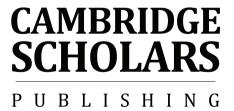# Everlasting Countdowns

Everlasting Countdowns:
Race, Ethnicity and National Censuses
in Latin American States

Edited by

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CHAPTER ONE

RACE, ETHNICITY AND NATIONAL CENSUSES
IN LATIN AMERICAN STATES:
COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES

LUIS FERNANDO ANGOSTO FERRÁNDEZ
AND SABINE KRADOLFER

Politics, not demographics, is at the core of this book on censuses. This caveat will hardly surprise social scientists, always on their guard before clichés about the politically neutral functioning of statistics bureaus, but may however be reassuring for the general reader who opens this type of book all too ready to drop it as soon as the first numbers are within sight. No statistical or demographic expertise is required to engage debate around social categories in censuses, and one of the goals pursued by this work is in fact grounded on that basic premise: we should like to increase the existing degree of public awareness, scrutiny and discussion around national population counts.

Contributors to this volume are removing the fig-leaves from censuses by historicising and contextualising a type of statistical practice that has become essential for the functioning (and understanding) of the contemporary state. Through censuses, states both obtain information from and give shape to "national" populations upon which government will be exercised. Nowadays these populations are characteristically diverse, and racial and ethnic identification has become one of the means through which censuses officially classify that diversity in discrete units. The contentious and complex history (and present) of this type of categorisation is a telling testimony to the political load embedded in census-making, and also an excellent platform to tackle ongoing debates on statecraft, cultural diversity and democracy in contemporary Latin America. By focusing on the contested and contingent realm of census-

making, we aim to contribute to a more fertile understanding of these contemporary debates.

Ethnicity and race have re-emerged as pivotal social categories in this continent. There is a growing influence of social movements, political parties and civil society organisations that, with differing strategies and outcomes, appeal to these categories as sources of identification, mobilisation and rights claims. In parallel, some governments are drawing on narratives of ethnicity, and particularly on notions of indigeneity, in order to reshape national identities and create new legitimacies for post-neoliberal political models. This amalgam of social processes "from below" and "from above" powerfully influences today's Latin American politics and, though slippery in analytical terms, it feeds into the realm of census-making.

A decade ago, seventeen out of nineteen Latin American states were incorporating categories to identify ethnic or racial belonging in their first census round of the century (Del Popolo et al., 2009; see Petruccelli in this volume for a list of census questions and race and ethnic categories in that round). A new census round is now taking place and, yet again, one of the aspects that attracts most expert and general attention concerns the inclusion and operational shaping of those categories. Both socialist-leaning and liberal-leaning governments are currently including ethnic and/or racial categories in their national censuses, in a factual demonstration that the tendency towards developing a degree of sensitivity for diversity in population counts can be regarded as a consolidating ideological trend in the continent. This fact presents great interest for comparative studies, and this in turn relates to another of the volume's goals: we intend to provide information and grounded discussion for future decision-making in this transcendent field of contemporary politics.

Race and ethnicity have a consolidated presence in Latin American censuses for reasons that, to a considerable extent, are associated with current global politics, but which are nonetheless strongly conditioned by the historical and sociological peculiarities of the region. In the broad picture, national censuses are recognised world-wide as transcendent (and laborious and costly) administrative events. They are essential instruments of state governance, a means to "govern by numbers" (Desrosières, 2008b). They provide data for the definition of public agendas and for the subsequent design and implementation of government policy. But, in addition, they are spaces of contested social representations and considered essential in the struggles for group recognition. Censuses thus relate to the whole continuum of politics that oscillates between redistribution and "recognition"[1]. Against this international background,

and with the ideology of multiculturalism so closely intertwined with both the re-legitimisation of Latin American democracies and in general with neoliberal governance (Assies et al., 2000; Hale, 2002; Van Cott, 2000), it is unsurprising that at present these national counts pay distinctive attention to identity groups identified through ethnic or racial criteria.

In addition to these global conditionings, regional idiosyncrasies certainly modulate interests in and approaches to census-making, and Latin American actors have elaborated their own set of arguments in the justification of the use of race and ethnic categories. Latin America harbours the world's most unequal wealth distribution and, given the central role censuses can play in portraying and tackling that issue, these national counts have understandably become the target of increasing political and technical scrutiny. "Ethnicity" and "race" are social categories that have been related to unequal distribution of both wealth and power and to the different degrees to which a person (as a member of a particular identity group) can enjoy citizen rights (Byrne, 1999; Lovell and Wood, 1998; Valle Silva, 2000). In addition, the demands and expectations projected upon censuses in this continent are distinctively strong for other political reasons: powerful emergent narratives of democracy and citizenship are addressing social groups as much as individuals, and human rights debates are as focused on the particularities of cultural diversity as on universal concerns. Two pursuits thus become intertwined in cultural-diversity sensitive population counts: first, since they produce numerical data for social indicators in areas such as education, health or income, censuses are expected to contribute to tackling social inequality through a more effective orientation of the state's "politics of redistribution". On the other hand they are considered to be tactical for a positive re-valorisation of already existing collective identities which have previously been subordinated and pervaded by a negative "minority" status within national constructs.

Officially recognised as politically and economically significant, and in harmony with the substantially different but on this point convergent ideologies of multiculturalism and plurinationalism that have been shaping Latin American constitutionalism in the past two decades, race and ethnic categories are gaining presence in administrative records. Census designs, their implementation programmes and the ideological conceptualisations that articulate them have accordingly been in a continuous process of re-modelling. Studying these changes is a way to identify ideological affinities and cleavages in national and regional politics of governmentality, for censuses are administrative tasks in which the state is obliged to transform ideology into practice. In this practice states project

dominant views on what constitutes the "national body" and, to a large extent, condition the policies that can be developed in regard to that body.

Critiques of the inclusion of racial and ethnic categories in Latin American censuses are rare, in general terms, or weakly articulated–Brazil being the most salient exception. On the contrary, there is a predominant concern with improving the quality of censuses by creating mechanisms that portray the population's cultural diversity with more reliability and contrast it with other social diversities (such as economic ones). However, the development of case studies in the continent is very uneven, with countries such as Brazil, and to a lesser extent Colombia and Chile, concentrating a large share of the existing analytical efforts. We hope that the chapters included in this volume, which provide insights into state-of-the-art census research in the continent, will stimulate further debates in countries where this research is still only incipient.

1. So what is political about censuses?

Ideology pervades the census approach to race and ethnic identities. Ideology determines in the first place whether or not ethnic and racial categories will be accepted as legitimate and realistic divisions of the "national body" that the census represents. Then, if those categories are accepted, ideology, articulated in this stage with technical considerations, continues to influence the national population image through the specific shaping given to those categories in operational definitions that are far from being universal: they do vary and can do so substantially. All this ideology-pervaded process impacts on society in practical terms, both through the ways in which it pre-informs public policy and through a practical act of administrative recognition that implies the legitimisation, consolidation or even the creation of social categories that may condition citizen interaction.

Census bureaus tend to present themselves as "fact-finder" technocratic bodies, thus setting boundaries to external political influences and aiming to maintain stable institutional environments. However, research on censuses has been consistently showing how rusty that armour of bureaucratic neutrality is, and a "loss of innocence" story has gained ground, emphatically stressing the political nature of these statistical undertakings. Though technical expertise at the bureaus remains centrally accredited, it is widely recognised that census-making is deeply enmeshed in broader political processes that shape them as governmental tools. In the USA, where there is by now a rich tradition of debate around racial and ethnic census categories that is rooted in civil right activism and more

recently in the wave of debates around the ideology of multiculturalism and its practical articulations, research produced on the occasion of the first census round of the new century was extraordinarily emphatic and convergent on this point. In her book on race and census, Melissa Nobles remarked that her general goal was "to confront the presumed transparency and political neutrality of racial categorisation on censuses", and reminded the reader that "census bureaus are not innocent bystanders in the arena of politics; census data are never merely demographic data" (2000: x). Kertzer and Arel similarly argued that "the formulation of census questions and categories is inextricably embroiled in politics" (2002: 18) and, against the portrayals of censuses as neutral scientific enterprises, they suggestively depicted these counts as "a political battleground" where the existence of a given imagined group can be scientifically legitimised (ibid.: 20-21). Peter Skerry pithily stated that "the census is inherently–and properly–political in nature" (Skerry, 2000: 7) and presented his book on the topic with the subtitle "race, group identity and the evasion of politics", in a belligerent allusion to the still lingering bureaucratic reluctance to openly accept political debate on census design and implementation. Nancy Krieger stressed the closely-knit relation between ideology and practical effects as mediated by identity categories in censuses with the following comments on USA experiences: "Change racial/ethnic categories […] and you change denominators for rates of birth, disease, disability, and death. Change rates, and you change assessments of need, understandings of social inequalities in health, and claims for resources. Change racial/ethnic categories, and you change our view of ourselves in relation to what even the US federal government now recognises, explicitly, as the 'social-political construct' of race/ethnicity" (2000: 1687)[2]. These geographically localised views are far from being exceptional among social scientists working in other very different social and political milieus.

Existing work on censuses in or on Latin America goes along these lines. In his study of the use of statistics as ideological nation-making instruments in Ecuador, A. Kim Clark was aware that for many people "the very use of numbers seems to preclude the contaminating subjectivity of opinions". However, far from subscribing to such views, he contended that "while statistics seem to present objective data through the simple counting of already existing facts, the very categories used in their collection reveal conceptions of society and personhood" (1998: 185). Other scholarly research may not have been so explicit about this point, but the generalised critical stance demonstrates that social scientists working on the region share the premise that there is nothing apolitical in

census undertakings as a whole (Harris et al., 1993; Magno et al., 2004; Sulmont, 2011; Telles, 2002; Telles and Lim, 1998; Urrea, 2011; Valdivia, 2011).

The works produced by analysts linked to regional bureaus of statistics in the region or to supranational agencies specialised in population studies advocate the use of ethnic and racial categories as instruments to combat structural marginalisation, which is another way to acknowledge the political quality of the census enterprise (CELADE/CEPAL, 2009; CEPAL, 2006; Del Popolo, 2008; Jhon Antón et al., 2009; Petruccelli, 2007; Scholnik and Del Popolo, 2005).

In relation to the political nature of censuses, it has been remarked that these counts, rather than merely adapting to the social world, play a central role in configuring it. In this regard Bourdieu's ideas on the symbolic might of the modern state have had a strong influence, as well as Foucauldian notions of governmentality (Brubaker et al., 2004: 33-34; Desrosières 2008a and 2008b). It is nowadays generally accepted among scholars that censuses, as statecraft tools, project an illusory image of societies as well-bounded entities constituted by an addition of discrete cultural, racial or ethnic sub-units (Anderson, 1991), but also that this is related to modern "governmental technologies". Foucault's insights (2008) into the emergence of statistics in the eighteenth century as closely associated with such technology have been recovered by authors such as Desrosières (2008a and 2008b) in his analysis of the tensions between descriptive and normative dimensions in statistics as a characteristic of these undertakings.

Censuses legitimise certain social identities, but they can also contribute to generating those identities. For some analysts the constitutive potential of censuses is so absolute that they have been said to "nominate into existence" (Goldberg, 1997) and also to "make up people" (Ian Hacking, cited by Brubaker et al., 2004). Kertzer and Arel worked on the premise that the "census does much more than simply reflect social reality: rather, it plays a key role in the construction of that reality" (2002: 2). Nobles suggested that "racial enumeration itself creates and advances concepts of race" (2000: xi) and, furthermore, that the "census bureaus are political actors that help to make race a political reality and do not simply count by it" (ibid.: 22). Skerry, providing concrete examples of the influence of census in shaping social categorisations, pointed out how a term such as "Hispanic", so consolidated in USA nowadays, was not that common before its being adopted in the USA by the Bureau of the Census in the 1970s (2000: 31). In smaller scale studies, other authors have also

acknowledged "the constitutive power of the census with respect to race" (Mezey, 2003: 1703).

All this research situates bureaus of statistics as targets of political scrutiny and, to some extent, it is not surprising that they have tried to defend their administrative neutrality. Besides the search for stable institutional environments, the existing reluctance within these bureaus to accept the premise that censuses are "political" relates to potential collateral damage that understandably concerns functionaries: the fact that they can be associated with wilful and fraudulent data production and management. However, when social scientists recognise the political nature of censuses they do not (necessarily) contend that census results are being "cooked". "Political" is not (in principle) "unethical". It is not even conterminous with "fabricated" in the arena of census categorisation, since what is being contended by scholars and activists is precisely that in the practice of counting social identities there is no such a thing as an exact or naturally objective method, and therefore that in this aspect of census-making there is nothing that is not "fabricated" (Kertzer and Arel, 2002: 21-22). Unfortunately, certain bureaucracies (and also certain governments) cultivate a (misleading) narrative of distrust of the term "political", contributing to normalise a hegemonic discourse, triumphant in the heyday of neoliberalism, that presents the orientation of public administration as a de-ideologised practice that merely requires attention to unquestionable (market-determined) facts. This does not benefit civic engagement with the public sphere, and certainly does not facilitate the increase of legitimacy in census processes.

There is an ample scope for political decision in the process that conditions the inclusion, definition and operationalisation of social identities in national censuses. We contend that the only way to avoid lack of legitimacy and problematic outcomes in the shaping and management of these social categories in censuses is precisely by making that decision process as open to informed public debate, participation and scrutiny as possible.

2. The chapters

This volume includes chapters on ethnic and racial census categorisation in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Panama, Peru and Venezuela. There is a strong focus on the examination of state-fostered constructions of indigeneity as mediated by national censuses, though the Argentinian, Brazilian and Panamanian case studies address ethnic and racial categorisation at large. In addition, two chapters

of the volume explicitly develop a comparative perspective that tackles the types of questions used in different South, Central and North American and Caribbean national censuses to classify population according to ethnic and racial criteria.

Like most volumes with a continental scope, ours deals with the dilemmas of representation and with the challenge of identifying regional trends with a limited sample of national studies. The diversity of analytical perspectives to be found here not only reflects the varied disciplinary backgrounds of contributors, but also testifies to the complexities associated with census categorisation and the range of political stances that censuses generate as soon as they are critically scrutinised. We nevertheless consider that the combination of South and Central American case studies, the range of theoretical and methodological perspectives developed by contributors and the comparative efforts explicitly developed in some of the chapters play to the volume's advantage. As a whole, it provides insights into regional trends as well as a large amount of empirical data that not only enriches our general introductory reflections but will be a valuable input into any forthcoming comparative analysis.

All the chapters present some common grounds. The authors have examined the political aspects of census-making, which is an essential step forward for bringing them closer to public debate. Some degree of diachronic analysis has been adopted in the examination of national censuses in all case studies, and notions of "change" in state approaches to indigeneity in particular and to identity classification in general become apparent. This is probably the simplest and strongest testimony to the constructed character of state sanctioned ethnic and racial categories: in censuses they are defined, used or obliterated in accord with malleable conceptions of nationality, democracy and justice that depend on hegemonic ideologies and the goals that states set for themselves at particular historical periods. A brief introduction to the chapters follows.

Pilar Barrientos provides a historical overview of indigenous categorisation in Argentinian censuses and discusses the practical implications of current working dynamics within the national bureau of statistics. The link between census-making and nation-building are made salient by a critical examination of the historically contentious relationship between the Argentinean state and the indigenous population, and then by analysing the terms under which Afro-descendancy has been recently (2010) conceptualised as an ethnic category. From a standpoint informed by personal experience in the bureau of statistics, Barrientos highlights how its decision-making processes can be conditioned by an underlying tacit hierarchisation of knowledge types. The "technical" one ranks at the

very top, and for some inside technicians "bureaucratic procedures take precedence over any other logic". As a result, despite the existence of rhetoric and positive regulations that promote the participation of civil society representatives (such as indigenous ones) in census design, actors who participate but are not bearers of "technical knowledge" can be factually excluded from decision-making. Besides the value of her reflexive authorship in this context, with this work Barrientos generates avenues for the study of power relations ingrained in institutional place and practice, something about which science historians have been long writing without many echoes in the social sciences.

The chapter by Pablo Regalsky revolves around one of the major issues associated with contemporary census politics: the individual subjectification of identities implied by the consolidation of self-ascription as the central criterion for ethnic identification. The author approaches censuses from a relational understanding of ethnicity within state power relations. The national census, rather than merely providing a snapshot of demographic conditions, becomes in this view an indication of the existing power balance between indigenous peoples and the state. This analysis of national censuses is developed within a broad political frame that takes into account the global conjunctures of contemporary capitalism and the ongoing hegemony of neoliberal political narratives. Against that background, Regalsky explores alternative methods for indigenous identification in Andean Bolivia. He points out objective grounds upon which that identification can be undertaken by resorting to existing forms of recognising community belonging and membership in the region: indigenous notions of descent and the mechanisms through which holding rights over communal lands are granted are central in that process. This proposal sharply highlights the contrast between the use of census paradigms that promote individual self-identification (and therefore count "individual bodies") and the possibilities to be found in paradigms based on "collective bodies" and communal ideologies. The author contends that the critical analysis of this contrast is particularly relevant in a period of ongoing debates about the territorial and political configurations that pluri-national Bolivia requires.

Gloria Lopera Mesa examines the relation between national censuses and the construction of indigeneity in Colombia by questioning *who* counts indigenous peoples, *how* are they counted and *what for*. The author's densely documented historical overview generates analytical threads that link the racialised colonial order established by the conquest with contemporary models of differentiated citizenship sustained by notions of cultural difference. At present, census categorisation in

Colombia faces what the author calls "the paradox of self-recognition": self-identification is the central criterion for ethnic identification in the national census, yet its results continue to be treated with suspicion from state agencies that in their institutional praxis retain the power of defining indigeneity through other mechanisms.

Lopera additionally examines the appearance of a new ethnic/legal category, that of the "indigenous (or Afro-Colombian) victim of the armed conflict". The author argues that this category, a combination of ethnic identification and penal typification, is showing an unexpected potential for the displacement of other categories of "mere indigeneity" as a condition to access basic state-regulated benefits. This category presents the double challenge of identifying who is a "victim" and setting boundaries to an indigenous or Afro-Colombian subjectivity, and Lopera suggestively draws attention to the role that the judiciary might play in the process of identification as the ultimate sphere in which existing notions of indigeneity can be legitimised or rejected.

Gemma Celigueta Comerma analyses the appearance of new forms of indigenous identification in the Guatemalan census round 2002. In a country with a long history of categorical dichotomisation between "indigenous" and *ladino* population, over 100,000 people simultaneously self-identified as both *indígenas* and *ladinos* in 2002. The author remarks on the puzzling fact that these amalgamated *indígenas-ladinos* identifications precisely sprang up in a period in which the prevailing ideology of multiculturalism had been stimulating differentiated ethnic ascriptions, rather than cohesive hybrid categories (such as those previously promoted through Latin American paradigms of national integration). With the support of her own ethnographic work in Quetzaltenango and in critical dialogue with recent work on indigeneity and *mestizaje*, Celigueta suggests that these *indígenas-ladinos* figures incarnate understandings of indigeneity that depart from notions of "purity and authenticity". Albeit calling for further ethnographic studies in order to bring new insights into this phenomenon, the author points to the influence that current redefinitions of indigeneity at international level might be exerting over contemporary representations and conceptualisations of indigeneity in Guatemala.

The chapter by Mònica Martínez Mauri explores how racial and ethnic categories have been constructed in Panama with the support of national censuses and the state's biopolitical management of a culturally diverse population. She highlights the relation between the official population categories and the ways in which the national territory has been conceptualised, largely along the lines of a centre-periphery dichotomisation

that overlaps with another, separating "civilised" and "uncivilised" spheres. Martínez shows how the relations between centre and periphery and between urban and rural were not only reflected in but also supported by census categories used to identify population inhabiting territories differently related to national power. In this context, racial ideology is shown to have been central in the shaping of census categories, with notions of race determining categorisation until the 1950s. Even when "mixed" categories appeared in censuses they were conceptualised as resulting from the combination of "pure" ones, thus reinforcing racial thinking.

The author also emphasises the strong influence of international organisations in the definition of indigeneity and discusses the links between contemporary census categorisation and the Panamanian version of the neoliberal model. She suggests that the fact that indigenous organisations are accepting policies of differentiation consistent with the scripts fostered by guiding institutions within this model relates to the existence of an assistance-based local development frame that offers advantages to the members of differentially targeted cultural groups.

David Sulmont and Néstor Valdivia tackle the case of Peru, a country where ethnic self-identification has not yet been introduced in national censuses. The authors provide a historical overview of these censuses and identify four distinguishable phases. Racial categorisation prevailed until the 1940s, when censuses shifted to register indicators of what dominant anthropological schools identified as "indigenous" cultural traits. By the 1970s, ideological changes in the state's approach to ethnicity meant that it would not be directly registered in censuses. However, the persistence of different forms of discrimination continued to spur debates about how to officially identify and portray the perceived relation between ethnic and racial differentiations and social disadvantage, and since 2001 those concerns have been reflected in a variety of research projects and practical statistical experiences that are critically explored by the authors.

With a focus on applied research, Sulmont and Valdivia partake in the efforts to improve the reliability of ethnic and racial identification in the next national census round (to be held in 2017). They distinguish sets of goals in the advocacy of ethnic and racial categories in official statistics, showing how census methodologies vary in accord with the goals that are to be pursued. They emphasise the importance of sound methodological and conceptual foundations for census undertakings. Though the contribution of technical expertise is acknowledged and the investment of adequate resources is of course called for, the authors rightly underscore the crucial importance of wide public engagement in the shaping of

censuses, whose results always have wide-ranging and transcendent practical implications.

Luis Fernando Angosto Ferrández examines the relation between indigeneity and census-making in Venezuela, where official data on the relative size of the indigenous population has always projected its "minority" status. With a particular focus on the analysis of censuses from the 1980s onwards, the author shows how different historical and political conjunctures have influenced census designs and results. Operational definitions, questions and methodologies used in national censuses to identify and characterise the indigenous population are analysed in relation to particular political milieus. Angosto contends that fluctuations in the size of the indigenous population reflected in official statistics relate more directly to political than to demographic factors. The analytical comparison of the number of indigenous peoples registered in different census rounds supports that argument and clearly illustrates the ways in which contingent political milieus and bureaucratic decision influence census results.

Regarding contemporary census affairs, Angosto also identifies noticeable divergences within state organs in the approach to "indigeneity" and in the understanding of concepts such as "indigenous community", and shows how those divergences are currently reflected in institutional praxis. The realm of the census becomes one of the arenas where those divergences are negotiated, but the author reveals the ways in which that realm is more broadly framed and influenced by contextual political forces. New discursive narratives of national identity that intensively draw on an imaginary of indigeneity and governmental plans of national development (articulated through the so-called "new geometry of power") are pointed out as particularly influential in that regard.

José Luis Petruccelli situates his analysis of Brazilian censuses within a continental comparative frame. He shares the view that, besides providing data for public policy, censuses legitimise a particular social perception of the groups that constitute the society. In the examination of Brazilian censuses from the late nineteenth century onwards, he shows how, besides describing and classifying the population through physical traits, race categories have contributed to naturalise culture.

Petruccelli tackles in applied terms the debate around the number and definition of the social categories that ought to be used to provide an appropriate representation of the Brazilian population in national censuses. This has been a politically loaded and paradigmatic debate, given the prominence of the racial democracy ideology in the country and the often alleged difficulties in the establishment of discrete classifications in the Brazilian "racial continuum". Petruccelli nevertheless shows that in fact a

small number of categories concentrate most responses of racial self-identification when surveys with national scope have been conducted, and argues that this should constitute the basis for informed debates around censuses. The author contends that the removal of racial classifications from Brazilian censuses, a proposal consonant with the views of those who characterise the country as a racial democracy, would hinder the struggle against still existing forms of race-based marginalisation in the country.

On another front, Petruccelli makes a remarkable compilation of data regarding the use of ethnic and racial census indicators in American countries. This compilation, along with the one provided in the following chapter by Fabiana Del Popolo and Susana Schkolnik, offers an excellent comparative platform for anyone interested in contemporary census-making in Latin America and beyond.

Fabiana Del Popolo and Susana Schkolnik share the premise that indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants in Latin America are disadvantaged populations as regards the enjoyment of human rights. They set out to identify ways to gather information that can be used to effectively tackle those disadvantages, making an overview of statistical experiences in the continent. Out of this comparative exercise, the authors elaborate conceptual tools that could orientate the inclusion of ethnic and racial categories in forthcoming national censuses. They remark the centrality of these counts in processes of official ethnic and racial identification. However, Del Popolo and Schkolnik consider that, beyond national censuses, it is also essential to extend ethnic and racial identification to all official sources of data, and close their chapter with a list of recommendations for that purpose. Given the centrality of the authors' own institution, the CEPAL, in the channelling of continental census trends, this work provides insights into some of the central guidelines that Latin American bureaus of statistics will be using in the next few years.

3. Historical framings

The establishment of parameters for the historical comparison of racial and ethnic categorisation in Latin American censuses is a complex task with which we will only partially deal in this volume. Instead of embarking on a systematic comparison of census methodologies and results, we have focused on the identification of common sociological patterns, salient ideological currents and statecraft models that have conditioned the ways in which race and ethnic census categories have been shaped and used by Latin American governments.

3.1. Liberal projects and state modernisation in nineteenth century Latin America

The early stages of modern Latin American censuses are closely intertwined with the processes of state development and modernisation that spread over much of the continent in the latter part of the nineteenth century. In the second half of the century the continent witnessed what somewhat celebratorily has been called "the heyday of liberal reform" (Bushnell and Macaulay, 1994: 193-221). In effect, that reform had little room for liberal democracy and even less for the participation of subaltern classes in the orientation of government, with political dominance often expressed through figures who concentrated and even personalised state power. However, it has to be conceded that, though frequently at the expense of violently suppressed internal conflict and with political rule sustained by quite impermeable (if heterogeneous) elites and/or parties of notables, the last decades of the century and the early 1900s established the grounds for new avenues of economic growth. Albeit principally benefiting those elites (Burns, 1980: 10-15), that economic growth was accompanied by a gradual development of the state apparatus. Particularly from the 1870s onwards, with relative political stability and ongoing projects of modernisation under some variant of the "order and development" motto, governments sought mechanisms that would facilitate the consolidation of state institutionality and governmentality over the national population. Significantly, bureaus of statistics were created in several countries during this period, and many of the first "modern" national censuses were conducted in or around the 1870s: Argentina (1869), Brazil (1872), Guatemala (1870, with its Bureau of Statistics created in 1879), Peru (1876) and Venezuela (1873) are examples of this trend to be found amongst the national case studies included in this volume[3].

This was also the period of new intellectual influences in the continent. Positivism had gained terrain in intellectual circles[4] and, albeit with distinctive national characteristics, at large it became an "ideology more than a philosophy [of science]"; it was used for political purposes, finding expression in governmental institutions (Ardao, 1963). In addition, notions of social Darwinism had become a "meta-language" that provided elites with frameworks for scientific and political analysis of Latin American histories and futures (Stepan, 1991: 41). Theories of science and social conclusions were thus intertwined in a system of interpretation which provided grounding for state approaches to population diversity through the accommodation of evolutionist views that equated "white race" and "progress". Whilst race in this period was often conceived in terms of

cultural (hierarchised) difference rather than merely based on biology, it determined the fate of a social group: inferior cultures would need to be "civilised".

Censuses maintained their usual importance for tax collection and were used for the establishment of quotas of representation in the consolidating parliamentary regimes, but in this period they also became the foundations of development projects and population management in general. They were instrumental in the pursuit of the sought-after "modernised" national image. Accordingly, censuses marked boundaries between "civilised" and "uncivilised" populations, the former being sustained by largely racialised notions of national identity in which "white" (or "creolised"), "cultured" and "urban" profiles represented the peak of evolution and articulated the interests of the dominant classes. In this context, the indigenous population that had not been "reduced", effectively integrated into the national economy and subjected to direct state control (that is, the population that maintained more autonomy) would fall under the "uncivilised" category, and it was thus reflected in censuses.

3.2. National projects and the ideologies of *mestizaje* and "whitening"

Although nation-state building processes have had distinctive features in different Latin American countries, most of them faced similar challenges with regards to the construction of their sought-after "unitary" population. After nineteenth-century independences, the colonial order was theoretically contested through liberal ideals that projected images of a citizenry based on individual subjects equal before the law. Governments were charged with the responsibility of overcoming or removing the cultural and juridical distinctiveness that subaltern groups were ascribed in the previous order. Cultural difference was causally narrowed down to lack of educational enlightenment, and legal difference, particularly the existence of collective rights, was targeted as antithetic to the emancipatory values of political liberalism and modern individualism. The juridical distinctiveness that indigeneity preserved in much of the continent under colonial law was one of the first obstacles to be erased. However, the young and unstable Republics fell short in the realisation of their ideals. Weak state apparatuses and inconsistencies in the policies that were to split indigenous collective bodies into individual citizens and proprietors converged with the resistance deployed by some of those collectives. Furthermore, as slavery was formally abolished during the second half of the century, the Republics had to face additional challenges in the

constitution of a national population that, though theoretically equal, continued to be perceived as racially and culturally diversified. There would be additional strong opposition from elites that loathed the potential consequences of eliminating legal differences and the implications of blurring conceptual and cultural ones. The increasing "vulgar" miscegenation (Cañizares-Esguerra, 2007: 32) was seen as a threat to their ideals of a (hierarchised) nation based on Hispanic heritage. However, as outlined above, Latin American evolutionist science and political philosophy of this period tended to explain race hierarchies through cultural rather than purely biological reasons. Whilst white superiority was tantamount to cultural superiority, racial mixture would not necessarily be conceptualised as leading to degeneration and corruption, as was the assumption for hegemonic political and scientific discourse in the north of America (cf. Baker, 1998). Parts of the continent had already witnessed an ideologically approved miscegenation of Spanish and Amerindian elites that facilitated colonial rule at early stages. On the other hand, nationalist movements throughout the nineteenth century had made a considerable theoretical investment in presenting the political value of miscegenation and mestizo identities as a guarantee for and label of American autonomies.

With variants of this socio-political background in different parts of the continent, a basic ingredient for late nineteenth and twentieth-century nationalism would be the concern with national identity and racial mixture (Miller, 2004; Wade, 1997: 84-87). The general goal of presenting a culturally homogenised and unitary population came through distinctive national projects, but it is possible to identify within them two dominant, if often inter-related, trends: the ideologies of *mestizaje* and the ideologies of "whitening".

In order to consolidate the unitary character of the national population base, and depending on where the cause of the problem of diversity was placed, two avenues were followed. When the problem was categorised as "cultural", it was to be tackled through educational programmes and the search for amelioration in conditions of work, health, etc. If it was labelled biological, it would be addressed through programmes of eugenics (that were expected to result in generalised "whitening" of the population), through a management of migration policies that favoured the arrival of certain types of ("white") migrants and forbade the arrival of ("non-white") others[5], or else by isolation of Blacks and Indians in enclaves (cf. Wright, 1990: 76). Notwithstanding the recognition of the hybrid cultural and biological origins of the Latin American nations, both the ideologies of *mestizaje* (and also those of "whitening") were based on the idea that

the "indigenous" and "black" groups that had not already disappeared were likely to disappear soon into the new mestizo identity of the nation. When the projects of assimilation and cultural and economic merging into the new national conglomerate proved a blatant failure, the indigenous population was left outside the boundary of the project of nationality (such as in Guatemala), with the underlying assumption that it was essentially atavistic and could never form part of the new nation.

These ideologies of *mestizaje* and "whitening" were reflected in census programmes that would register racial categories as associated with extreme alterity from the referential "mestizo" or "white" spheres. The "indigenous" population was defined through its lack of "civilisation" and its "isolation". As soon as the Spanish language was spoken, overt signs of indigeneity had been eliminated or modified to a *mestizo* or creole standard and/or there was urban residence, the assumption was that the indigenous ingredient had merged into the mestizo nation. Beyond cultural matters, these conceptions implied that the integrated population took part in national production.

With the expansion of the capitalist frontier and urbanisation, the numbers in groups categorised as "indigenous" would tend to decrease. A good illustration of the ideology that pervaded this period is to be found in this chapter in this volume by Sulmont and Valdivia: in Peru, the increase of "white" and mestizo population that was projected by the 1940 census was interpreted by state agents as an expression of the tendency towards the "formation of the specific type of national race: the Mestizo, in which racial crossbreeding is synthesised, with a predominance of the ethnic characteristics of whites and Indians".

3.3. From *indigenismo* to participative anthropology

3.3.1. The influence of institutional indigenismo

The emergence of *indigenismo* as a distinctive state ideology orienting policy for indigenous peoples is one of the most influential milestones in the shaping of approaches to population management in the continent. Institutionalised with the creation of the Interamerican Indigenist Institute (INII) after the First Interamerican Indigenist Congress of 1940 (Pátzcuaro, Mexico), it had the International Convention on the Interamerican Indigenist Congress and the Interamerican Indigenist Institute (*Convención Internacional Relativa a los Congresos Indigenistas Interamericanos y al Instituto Indigenista Interamericano*) as its legal foundations. An institution with such Panamerican scope could only materialise after a historical period of gestation in which its necessity was defined and

discursively recognised (Giraudo, 2006). The legitimising discourse had
been gaining strength for a decade, revolving around the necessity of
coordinating state approaches to the so-called "indigenous issue" (*la
cuestión indígena*) in the continent. The First American Conference of
Labor (*Primera Conferencia Americana del Trabajo* [Santiago, 1936]) and
the Second General Assembly of the Panamerican Institute of Geography
and History (*Segunda Asamblea General del Instituto Panamericano de
Geografía e Historia* [Washington, 1937]) had converged on that point:
indigenous issues should be addressed in meetings of experts, supported
by scientific research and specialised institutions. Two years before
Pátzcuaro, the Eighth Panamerican Conference (Lima, Peru) openly
recommended the creation of an indianist institute and urged American
governments "to develop policy aiming to completely integrate [the
indigenous population] in the respective national milieus", since this
population, as the descendant of the first ones in American lands, deserved
"a preferential right to protection from public authorities in order to
overcome the deficiencies of their physical and intellectual development"[6]
(Giraudo 2006: 6-7). The problem was in those terms associated with
physical and cultural dimensions, but the first one would be abandoned
soon after. A resolute departure from the explanation of difference and
marginalisation through biological criteria would be one of the
characteristics of state approaches to cultural diversity (and to indigeneity
in particular) after the Second World War and after emergent
anthropological theories that focused on cultural dynamics started to
become functional for the Institute (see next section). Race seemed to be a
category in "extinction" in that post-War world context. At an
international level, those scientific epistemes converged with antiracist
movements that went from antifascism to the struggles in the sphere of
civil rights in countries like the USA, but also included the anti-colonial
wave and the anti-apartheid movement. This was all framed by the Cold
War and the competition of two super-powers for global supremacy.
Although the nominal obliteration of race would gradually take over
censuses, this did not imply that racial dominance disappeared. The so-
called "post-racial" era could be interpreted as a transition from a system
of racial dominance to one of racial hegemony (Taguieff, 2001; Winan
2004).

The influence of *indigenismo*, and particularly of its Mexican current,
was strong in the continent. It shaped research agendas and analytical
perspectives in countries with most diverse sociological and political
histories[7], giving legitimacy to social orders and reproducing the state's
"right to rule" (Saldivar, 2011: 69-70). But, notwithstanding its

governmental elements, *indigenista* praxis advanced ideas of cultural relativism. In the causal explanation of inequalities between the groups that constituted society, it placed emphasis on the sphere of culture. Censuses in the continent would be consistent with that orientation and in this period one can identify a clear shift towards this type of approach to indigeneity as defined through certain cultural traits considered to be "traditional". Chapters in this volume provide significant illustrations of this process.

In Guatemala, the 1950 census, regarded as the first professionalised census programme in the country, had the imprint of the INII and the Interamerican Statistical Association (see Celigueta in this volume). The census abandoned the definitions of the *ladino* and the *indígena* groups in racial terms and started to build upon idioms of ethnicity, defining group difference in terms of culture and compiling information about a whole list of cultural traits (from language and type of dwelling to clothing and food). In Panama census re-orientation had similar characteristics, and the INII's emphasis on integrating the indigenous population was felt. The 1950 census abandoned racial criteria too; *indígenas* were defined as those "who live primordially separated from the country's socio-economic structure and at times even under tribal organisation" (see Martínez in this volume). In Venezuela, the influence of *indigenismo* was also noticed, and indeed fostered by the father of Venezuelan anthropology, Acosta Saignes (see Angosto in this volume). In the 1950s the indigenous population which was not integrated in "civil life" was labelled "inaccessible"–a step away from "uncivilised". In Colombia, *indigenismo* was influential from the 1950s onwards (see Lopera in this volume), in a twofold way: on the one hand, national censuses introduced modifications in the criteria used to identify the indigenous population which, without totally eliminating phenotypical characterisation, emphasised cultural traits and residence; on the other hand, those criteria started to be contested by peoples who self-identified as "indigenous" but who did not match the "anthropological" criteria used in censuses to set boundaries to indigenous identities.

3.3.2. Anthropology, academia and the shaping of indigeneity through censuses

The historic relationship between anthropology and colonialism has been widely commented and documented. Along with other scientific disciplines, anthropology has also been associated with nation-state building processes, contributing to legitimise social orders sustained by racial hierarchies (Baker, 1998; Haller, 1971; Stocking, 1968) or facilitating

knowledge about indigenous populations in order to facilitate national integration (Hewitt de Alcántara, 1984; Saldivar, 2011). Against this background there has also been a considerable academic production addressing the history of "national anthropologies" in relation to social structures of power (Beckett, 2010; Lins and Escobar, 2006; Lomnitz, 2001). In Latin America there have been studies of the influence of local and global institutions and political contingencies in the shaping and legitimisation of academic work in countries such as Ecuador (Martínez Novo, 2007). Nevertheless, there seems to be sufficient scattered evidence to anticipate a fruitful harvest for those who conduct further research into the complex relation between political milestones in the continent and the twists and turns of national anthropologies. The relation between *indigenismo* and anthropological views of human diversity, or that between the 1970s international context and the emergence of currents of applied and politically engaged anthropology, are certainly interesting spheres of research.

A largely unexplored aspect of these histories is the role of anthropologists in the shaping of public policy or administration. As regards the criteria that have been used to count population in ethnic and racial terms in the Latin American continent, this influence appears to be considerable. Census-making is a field in which the relations between the political and scientific spheres need to be finely tuned. Census categories require scientific legitimisation and, particularly with regard to the shaping of ethnic and racial categories, the influence exerted by anthropologists as scientific authorities at certain periods of census history is very noticeable. Anthropologists have had a continuing presence as qualified experts on indigenous issues since the discipline began to be institutionalised in the continent and particularly since the INII helped in raising their professional profile as experts that could contribute to good government and to the consolidation of national projects. Dominant views from the discipline have helped to "normalise" conceptions of indigeneity and ethnicity through politically loaded administrative processes. In this volume, that influential weight of anthropology as a discipline is made salient in several chapters. The shift from "race" to "ethnicity" in the nominal and conceptual framing of indigeneity well illustrates that influence.

Celigueta emphasises in her chapter the influence of dominant anthropological theories in the definition of indigeneity in Guatemala through the selection of certain cultural traits as its diacritica. The role of anthropologists was central in the shift from the conceptualisation of *ladinos* and *indígenas* as racial groups to their conceptualisation as ethnic