.4[b]
"Canadian"[c]			
1991	2.7	1.1	3.8
1996	17.6	11.3	28.9
2001	22.1	14.9	37.0
"American"[d]			
1980	6.3	0.1	6.4
1990	5.6	n.a.	5.6
2000	9.0	n.a.	9.0

Notes:
n.a. Not available.

[a] Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2003b).

[b] Authors' analysis of public-use microdata from the 2001 Census.

[c] Figures for "Canadian" are based on authors' analysis of public-use microdata from the 1991, 1996, and 2001 Censuses.

[d] Based on authors' analysis of the 1% IPUMS for the 1980, 1990, and 2000 Censuses. The percents for 1990 and 2000 differ from those reported in Brittingham and de la Cruz (2004) because Brittingham and de la Cruz (2004) included everyone in the denominator (including people who failed to provide any response to the question) whereas the percents in this table are based on those who provided responses to the ancestry question, which we consider to be the correct denominator. In addition, beginning with the 1990 Census, the U.S. Census Bureau considered "American" a valid response only when it was the only response; thus, there is no information on people who reported "American" as one of multiple responses as these respondents were allocated to the non-"American" ancestry.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Samples, Persons 18 Years and Older

Characteristic	Australia	Canada	United States
Mean Age	45.8	45.4	45.1
% Female	51.4	51.5	51.8
% Aboriginal or Native Peoples	2.2[a]	3.7	1.5
Citizenship (%)			
Citizen by Birth	66.6	77.3	86.7
Citizen by Naturalization	20.0	17.0	5.7
Not a Citizen	13.4	5.7	7.6
Marital Status (%)			
Never Married	27.8	23.0	23.1
Married or in Common-Law Relationship	54.1	62.9	57.4
Separated or Divorced	11.5	8.3	12.6
Widowed	6.6	5.8	7.0
Education (%)			
Less than High School	41.4	28.2	20.3
High School Graduate	30.5	24.8	28.7
Some Post-High School	17.6	30.7	28.8
Bachelor's Degree or More	10.5	16.3	22.3
Labor Force Status (%)			
Employed	59.9	63.1	61.4
Unemployed	4.5	4.9	3.5
Not in Labor Force	35.6	32.0	35.1
% Homeowner	72.6	71.7	70.0
Mean Household Income (in constant 2001 US $)	34,271	45,197	65,454
% Residing in Metropolitan Area	61.0	62.4	55.6
Unweighted Number of Cases	141,367	612,608	2,086,381

Notes:

[a] This variable was not available in the public-use file for Australia. The 2.2 percent is from published tables from the Australian Burea of Statistics.

Table 3: Percent in Each Category of Selected Characteristics Reporting "Australian", "Canadian" or "American" Ancestry, Persons 18 years and older: 2000/2001

Characteristic	"Australian"			"Canadian"			"American"
	Single[a]	Multiple[b]	Total	Single[a]	Multiple[b]	Total	Single[a]
Age Groups							
18 to 29	28.5	11.1	39.6	23.1	16.2	39.3	8.0
30 to 59	25.8	7.9	33.7	22.2	15.1	37.3	8.2
60 and older	24.8	6.1	30.9	19.9	12.5	32.4	9.7
Nativity							
Native-Born	36.1	11.1	47.2	28.1	18.5	46.6	10.0
Foreign-Born	3.3	1.5	4.8	1.0	1.9	2.9	0.1
Home Language							
English	31.2	9.7	40.9	14.8	14.4	29.2	10.0
French	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	53.4	22.5	75.9	n.a.
Other	0.9	0.7	1.6	0.6	1.8	2.4	0.1
Education							
Less than High School	27.8	7.6	35.4	26.6	12.5	39.1	10.2
High School	26.7	8.4	35.1	25.7	15.6	41.3	11.5
Some Post-High School	21.6	8.9	30.5	19.1	15.9	35.0	7.4
Bachelor's Degree or More	20.2	10.1	30.3	13.1	15.5	28.6	5.2
Residence							
Metropolitan Area	21.1	8.0	29.1	17.9	13.5	31.4	5.4
Non-Metropolitan Area	34.1	8.5	42.6	28.6	16.8	45.4	12.9

Notes:
n.a.: Not applicable. In Canada, English and French are official and dominant languages while only English is in Australia and the United States.

[a] "Single" means this was the only ancestry provided by the respondent. Only single responses are available in the U.S. data, so the total is the same as for "Single".

[b] "Multiple" means "Australian" or "Canadian" was reported together with other responses, for example, Irish or French, in Australia and Canada, respectively.

Table 4.a: Logistical Regression Analysis, Predicting Single-Origin "Australian" Ancestry, Australia, 2001

Explanatory Variables	Variable Categories	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-test	Exp(B)
Constant		-5.9631	0.0309	-193.0646	0.0021
Age	Less than 30	0.3052	0.0051	59.4337	1.3569
	30-39	0.2447	0.0049	50.1065	1.2773
	40-49	0.2831	0.0049	58.0415	1.3273
	50-59	0.1850	0.0048	38.2439	1.2032
	60-69	0.0504	0.0048	10.5446	1.0517
	70-79	0.0450	0.0047	9.5180	1.0460
	80 and Older	---[a]			
Sex	Female	-0.0042	0.0016	-2.6634	0.9958
	Male	---[a]			
Citizenship	Citizen by Birth	2.5369	0.0059	429.1611	12.6404
	Citizen by Naturalization	0.1953	0.0071	27.3707	1.2157
	Not a Citizen	---[a]			
Home Language	English	2.6360	0.0085	310.4695	13.9566
	French	---[b]			
	Other	---[a]			
Education	Advanced Degree	---[a]			
	Post Bachelor's	-0.0561	0.0087	-6.4823	0.9455
	Bachelor's Degree	-0.0081	0.0066	-1.2193	0.9919
	Some College/University	0.0146	0.0069	2.1081	1.0147
	Vocational Diploma	---[b]			
	High School Diploma	0.1989	0.0065	30.5840	1.2200
	11th Grade	0.8120	0.0077	105.3240	2.2525
	10th Grade	0.1759	0.0065	26.9836	1.1923
	9th Grade or Less	0.3914	0.0063	61.6590	1.4790
Household Income (10,000s)		-0.0125	0.0018	-7.0144	1.0125
Household Income-Squared		0.0001	0.0002	0.5878	1.0012

Table 4.a. (continued)

Explanatory Variables	Variable Categories	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-test	Exp(B)
Marital Status	Never-Married	---[a]			
	Married/Common-Law	-0.0065	0.0022	-2.9582	0.9935
	Separated	0.0042	0.0043	0.9878	1.0042
	Divorced	-0.0614	0.0033	-18.6025	0.9405
	Widowed	0.0853	0.0041	20.6831	1.0890
Labour Force Status	Employed	---[a]			
	Unemployed	0.0140	0.0039	3.6197	1.0141
	Not in the Labour Force	0.0541	0.0021	25.9421	1.0556
Religion	Protestant	---[a]			
	Catholic	-0.2710	0.0018	-151.0334	0.7626
	Other Christian	-0.3541	0.0037	-97.0018	0.7018
	Other Religion	-0.6241	0.0073	-85.4335	0.5358
	No Religion	-0.0333	0.0021	-15.6890	0.9673
Region	New South Wales	---[a]			
	Victoria	-0.1162	0.0020	-56.8838	0.8903
	Queensland	-0.1059	0.0020	-51.7654	0.8995
	South Australia	-0.1030	0.0029	-35.3712	0.9021
	Western Australia	-0.1611	0.0028	-56.7202	0.8512
	Tasmania	0.0023	0.0044	0.5179	1.0023
	Northern Territories	-0.2416	0.0081	-29.9575	0.7854
	Australian Capital	-0.0811	0.0060	-13.4172	0.9221
Metropolitan	Metropolitan	-0.2405	0.0016	-149.9319	0.7863
	Non-Metropolitan	---[a]			

Model Summary

Number of Observations	113,978
Weighted Sample	11,397,800
-2 Log likelihood	10,754,395
Cox & Snell R Squared	0.1780
Overall Percentage Predicted Correctly	74.31

Notes:

[a] Reference or excluded category.

[b] Not applicable.

Table 4.b: Logistical Regression Analysis, Predicting Single-Origin "Canadian" Ancestry, Canada, 2001

Explanatory Variables	Variable Categories	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-test	Exp(B)
Constant		-6.4989	0.0187	-348.2624	0.0011
Age	Less than 30	0.4991	0.0043	115.3218	1.6472
	30-39	0.5109	0.0042	120.4419	1.6667
	40-49	0.4400	0.0042	104.7196	1.5527
	50-59	0.2933	0.0042	70.2958	1.3408
	60-69	0.1488	0.0041	36.2138	1.1605
	70-79	0.0694	0.0041	16.8061	1.0718
	80 and Older	---[a]			
Sex	Female	-0.0066	0.0012	-5.5196	0.9934
	Male	---[a]			
Citizenship	Citizen by Birth	2.8603	0.0106	271.0771	17.4662
	Citizen by Naturalization	0.2189	0.0117	18.7670	1.2447
	Not a Citizen	---[a]			
Home Language	English	1.6200	0.0085	191.7018	5.0532
	French	2.7746	0.0086	322.7860	16.0321
	Other	---[a]			
Education	Advanced Degree	---[a]			
	Post Bachelor's	0.1376	0.0124	11.1175	1.1475
	Bachelor's Degree	0.2808	0.0121	23.2877	1.3242
	Some College/University	0.5994	0.0120	50.1153	1.8210
	Vocational Diploma	0.5660	0.0123	45.9669	1.7612
	High School Diploma	0.8697	0.0120	72.7241	2.3861
	11th Grade	1.0733	0.0122	87.6650	2.9249
	10th Grade	1.1154	0.0122	91.7028	3.0508
	9th Grade or Less	1.1314	0.0120	94.3397	3.1001
Household Income (10,000s)		-0.0088	0.0007	-12.5556	0.9912
Household Income-Squared		0.0002	0.0001	2.9492	1.0002

Table 4.b. (continued)

Explanatory Variables	Variable Categories	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-test	Exp(B)
Marital Status	Never-Married	---[a]			
	Married/Common-Law	0.0709	0.0017	42.0756	1.0735
	Separated	0.0945	0.0039	23.9506	1.0991
	Divorced	0.0556	0.0029	19.0867	1.0572
	Widowed	0.1661	0.0033	49.7780	1.1807
Labour Force Status	Employed	---[a]			
	Unemployed	-0.0655	0.0027	-23.9859	0.9366
	Not in the Labour Force	-0.0194	0.0017	-11.5903	0.9808
Religion	Protestant	---[a]			
	Catholic	-0.1654	0.0017	-96.0938	0.8475
	Other Christian	-0.3073	0.0044	-69.1106	0.7354
	Other Religion	-1.1397	0.0069	-164.8537	0.3199
	No Religion	0.1903	0.0020	96.3794	1.2096
Region	Atlantic Provinces	---[a]			
	Quebec	0.1709	0.0028	60.3188	1.1864
	Ontario	-0.5272	0.0021	-248.8037	0.5902
	Prairies	-1.0401	0.0025	-415.4451	0.3534
	British Columbia	-1.0701	0.0028	-376.7904	0.3430
	Northwest Territory/Yukon Territory/Nunavut	-1.3080	0.0148	-88.4659	0.2704
Metropolitan	Metropolitan	-0.2034	0.0013	-160.7804	0.8160
	Non-Metropolitan	---[a]			
Model Summary					
Number of Observations				609,806	
Weighted Sample				22,559,429	
-2 Log likelihood				18,077,619	
Cox & Snell R Squared				0.2215	
Overall Percentage Predicted Correctly				81.24	

Notes:

[a] Reference or excluded category.

Table 4.c: Logistical Regression Analysis, Predicting Single-Origin "American" Ancestry, United States, 2000

Explanatory Variables	Variable Categories	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-test	Exp(B)
Constant		-10.5528	0.0329	-320.7135	0.0000
Age	Less than 30	0.2482	0.0018	135.7624	1.2818
	30-39	0.1979	0.0018	111.7796	1.2188
	40-49	0.0623	0.0018	35.3345	1.0643
	50-59	0.0444	0.0018	25.1449	1.0454
	60-69	0.0586	0.0017	33.7120	1.0604
	70-79	0.0256	0.0017	14.7451	1.0259
	80 and Older	---[a]			
Sex	Female	-0.0010	0.0006	-1.7402	0.9990
	Male	---[a]			
Citizenship	Citizen by Birth	4.4775	0.0359	124.6510	88.0182
	Citizen by Naturalization	1.0715	0.0139	77.0114	2.9197
	Not a Citizen	---[a]			
Home Language	English	1.8183	0.0198	91.6402	6.1616
	French	---[b]			
	Other	---[a]			
Education	Advanced Degree	---[a]			
	Post Bachelor's	-0.0483	0.0028	-17.3538	0.9528
	Bachelor's Degree	0.1454	0.0025	59.0436	1.1565
	Some College/University	0.3846	0.0024	159.6068	1.4690
	Vocational Diploma	0.3320	0.0026	126.4956	1.3938
	High School Diploma	0.8415	0.0024	353.0276	2.3197
	11th Grade	0.8221	0.0026	321.8875	2.2753
	10th Grade	1.0162	0.0027	369.5721	2.7626
	9th Grade or Less	1.0585	0.0026	411.5217	2.8820
Household Income (10,000s)		-0.0112	0.0001	-114.1166	0.9889
Household Income-Squared		0.0002	0.0000	82.2364	1.0002

Table 4.c. (continued)

Explanatory Variables	Variable Categories	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-test	Exp(B)
Marital Status	Never-Married	---[a]			
	Married/Common-Law	0.3862	0.0009	430.5574	1.4714
	Separated	0.0129	0.0022	5.8282	1.0129
	Divorced	0.3115	0.0012	260.3703	1.3655
	Widowed	0.3246	0.0015	211.1327	1.3834
Labour Force Status	Employed	---[a]			
	Unemployed	-0.2360	0.0018	-132.1817	0.7898
	Not in the Labour Force	0.0063	0.0007	8.4608	1.0063
Religion	Protestant	---[b]			
	Catholic	---[b]			
	Other Christian	---[b]			
	Other Religion	---[b]			
	No Religion	---[b]			
Region	New England	---[a]			
	Middle Atlantic	0.1556	0.0019	81.7126	1.1683
	East North Central	0.5400	0.0018	305.3707	1.7160
	West North Central	0.4238	0.0020	216.0893	1.5277
	South Atlantic	1.2258	0.0017	721.6999	3.4070
	East South Central	1.6699	0.0018	931.3733	5.3115
	West South Central	1.0265	0.0018	575.8283	2.7912
	Mountain	0.3855	0.0021	187.4194	1.4704
	Pacific	0.3207	0.0019	169.4185	1.3781
Metropolitan	Metropolitan	0.5656	0.0006	915.4767	1.7606
	Non-Metropolitan	---[a]			

Model Summary

Number of Observations	1,590,357
Weighted Sample	160,840,917
-2 Log likelihood	85,733,339
Cox & Snell R Squared	0.0641
Overall Percentage Predicted Correctly	91.12

Notes:

[a] Reference or excluded category.

[b] Not applicable.

FIGURE 1: ANCESTRY QUESTION, 2001 CENSUS OF AUSTRALIA (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001 Census questionnaire).

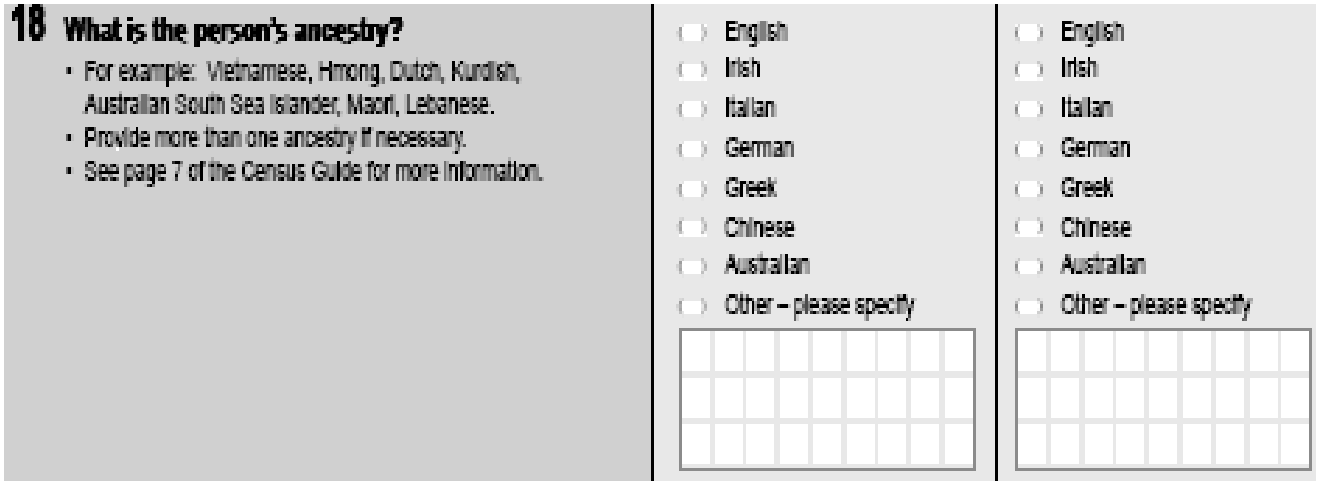
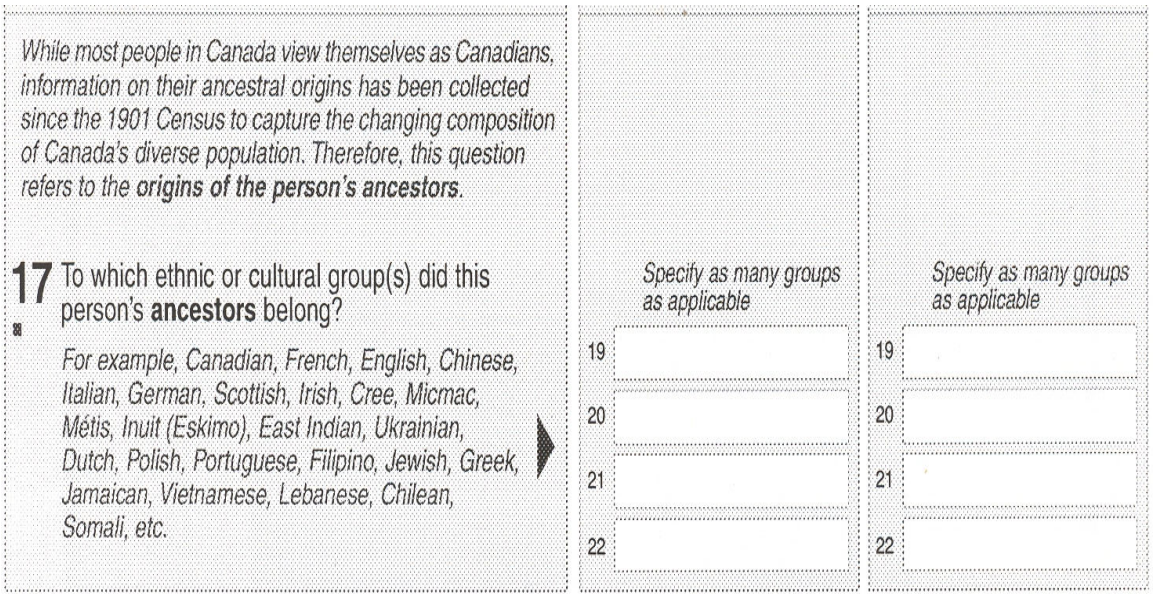


FIGURE 2: ETHNIC ORIGIN QUESTION, 2001 CENSUS OF CANADA (Statistics Canada, 2001 Census questionnaire)



*While most people in Canada view themselves as Canadians, information on their ancestral origins has been collected since the 1901 Census to capture the changing composition of Canada's diverse population. Therefore, this question refers to the **origins of the person's ancestors**.*

17 To which ethnic or cultural group(s) did this person's **ancestors** belong?

For example, Canadian, French, English, Chinese, Italian, German, Scottish, Irish, Cree, Micmac, Métis, Inuit (Eskimo), East Indian, Ukrainian, Dutch, Polish, Portuguese, Filipino, Jewish, Greek, Jamaican, Vietnamese, Lebanese, Chilean, Somali, etc.

Specify as many groups as applicable

19
20
21
22

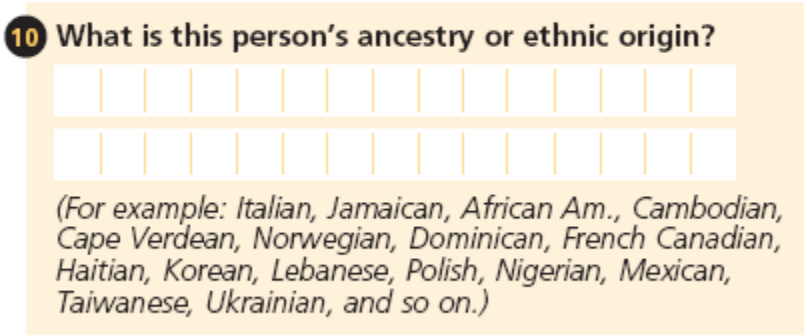
Specify as many groups as applicable

19
20
21
22

FIGURE 3: ANCESTRY QUESTION, 2000 CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES

Figure 1.

Reproduction of the Question on Ancestry From Census 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 questionnaire.