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Producing Population

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Abstract

This paper develops a theoretical approach for understanding how the census has not only played a role in constructing population (census making) but also has simultaneously created subjects with the capacity to recognise themselves as members of a population (census taking). The ‘population’ is now generally considered something that is not discovered but *constructed*. But what is neglected is that the population is also *produced* one subject at a time. The paper provides an account of census taking as a practice of double identification (state-subject) through which subjects have gradually, and fitfully, acquired the capacity to recognise themselves as part of the population through the categories circulated by the census (subjectification) and the state has come to identify the subject and assemble the population (objectification). The approach is elaborated in an account of a particular moment in the creation of census subjects, the self-identification and discovery of individuals as ethnically ‘Canadian’ in the early part of the twentieth century. Through this account I suggest that the capacities and agencies of being a census subject are connected to citizenship and the claiming of social and political rights.

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Producing Population

Introduction

Consider the events leading up to census day in early twentieth century Canada: newspapers announce and in detail describe the practice, quote different public figures such as politicians, bureaucrats, census commissioners and enumerators, list some census questions to be asked, debate its meaning and significance, anticipate what the census will reveal and so on. On the day itself enumerators begin their door-to-door visits of all dwellings in designated sub-districts and interview the head of the household or any other available adult present when he arrives. Armed with instructions and training, the enumerator interviews the individual according to the questions on the census manuscript form where all answers are recorded. For each question, he handwrites his translation of the answers provided according to his interpretation of the instructions, which in some cases designate acceptable answers. Both the enumerator and the enumerated struggle over the form to complete a listing and categorisation of all individuals in the household. There are many instances of language barriers requiring the assistance of translators, individuals not comprehending questions or offering answers that do not fit given categories. The newspapers publish numerous accounts about the practice, errors, and omissions. Some citizens are dragged before local magistrates for refusing to be enumerated, others hide for fear that the census is connected to taxation, and some are ridiculed for their inability to comprehend what is required of them. Categories are not 'properly' completed and in many cases do not constitute odd random errors but systematic 'errors' or types of entries across different enumerators. After the census day the manuscripts make their way to district census commissioners who review the recordings, make corrections and changes and meet regularly with enumerators. Soon manuscripts leave the district offices and are transported to the central offices of the census bureau where compilers interpret the written forms and begin to code responses in order to aggregate them. The compilations reach the hands of a team of statisticians who further organise the coded responses into tables. Eventually after passing through many other hands and desks a report is produced and vetted with the chief census commissioner who further edits and intervenes in the production of the results. When released the newspapers begin a long cycle of publishing articles that interpret, debate and challenge the practice and the implications of the results. The census population gradually becomes a recognisable object as the results are deployed and interventions occur at myriad government sites and offices.

Today the census is typically a relatively routine and taken-for-granted practice. Technical and political issues are usually debated while questions about how we have come to identify ourselves through the census and what capacities and agencies are necessary for the modern census to be possible are overlooked. I aim to investigate these questions by returning to the period when the census was in the early stages of becoming a key practice of governing the state. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the census manuscript form and the at-the-door interview with an enumerator signified a new interaction between the state and the individual. The practice of census taking required that the individual identify herself in relation to the state in a new way. It involved the inculcation of a particular way of thinking of the relationship between the individual and a larger social entity—the population—a way of thinking that is now relatively taken-for-granted. Yet, census taking is only one aspect of this new relationship. For once taken, the census is made to represent a whole, which is called population. Census making constructs population, that is, it builds, assembles and represents population through various statistical techniques. While the population is now generally considered something that is *constructed* rather than discovered and made possible through techniques such as statistics, what is neglected is that the population is also *produced* one subject at a time. Through census taking, subjects gradually, but fitfully, acquired the capacity

to recognise themselves as members and parts of a whole. Producing population captures the *practice* of developing, creating and bringing this capacity into being whereas constructing population attends to the practice of assembling and representing population. The aim of this paper is to understand how the census has not only played a crucial role in constructing population (census making) but has simultaneously created subjects by bringing into being and developing their capacity to recognise themselves as members of the whole (census taking). In this regard the paper focuses on the creation of census subjects rather than the construction of the population. The main instrument and record of this production, which involves an interaction between the state and the individual, is the manuscript form and so I take this as the focus of investigation.

The census manuscript form in the early twentieth century consists of a grid of columns covering each question or classification of the population (name, address, age, sex, marital status, ethnicity and so on) and of rows for categorising individuals in relation to each classification or question. It thus represents the individual in relation to a social grid as it were and as such symbolises a social space and the individual's relative position within it. The information about each individual is painstakingly recorded, often in immaculate handwriting. There are many erasures, crossed out entries overwritten in different handwriting, and marginal notes. The various entries alone reveal a world in which the enumerated and enumerator entered into a classification and interpretive struggle. Thousands of such pages were so produced in the course of census taking but due to confidentiality laws have been stored away on microfilm in government archives only to be seen by the occasional researcher. It is these pages that I propose to study, not the tabular and statistical aggregations, which construct and represent that ubiquitous object called population.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in manuscript forms in part due to the lapsing of restrictions on their release (92 years for Canada) and increased scholarly interest in manuscript forms as historical 'data.' Since the 1980s researchers have begun studying the records as individual level or 'micro data' evidence of the everyday lives and experiences of the historically 'anonymous.' In doing so they are challenging social histories based on the ideas and lives of 'Great Men' and studies focused on aggregate statistics or population level 'macro data'—the familiar coding of census data and compilations that governments typically release and publish. As micro data reveal, these compilations often belie the variability and diversity of individuals that constitute a social space. Debates about the meaning and interpretation of both micro and macro data have thus ensued but to date there are only a few theoretical investigations of their construction of population. While questions about the meaning and making of censuses have been raised, many researchers still engage with a realist approach as evidenced in the focus on concerns about the accuracy of data. When questions are asked it is usually with the objective of addressing an empirical question. Consequently, micro and macro data continue to be extensively used by researchers, governments, corporations and others but the practices involved in their construction remain largely unexamined and black boxed. How can we theorise and understand the connection between the handwritten recordings on census manuscript forms and the aggregate population totals published and mobilised by many governing practices?

I am intrigued by the possibilities that census manuscript forms open up for a few reasons. First, census manuscript records provide an opportunity to empirically investigate what Foucault described as a political technology of individuals, that is, how we have come to recognise ourselves as part of a larger social entity and how that recognition involves a relationship between governing the individual and the state (Foucault 1994). The census gives symbolic form to this relationship between the social entity and the individual and is a key technique of what I will define later as double identification: of the individual and the state. *By studying census taking and the at-the-door interview recorded on census manuscript forms I shift attention from how the census constructs population to how it produces population by creating census subjects.* The former has been addressed through studies of the administrative

and political practices involved in census making but the latter, as I mentioned, has not received attention.

The study also involves understanding the relationship between individuals, census categories and the population. On the one hand, through the census one identifies with categories of and not with the population as such. While the reason of state is to know population, the governing of the state involves the vision and division of population into sets of social relations, of insiders and outsiders, citizens and aliens. On the other hand, as any census manuscript form reveals, individuals occupy a unique combination of categories, which together constitute an account of their ‘individuality.’ Yet, a large number of individuals share the same categories, which together constitute an account of their ‘generality.’ For these reasons, the categories of census manuscripts open up an investigation of the relation between the individual and the population.

Finally, census manuscripts provide an opportunity to re-visit Foucault’s argument that a political technology of individuals and the ‘discovery’ of population gave rise to anatomico-political technologies (discipline) and bio-political technologies (government), which along with sovereignty constitute a triangle of modern political rule (Foucault 1991). It is perhaps timely to return to this conception on the occasion of the publication of his full set of Collège de France lectures on security, territory, population (Foucault 2007). However, Foucault’s concept of population has not been sufficiently scrutinised nor have his analytics of government been deployed to investigate the construction and production of population through the census. My key objective here is to understand the simultaneous and integrated operation of all three forms of modern rule in the practices of census taking and making, and in particular, what agencies must be brought into play so that population can be ‘discovered.’

This is thus a starting point for mapping out a larger inquiry into what I provisionally call *producing population*. I first discuss theoretical perspectives on the social construction of censuses. I follow this with a brief discussion of Foucault’s writings on population and governmentality and at some length Bruce Curtis’s account of census making in late nineteenth century Canada, one of the few theoretical investigations of the construction of population. I follow this with a proposed theoretical approach to how population is produced by drawing on perspectives that have followed from Foucault and Latour, writings on the philosophy of the sciences as well as work on identification and classification. I draw from examples of censuses in early twentieth century Canada to ground my proposed approach, which I elaborate in the final section. That part of the paper involves a detailed account of a particular moment in the creation of census subjects—identifying as Canadian—the self-identification and discovery of individuals as ethnically Canadian in the twentieth century.¹

1. The social construction of population

The census is one of the few administrative practices concerned with knowing population that is consistently repeated by most western states every five or ten years. Since the nineteenth century these state practices have been closely tied through the international statistical movement, which has sought to standardise and normalise national practices and the making of population across time and space (Goyer and Domschke 1992). Indeed, Canadian practices in the nineteenth century, a period described by Hacking as the ‘avalanche of numbers,’ were tied into a trans-Atlantic network of intellectuals, politicians and civil servants that was fuelled by state competition in the race for progress (Curtis 2001). Over the past century, the practice has been institutionalised, codified and systematised such that myriad policies and practices of governments, international organisations, corporations and researchers rely upon censuses to a great extent. While its imperfections have been well documented, the census remains the only longitudinal and comparative record of the construction of an object—population—and I would add, one of the few longitudinal and comparative records of a

regularised state administrative practice. That in most cases every inhabitant of a state is legally compelled to participate in the practice is an additional unique and intriguing characteristic that attests to its embeddedness as a modern cultural practice.

Researchers have studied and interpreted historical census manuscript forms in a variety of ways but basically these can be summarised in two main streams: the ‘new social history’ of the 1960s and 1970s and the cultural history that followed the ‘linguistic turn’ during the 1980s and 1990s. At the core of this changing research interest have been different answers to the question of evidence: census enumerations are evidence of what? (Gaffield 2005).

In the 1960s and 1970s scholars began to study census manuscript forms and to write a ‘new social history’ that challenged the ‘history of ideas’ that had dominated historical scholarship since the 1950s.² Literary accounts were criticised for providing only impressionistic evidence of the thoughts, ambitions, and claims of a small number of ‘Great Men.’ Amongst other sources, researchers turned to census manuscripts, which were seen to offer new insights into the everyday lives and experiences of the historically anonymous. Census manuscripts were seen to provide quantitative data and new evidence about the behaviour and lives of the ‘common person’—the women, men and children who usually do not leave records behind—rather than the impressions of elites. By examining the answers to census questions recorded on manuscript forms, researchers began to write numerous ‘micro histories’ as a means of understanding larger historical changes and processes.

However, these census manuscript research projects were challenged by the linguistic turn in the social sciences in the 1980s when a ‘new cultural history’ emerged. Scholars in Canada and elsewhere expressed scepticism about sources such as manuscript census data, which were criticised on the grounds that the observations and evidence produced were generated by outsiders—reformers, professionals and officials connected with state bureaucracies and social organisations (Iacovetta and Mitchinson 1998). Rather than accepting the responses to census questions at face value, researchers expressed doubt about their evidentiary value. Researchers also questioned and documented the errors, inaccuracies, and biases and debated the evidentiary value of any enumeration for understanding the anonymous.

In this climate some researchers turned their attention to the study of the making of censuses (as opposed to the taking of censuses and the use of census data as evidence). The census questions rather than the answers were of historical interest. These scholars challenged the consistency and facticity of data that once reported conceals processes of construction. Census enumerations were examined as more representation than reality. One field of inquiry examined censuses as evidence of governmental projects and state power over domestic and imperial jurisdictions (e.g., Anderson 1983; Porter 1986; Hacking 1999). Others described how the political interests and aspirations of various groups or social actors influenced census officials and both the questions and acceptable answers (Dunae 1998). In this way, the census came to be associated with qualitative research rather than the increasingly criticised quantitative research developed earlier.

Some researchers though moved away from the idea that census enumerations only provided evidence of the ability of those in power to impose their concepts and to define individuals and groups according to their own preferences. Rather, they suggested that influence flowed in both directions and depended on the particular distribution of power and influence at the time (Baskerville and Sager 1998). There are many similar analyses of contemporary census making practices and the dynamics of influence and power. In a collection compiled by Kertzer and Arel (2001) a number of researchers document how census making involves a range of actors and agencies that interact and influence the construction and reporting of censuses. Through numerous international examples they document how interest groups and non-state organisations have successfully influenced and altered census questions and categories and thus conclude that census making is inherently a political practice.

Yet, despite these developments and challenges, scholars have by and large remained committed to the data value of census manuscript forms and have continued to focus on debates about their accuracy towards better grasping empirical questions. Thus there are innumerable studies that use census data but few studies about how the data is constructed. Political and administrative uses of the census are also well studied and documented as are technical disputes about the accuracy of data and the classification and measurement of particular population characteristics. These accounts do not deny political influence, the engagement of numerous actors, etc. but when acknowledging this there is a tendency to be narrowly realist: that through better construction and through the inclusion of different interests and voices, censuses will better approximate the real population. And finally, as the standard guide to international censuses indicates, a realist interpretation dominates: the census is a ‘reflection of society,’ a ‘photograph of a population at one moment in time’ (Goyer and Domschke 1992).

How can we go beyond simply noting that the population is both real and constructed by the census? Some promising approaches to overcome such distinctions attend to questions of authorship (e.g., documenting the agents and interests involved and tracing their lines of influence) and the identification of the criteria involved in the construction of censuses (e.g., documenting state objectives, questions, analysis, interpretations, and consequences) (Gaffield 2005). However, approaches that document political, social, economic and cultural contexts are primarily descriptive and do not offer the theoretical and conceptual tools necessary to overcome the standard dichotomies of quantitative versus qualitative, micro versus macro, and representation versus real. Indeed, despite these challenges and debates, there are only a few *theoretical* investigations of the construction of population and its relationship to the individual, the two ostensible objects of census making. One notable exception is Bruce Curtis’ book *The Politics of Population*, which examines the making of the first scientific census in Canada in 1871 (Curtis 2001). The book, as well as several other articles that he has written over the past decade or so, has filled a gap in the social sciences. In addition to putting forward a theoretical approach for interpreting census making he has also provided the first extensive historical sociology of the administrative practice in Canada. He meticulously documents the politics and practices of mid-nineteenth-century census making, which involved translating visions of social relations into authoritative numerical accounts. His tracing of the development of the state’s capacity to enumerate follows Latour by describing it as ‘science in the making’ rather than ‘made science’ and the Foucauldian and post-Foucauldian literature including the main debates in governmentality and science studies. Curtis’s work is thus a beginning point for theorising modern censuses and from which I initially situate my account. Since Foucault’s understanding of the triangulation of rule in modern societies and the concept of governmentality are crucial starting points for an investigation of producing population, I shall start with Foucault.

2. Making population

Foucault and biopolitics

As is well known, Foucault described modern political rule as a triangulation of three technologies of power: sovereignty—discipline—government (Foucault 1991). It was the discovery of population, the object of rule in modern societies, that according to Foucault gave rise to anatomo-political technologies (discipline) and bio-political technologies (government). Anatomo- and bio- political technologies are made possible by and arise from a political technology of individuals, which involves the relation between governing the individual and the state (Foucault 1994). It is through a political technology of individuals that he argues we have come to see ourselves as part of a social entity. Foucault connects a technology of individuals to three particular rationalities or reasons of state. One is the necessity of political knowledge—a specific knowledge or political arithmetic (statistics) of

the state and its forces. It is a knowledge that seeks to reveal the nature of the state, which has to be governed. A second is the understanding that the true nature of the state consists of a set of forces and strengths that can be increased or weakened according to the policies followed by governments. A third reason is the concern with individuals in relation to how they reinforce the state's strength: how they live, work, produce, consume, and die. His question then is what political techniques or technologies of government have been developed as part of the reason of state that have made the individual a significant element for the state? What are the techniques that give a concrete form to this new kind of relationship between the social entity and the individual, the techniques through which the individual could be integrated into the social entity?

Foucault considered the technologies of power that emerged and gave these rationalities a concrete form beginning in the eighteenth century as two linked poles: one addressing individual bodies and the other as a multiplicity of bodies or population (Foucault 2004). The first constituted the individual body as a machine that could be disciplined and its capabilities optimised by the procedures of power characterised as the *disciplines: an anatomo-politics of the human body* (Foucault 1980). The second formed somewhat later. It focused on the 'species body,' a multiple body that is not exactly society. It is a collective entity that is not simply a collection of living human beings but a kind of living entity imbued with biological processes of propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity. Foucault refers to this pole as biopolitics and its objective is to take control of life and biological processes of man-as-species (rather than man-as-body) and thus ensuring individuals are not only disciplined but also regularised (Foucault 2004). In this way, biopolitics are collective and serial phenomena and the purpose is not to modify individuals as such but to intervene at the level of their generality.

What Foucault called biopower integrates with and modifies disciplinary power and thus the two are not mutually exclusive and can be articulated with each other. This articulation is illustrated in Foucault's example of the urban environment as a domain and site of intervention. Biopolitics seeks to regularise the species body and its well being through regulatory mechanisms such as different insurance schemes and rules on hygiene whereas anatomo-politics seeks to discipline the individual body through measures such as surveillance and policing through design. Another way in which they are interwoven is via the norm that circulates between the disciplinary and the regulatory and which can be applied to both the individual body one wishes to discipline and the species body or population one wishes to regularise.

While Foucault described how population was the object of biopower and connected to the three rationalities of political government he did not investigate the development of specific practices of observation that made it possible to know and then act upon population (Curtis 2002). To the contrary, he tended to naturalise population as an object on which power can act and as a thing that follows natural processes and laws (Curtis 2001). However, Curtis argues that population as an object of biopower is not a thing that can be observed. It is a theoretical entity because it is a particular way of organising social observations and configuring social relations. Thus, rather than a thing waiting to be discovered, statistical techniques and the construction of statistical populations through specific administrative practices render population as an object of knowledge.³ Biopolitics require specific totalising procedures—that is, techniques that can constitute an entity out of various individual parts to construct the whole. These procedures include specific administrative techniques such as the development of statistics, surveys and censuses that are necessary for constructing population. In a sense, we are only now beginning to harness the brilliant insights that Foucault produced in the late 1970s.

Curtis: Constructing Population

Statistics and censuses form part of an immense organisational and infrastructural work, ‘a common term to describe all the arrangements necessary to translate the imaginings of state officials about social relations into practical observations and measures of the ‘population’ and its activities’ (Curtis 2001: 32). These are what we could call the administrative conditions necessary for making population.⁴ Part of this infrastructure depends on a political-scientific knowledge that establishes equivalences between bodies and disciplines potential objects of knowledge:

It is only on the grounds of constructed and enforced equivalences that one body comes to equal another, that each death, birth, marriage, divorce, and so on, comes to be the equivalent of any other. It is only on the grounds of such constructed equivalences that it is possible for statistical objects to emerge in the form of regularities and to become the objects of political practice. Population is coincident with the effective capacity of sovereign authority to discipline social relations.

(Curtis 2002: 529)

Curtis extensively documents how totalisation involves the infrastructural work of census making, which is the specific practices and totalising procedures necessary to construct population. He describes the development of this infrastructure on the part of the central authority and its agents in nineteenth century Canada. In mid century, practices were relatively haphazard; enumerators exercised considerable discretion and often provided their own narrative accounts full of interpretive idiosyncrasies. By 1871 the infrastructure was far more systematised and regularised and included standardised practices of observation that dramatically stabilised observations and banished discursive accounts. It is on the basis of such standardisation that he declares the census of 1871 to be the first truly ‘scientific’ and modern census of Canada.

This is one of two disciplinary aspects of census making that Curtis investigates and focuses on. It consists of specific procedures used to render social relations into statistical form such as those elaborated and explored by Desrosières (1998) in his account of the history of statistical reasoning and the state. The procedures involve the disciplining of social relations in that census making ‘seeks to tie individuals to places within an administrative grid and then to hold them steady so that they may become objects of knowledge and government’ (Curtis 2001: 26). In addition to establishing equivalences between bodies through authoritative categorisations, the procedures of discipline include tying bodies to virtual spaces and times within the territory, and modifying, correcting, changing, and editing census data to meet definitional and political requirements.

The other disciplinary aspect arises from the fact that population is not directly observable and so ‘opinions about such things’ must be solicited. Thus infrastructural work also involves routinised ‘encounters between census enumerators and informants [that] engage both parties in practices of meaning making’ (Curtis 2001: 31). Such meaning making depends on incorporating objects of investigation and this requires that both observers and informants be subjected to a certain degree of discipline. So while the census is indeed a technology that is totalising and generalising it is also and simultaneously individualising and disciplining. In addition to the statistical procedures used by the state to discipline social relations into statistical form, the necessary infrastructure includes the design and operationalisation of conventions of observing, reporting and recording. One convention is that individuals can be ‘identified, situated, located and induced or compelled to allow themselves and their conditions to be investigated’ (Curtis 1998: 3). The necessity of extracting reports from individuals demands a high degree of intersubjective agreement between ‘observers’ and ‘informants.’ If the social practices that the census aims to record have not first been

disciplined in this way, informants may be incapable of offering reports or in the form in which such reports are sought by enumerators: ‘Census making cannot but specify and discipline investigators and informants and their social relations’ (Curtis 2001: 29). However, he does acknowledge that social relations are not ‘whatever our discursive resources allow us to apprehend them to be’ – rather the translation of social observations into accounts of social relations result from negotiated understandings of ‘interested observers’ and in particular that of the ‘authoritative community’ (30-31).

The disciplinary dimensions of census making are closely connected to the exercise of sovereign power. Indeed, Curtis’s emphasis on disciplinary power follows from his stance that state formation and census making are bound up together. Censuses are typically undertaken by the centralised state, which he calls the authoritative community. It is its ability to mobilise authoritative categorisations that have a practical impact on social relations that makes the state the authoritative community in the case of the census. Representations constructed by state agencies come to be authoritative in part through efforts of state officials to limit the scope of other ways of determining population.⁵ That is, through the census, states assert sovereignty over social relations and thus census making involves ‘structured relations of domination and exploitation.’ Rather than a subcategory of a general will to govern as advanced by some post-Foucauldian governmentality theorists,⁶ he asserts that the object population – the ultimate terrain of government – ‘is inextricably a category of state, at least insofar as political subjects are concerned’ (42). He thus concludes that the configuration of social relations as population and the formation of liberal democratic states are mutually constitutive and so follows his focus and attention on census making as a set of ‘disciplinary practices and as an assertion of sovereign authority over territory’ (43).

Curtis’s focus on sovereign power thus leads him to write an account of the actions of senior census officials, politicians, clergy, and newspaper editors in constructing population in nineteenth-century Canada. All of their actions are interpreted as interventions interested in disciplining social relations into a statistical form. The actors are described as a team working under the direction of Joseph-Charles Taché, the Deputy Minister of the Department of Agriculture and Statistics from 1864 to 1888. Taché’s religious and political interests are documented as significant influences determining the census results.⁷ Curtis interprets the ability of Taché to direct and govern census making as ‘action at a distance’ as understood by Latour (1987). That is, how particular localities come to be the objects of action by distant authorities through inscription devices that translate observations into the two-dimensional surface of texts. Inscription devices are ‘immutable mobiles’ in that things can go away and come back again unchanged. For Curtis, Latour’s work is useful for understanding what makes it technically possible for the state and its centralised offices and officials to ‘transport social relations to distant sites where they can be worked up into administrative resources’ (Curtis 2001: 31). However, the political for Curtis remains principally in the hands of Taché.

While considering manuscript forms as an inscription device Curtis only adopts this understanding with the proviso that one must also account for power relations. In so doing Curtis echoes a common critique of Latour’s work. He argues that ‘action at a distance accounts tend to resolve political authority into the technical operations of inscription devices and thus do not deal with structured relations of domination and exploitation’ (Curtis 2001: 32). Instead, Curtis argues that the power of inscription devices is in large part due to the authority of the state officials who assert sovereignty over social relations as evidenced in the ability of observers ‘to convince or compel informants to yield up accounts of such relations.’ That is, sovereign and disciplinary authority does most of the work in the encounter between the observer and informant. Thus, Curtis tends to resolve the issue, as is evident in his descriptive narrative of the making of the census, by explaining all operations as exercises of this authority. The answer to power is to be found in the institution and its privileged authority. His account once again reduces the encounter and interaction between the enumerator and the individual to discipline and not government.⁸

This sums up the starting point for my investigation. While Curtis has produced a pioneering work in harnessing Foucault's insights in the 1970s, his approach does not adequately distinguish between the making and taking of the census and between constructing and producing population. I shall now make four conceptual moves towards developing a theoretical approach for an interpretation of how population is not only constructed through census making but also produced through census taking.

3. Producing Population

The approach I propose moves our focus away from questions of how the census constructs population (census making) to how it produces population (census taking). I have organised this into four conceptual moves, the outlines of which are as follows:

1. The census is a practice of double identification: through the categories circulated by the census the subject identifies herself as part of the population (subjectification) and the state identifies the subject and assembles the population (objectification).
2. Double identification creates the 'census subject' who has the capacity to comprehend the population as consisting of individuals identified by and organised into distinct categories or every person identifiers. Census taking is thus a practice that produces population, that is, brings into being and develops a particular subjectivity.
3. Once in circulation, census categories become 'actants' in that they can mobilise subjects to identify with them as well as create 'other' actants. Census taking makes subjects do things but can also be made to do things, that is, transport back to the state alternative and competing categories via the manuscript form.
4. Identification categories are boundary objects that circulate between numerous practices involved in constructing and producing population. These are part of a repertoire of identification that is connected to the census and part of a general will to produce and thus know population.

Move 1: Double identification with categories

This is the finest help I have yet received on my rounds, and if every citizen would do as you have done, our work would be much facilitated, and we would be saved a lot of worry, and at the same time we would be able to gather more accurate information,' said one census enumerator to a citizen yesterday afternoon when meeting him on the street, after having called at his home for census taking. The citizen appreciated the compliment. Later it was learned from the enumerator that the citizen in question some days ago had taken the questions as asked by the enumerator, which were printed in *The Standard*, and wrote out complete answers to them, giving all the information required. These the citizen left at his home to be handed to the enumerator when he called. This [is what] the lady of the house did yesterday afternoon, and it was this thoughtfulness and system which called forth the above commendation from the enumerator. The enumerator added that other citizens might with profit do the same.

(Daily Standard, 8 June 1921: 1)

The census manuscript form and the at-the-door interview with an enumerator mediate an interaction between the state and the individual in the early part of the twentieth century. Individuals such as the woman discussed in the narrative above engage in a reflexive practice of defining themselves in relation to the classification system represented by the questions on the form. Descriptions of the interaction such as this one are commonplace in newspapers and

highlight the capabilities and competencies required of the enumerated. However, while all individuals are subject to enumeration, it is the ‘heads of families, households and institutions’ that are ‘required to furnish the enumerator with all the particulars regarding every person in the family, household or institution.’⁹ Male heads of households are typically expected to be the qualified person to furnish the information. Be that as it may, as the narrative reveals, other individuals in the household can furnish the information and in many cases do so.¹⁰

Whether or not the citizen in this narrative agreed with the particular classification system and categories of the census, she had to understand the practice and way of identifying. Just as population could not be discovered without administrative and statistical methods, census taking could not be conducted without her capacity to comprehend and participate in the practice. If the good of the collective depends on knowing population, then it also depends on subjects who are able to think and comprehend themselves as part of the whole. They must be able to see themselves in relation to and as part of a definition of the population and in turn make the representation of the population an intelligible project. How do agents beyond the census authority comprehend and participate in census taking? Or, as Joyce puts it in his social historical account of the governing of the nineteenth-century liberal city and its citizens, what agencies need to be ‘brought into play in order for things to work in the way they do?’ (Joyce 2003: 6).

Of course, when census manuscripts get worked up and translated into statistical form and become population then we are speaking of a constructed object and census making. The constructed equivalences or the authoritative categorisations referred to by Curtis do indeed normalise identification, regularise differences and reduce individual variability. But if we return to the encounter described above then we need to address how the subject is incorporated into the population through the practice of census taking. It would be determinist to assume that both the enumerator and individual are only filling in a form in an automatic, non-reflexive or even a coercive manner or to assume that the questions and categories are ones through which they fully recognise and identify themselves and others or do not recognise or identify at all (as census manuscripts reveal, individuals often identify in ways not offered or expected). Additionally, while categories are circulated by the census their point of origin is not necessarily the census and the census is not the only practice involved in their production and circulation (as we shall see below).

It is perhaps worth repeating that for Curtis the construction of population through the census principally involves the exercise of sovereign and disciplinary authority by the state. The sovereign and its agents reduce the role of individuals to that of disciplined subjects who are recipients of the categorisation of social relations. Past infrastructural work disciplines individuals by inculcating the ability to both comprehend census categories and mediate the inquiries of the enumerator. In my view, Curtis significantly limits the role that so-called informants play as well as the numerous other administrative sites of governing constitutive of the state’s capacity to produce population.¹¹ By contrast, I think that these two aspects of census taking and census making need to be investigated. Now Curtis does recognise that the individualising axis of the government of population does not only seek to discipline (tying individuals to social categories or physical space, colonising their wills) but also to selectively develop capacities for reflection and self discipline. As he notes, this is captured in Foucault’s concept of governmentality, which conceives of subjectification as involving the production of disciplined and self-disciplining individuals. Yet, he does not investigate this form of rule as his description of agents as ‘informants’ attests.

We must consider census taking as also a form of government in particular at the moment when agents are mobilised and incited to identify with the population during census taking. This pole of Foucault’s political technology of individuals—of government and the conduct of conduct—requires a liberal, ‘free’ subject who is not a mere informant or recipient of

census taking but one who is active in shaping both its structure and meaning and whose political imaginary includes the collective. The census involves the individual associating with the collective and this association occurs at two key moments: during the actual taking of the census and when the population hitherto unseen is revealed and the agent sees herself and others in relation to the collective. I conceive of both moments as *performances* of the social that are disciplinary *and* governmental and thus when anatomo-politics and biopolitics intersect, when the discipline of the individual and the regulating of the general are simultaneously at work.

However, in practice, population is not the entity that unites biopolitical and anatomo-political forms of rule. Rather it is other entities that when assembled come to constitute population. At its most basic the census establishes 'practical equivalences' among subjects whose most general equivalence is to be a member of a population, an undifferentiated abstract essence that effaces their individual variation (Curtis 2001). However, this general equivalence is not the basis on which the census is taken. As census manuscripts reveal, generalising the individual into the population involves identifying her difference and resemblance to categories. The population is thus understood as an entity divided and differentiated into numerous categories and census taking involves identifying each individual in relation to these categories. At both moments—the taking of the census and when the population hitherto unseen is revealed—the subject is incorporated into and becomes a member of the population by identifying her difference and resemblance in relation to census categories such as sex, marital status, and racial origins. Census categories are thus the entities that unite the two forms of rule and are the norms or standards circulating between disciplinary and regulatory techniques of power.

It is also through census categories that the state identifies the individual. In the hands of the central authority it is an objectifying technique of configuring social relations and when all categories are assembled (gender, origins, occupation, income and so on) the population comes into being or is constructed. So while the census is often described as the 'counting of noses,' or 'taking stock' and knowing 'how many' it is categories that become actionable objects: the immigrants; the Quebecois; the 'Indians.' However, it is also with categories that individuals identify themselves in relation to others within a social space. It is through categories or classes of equivalence that the individual passes from their singularity to a generality (Desrosières 1998). Identification is not in relation to a statistical object, which is what happens when census officials construct population. Categories are 'conventions of equivalence, encoding, and classification, precede statistical objectification' and are the 'bonds that make the whole of things and people hold together' (Desrosières 1998: 236). But then what does identification with a category mean?

First, the individual is not subjected to the category or the census (connoting disciplinary power) but is subjectified through it, that is, made into a census subject. This is the meaning of subjectification that Foucault articulated in *The Subject and Power* (Foucault 1983). Subjectification recognises subjects as being capable of reflection and self-formation and objects of pastoral power where their subjection is also bound up with struggles against direct domination. Indeed, this is the key link connecting individualising techniques and totalisation procedures. The aim of pastoral power is not only to look after the whole community but each individual in particular. The modern state is not above the individual ignoring her existence and who she is but seeks to integrate and shape her, to help her know who she is. This requires exploring the soul, mind and conscience of and producing the truth about the individual both to herself and others. The aims, techniques and methods of subjectification, which emerged with the spread of confessional technologies or more generally technologies of the self, are thus different and must be distinguished from those of objectification, which emerged with the spread of disciplines (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983).

Census taking can thus also be conceived as a subjectifying technology through which individuals examine and articulate who they are in relation to others in the population. To do so individuals must engage in both creative and confessional acts that involve comprehending and identifying themselves in relation to categories of the collective. The acquisition of the cognitive tools of generalisation is a necessary precondition of statistical reasoning not only on the part of the state as Desrosières (1998) well notes, but so too on the part of subjects. It is a capacity that involves ‘articulation work’—all of the juggling of meaning that goes along with the task of interpreting categories and then performing in the face of uncertainty (Bowker and Star 1999: 310). Rather than an objectifying procedure to control bodies, census categories are specific ways of encoding and directing the articulation work of the subject, and in this way one of the three distinct modalities of the exercise of power: relations of communication (Foucault 1983).¹² Relations of communication include signs, the production of meaning and symbolic transmissions. They are implied in the other modalities of power: that exercised over things (objective capacities) and that exercised between individuals and groups (power relations). All three modalities overlap, support and imply each other and are not uniform or constant as they can take on differing configurations and articulations, which Foucault refers to as ‘blocks.’ These are regulated and concerted systems of power-communication-capacity. The census can thus be conceived as part of a block, a system of many parts and forms of power. Significantly, it is transported to the individual through relations of communication and when transported back to the state interpreted by specialists—the compilers and statisticians of the census authority, the subject’s ‘interpretive Others’—who alone can then reveal the truth about the population (relations of power) and can exercise objective capacities. But such truth is only possible through both processes of objectification and subjectification. That is, the subject must be active and able to acknowledge and recognise the truth of the interpretations of specialists (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983: 180).

Second, census taking relies on many agents in the exercise of pastoral power, who collectively make the state material through their interaction and direct contact with the everyday lives of individuals.¹³ The enumerator is but one agent for census taking also incorporates others in the practice of identification. As noted above, in addition to the individual respondent, census taking relies upon the articulation work of heads (or other members) of families (e.g., fathers, mothers), households (landlords, superintendents, keepers) and institutions (e.g., administrators, wardens) to identify and categorise.¹⁴ All of these subjects are part of the many governments internal to the state that are tangled together (Foucault 2007). For Foucault, the art of government involves managing individuals, goods and wealth in much the same way as the father governs his family for the common good of the whole family. That census taking recognises the head of the household (the father, keeper, warden) as the knowledgeable authority capable of identifying himself and all members of his household illustrates how knowing and governing population is internal and not simply imposed by the state (much rather it is the other way around). Insofar as census taking relies on all these other governing agents then state disciplining gives way ever more to government.¹⁵ Additionally, the census manuscript form constitutes yet another actant that is transported to the individual’s door and which enables the state to act at a distance, a point that I will develop below in move 3.

Third, I consider census categories as objects of classification struggles. Bourdieu made an important distinction between hypothetical and real groups, that is, between classification struggles and group struggles (Bourdieu 1988). The former consists of symbolic and conceptual struggles over the categorisation of individuals who occupy similar social positions, and who are thus subject to similar conditions and thus tend to perceive themselves as members of a group. But just because individuals are perceived or classified as a group does not mean they will act as a group as this requires the practical and political work of organising and mobilising. Census categories are thus part of symbolic and conceptual struggles over the classification of individuals, which in turn can mobilise and reinforce group struggles. The two struggles can overlap in a number of significant ways: through census

categories groups can be ‘nominated into existence’ (Goldberg 1997) which in turn can reinforce their affiliations and identifications (and of course the reverse is also possible); through numerable mediations between individual actors categories can be modified, subverted and changed; and through recognised census categories groups can claim or be denied social and political rights (Higgs 2004; Kertzer and Arel 2002; Potvin 2005).

Fourth, the subject is incorporated into and becomes a member of the population by identifying her difference and resemblance to categories. However, this identification is not one of exclusion but of alterity: the logics of alterity constitute others as immanent identities whereas the logics of exclusion constitute them as exterior identities (Lévinas 1969). Within each category all other categories are thus immanent and so when one identifies with a category they are simultaneously identifying with and against other categories of the population.

Taken together then the census is a practice of subjectification and objectification or what I will call double identification: through the categories circulated by the census the subject identifies herself as part of the population (subjectification) and the state identifies the subject and assembles the population (objectification). It is through such double identification that census categories come to have an existence, come to be facts that can then in turn not only be measured, analysed and assembled into population (objectification) but also be identified with (subjectification). That the presence of such double identification makes an ostensible division between the real and constructed artificial is a point I take up below.

Move 2: The census subject

News from London (Eng.) is to the effect that the King and Queen have also recently fulfilled their national duty in giving information for the census in Great Britain, and that they with members of the Royal Family were in residence at Windsor Castle for the occasion.

(The Montreal Daily Star, 1 July 1921: 13)

People who affect to elect a representative government owe no allegiance to an inquisitorial [oligarchy] who cannot in the very nature of things obtain a mandate from the people to hunt up, classify, specify, tag, label and officially register a pedigree of each person in the land.

(The Voice, 7 July 1911: 3)

To the Editor of The Globe: Is it not time for Canada to recognize the fact that some of their citizens find it hard to trace their ancestry? Myself and my father were born in Ontario, his paternal grandfather and his father were born in the British colony of Pennsylvania. I am unable to trace further back with accuracy. A man whose father was born in England would be allowed to say he was an Englishman, even though his great-grandparents were German or Russian. Why should I be obliged to invent some origin just to please the census commission! A U.E.L. [United Empire Loyalist].

(The Globe, 2 June 1921: 4)

The excerpts from newspaper articles reveal how census taking is both legitimated and resisted and its categories challenged. The sovereign (and head of the Canadian state) and her family submit to the census as should all subjects by inference, yet there are those who refuse and challenge their subjectification. Similarly, census manuscript forms reveal numerous instances when subjects or enumerators record categories not recognised by the authorities. Through subjectification, the reflexive and political agent is thus introduced into the practice of census taking. Such a move turns our attention to how census taking involves an

individualising moment when technologies of power speak to the individual who must reflect both on the practice and her identification with census categories. Census taking would not be possible without her capacity to be reflexive and population could not be constituted an object of political power without her engagement. Such capacity also includes her ability to categorise others (in her household, family or institution). Furthermore the very legitimacy of the categories circulated by the census (and the practice of categorising more generally) depends on the possibility of her resistance and intercession (as responses to the census categories reveal).¹⁶ Without such a move there is a tendency to conceive of census categories as state constructed and imposed and only as the state's disciplining of social relations.

These capacities are similar to those Nikolas Rose discusses in his account of the rise of the power of numeracy in modern political culture (Rose 1991). He argues that the power of numeracy requires subjects who can 'calculate about power,' that is, a numerate population that can both comprehend and govern themselves by numbers. Liberal forms of government must keep subjects numerate and calculating, which are prerequisites of the exercise and justification of governing by numbers. Patrick Joyce develops a similar argument when he investigates the 'cognitive possibilities available at the time' that enabled people in the nineteenth-century liberal city to be 'identified as individual and collective objects and subjects for governance' (Joyce 2003: 22).¹⁷ Following this line of thought census taking cultivates a subjectivity that includes the capacity to understand the population as consisting of individuals identified by and organised into distinct categories. It is only when subjects have this capacity that they can be incorporated into and become members of the population. In other words, identification with categories is necessary to produce population.

Numeracy is one required competency of the census subject enabling her to interpret the constructed equivalences represented in the reported census data. But through what techniques is the capacity developed to think of herself and others as both individuals and as members of categories? It is bound up with the same technology that is necessary to constitute the species body out of its individual parts: the nominal census return, that is, the recording of every name within a dwelling or household in relation to generalised 'every person identifiers' (the census categories).¹⁸ Names and addresses are the only individual identifiers on the census manuscript form. All other identifiers are recorded as categories that establish equivalences between bodies such that individual differences disappear and bodies become elements that can be categorised, recategorised, manipulated, and transformed. Census categories thus make individuals comparable and commensurable in all their difference, and can be conceived as part of a general democratic thrust to identify common personhood and equalise subjects (Joyce 2003). While there is a long history of different practices of enumerating, the nominal enumeration is a relatively new phenomenon. The first nominal census enumeration in England was in 1841, the United States in 1850, and in Canada 1852 (Curtis 2002).¹⁹ The nominal census is now recognised as an 'essential feature that distinguishes a census from other forms of population accounting' (Goyer and Domschke 1992: 1).

This technique does not only produce a political-scientific knowledge that disciplines potential *objects* of knowledge. It also produces potential *subjects* of power. For if we return to the performance of census taking, the individual identifiers of name and address are juxtaposed alongside the every person identifiers on the grid that is the manuscript form. It is only when the population is assembled that names are removed and addresses reduced to census administrative districts. Why is this significant? The technique of accounting for every individual's name and address in relation to 'every person identifiers' (categories) I would argue is bound up with the creation of the 'census subject,' a political subjectivity that Joyce argues was necessary for knowing, identifying and then governing population (Joyce 2003). It is similar to Osborne and Rose's description of the creation of 'opinioned or opinionated people,' which was part-and-parcel of the creation of the technology of public opinion research in the early twentieth century (Osborne and Rose 1999). Drawing on Hacking's

study of recovered memory, Osborne and Rose argue that genealogies of a research technology can be paralleled with a genealogy of persons: the phenomenon of public opinion created by the knowledge practice of public opinion research and how it is internalised within persons. People 'learn' to have opinions, became opinioned or opinionated and thus opinion polls 'make up' people. In similar fashion, through the technology of every person identifiers of the nominal census people learn to identify in relation to categories and be census subjects. To be a census subject then is a subjectivity that authorities in the early nineteenth century recognised as a necessary precondition of successful census taking and making.²⁰

If the census subject has the capacity to think of herself as part of the population then she is active in the practice. How then can we conceive of the categories she identifies with in her practical everyday life or in other contexts and those circulated by the census? There are two points I wish to develop in response to this question. First, we need to attend to the relationship between the categories circulated by the census and other forms of identification. What then is the relationship between the grounded and particular knowledge of identification and statistical knowledge-power? It is a circular process that is captured in Ian Hacking's definition of 'dynamic nominalism.' A kind of person comes into being at the same time as the kind itself is invented; the category and the people in it emerge at the same time (Hacking 1986). What are the specific processes of dynamic nominalism? The question is not whether categories are real but how they are constituted (Desrosières 1998; Hacking 1983). They are constituted as a result of battles over truth, debates, controversies, etc.—or what I referred to above as classification struggles. Once settled then the phenomenon—in this case the category—can be said to exist and can be investigated and acted upon (and I would add, identified with). This is a historically contingent outcome: some categories are 'discovered' and others are not. Hacking says there are many possible descriptions that are true of the world, but the events that establish the truth of one version close off other equally true versions. This contingency does not disqualify the truth status of the versions of the world we arrive at, but does account for why some things become true rather than others, or why some categories become authoritative and others do not. Once authoritative, categories can then be deployed administratively, shape social development, support particular political projects, have practical consequences for the distribution of resources and shape collective identities (Kertzer and Arel 2002).²¹

Interpreting census categories in this way directs our attention to understanding how particular categories have triumphed over others and have come to be recognised as authoritative. Once they have emerged they survive if it is possible for the state to do things with them (objectification) but only if subjects can also identify with them (subjectification). It is only when the category involves such double identification (state-subject) that it can be said to be 'real.' This understanding marks a significant departure from that advanced by Curtis. If the categories of the census are made authoritative by the dual processes of subjectification and objectification and if population is assembled from the categories of the census then population is not an abstract or theoretical entity. It is a 'real' thing through which the subject can identify herself, both her resemblance and difference. It is a 'real' thing through which the state can know subjects, both their resemblances and differences. The two come together when the census authority reveals the truth about the population, which only is possible when acknowledged and recognised by subjects.

However, we still need to attend to the microsociological processes and classification struggles that establish particular census categories as 'authoritative' and other 'non-authoritative' categories 'out there' and the relationship between the two. First, classification systems at root are social institutions; they grow out of and are maintained by social institutions (Bowker and Star 1999).²² There is no great divide between practical and authoritative classifications but there are often fault lines or fractures when lived experience is ordered against a formal, neat set of categories. All classification schemes have multiple sets of fractures arising from such a tension. But the key point is that authoritative classifications

are not separate systems from practical ones. Indeed, over time there usually is a convergence between the two: the ‘double process by which information artefacts or formal classification systems and social worlds are fitted to each other and come together’ (Bowker and Star 1999: 82). In this regard a classification system is partially constitutive of a social world; on the other hand any given social world generates many loosely connected but relatively coherent information resources and tools used to classify. In this way, classification systems and social worlds are involved in processes of mutual constitution or ‘co-construction’ (Ibid.). Census categories are constituted by and retain an account of what the census authority has done but also the classification work that has been occurring in the social worlds they seek to classify.

This dynamic is perhaps most visible when we consider the agent’s refusal or inability to identify with the categories circulated by the census. While the census imposes a limited repertoire of categories, agents do not necessarily limit their identifications to it. Can we then consider events when individuals assert new identification categories as a fracture and indicator of the start of the divergence between the formal and informal and when new kinds of people or social beings start to emerge? If so, then authoritative categories could be said to arise out of these moments. We will see this in the emergence of the category ‘Canadian’ as a non-authoritative origin in the early part of the twentieth century in part 4 below.

Identification occurs in relation to the categories that the census puts into circulation. The census subject is mobilised to participate in the practice of identifying with those categories that have triumphed over others, have been circulated and transported by different vehicles (the census manuscript form, enumerator instructions) and have been deployed to produce effects. But identification is never with one but rather the census demands that the individual simultaneously identify with the categories of numerous classifications: age, gender, marital status, ethnicity, origins, language, and so on. Each person’s identification when strung together on a census manuscript form constitutes a *particular* subjectivity or individuality. Even when the string of data is stripped of a person’s name and specific address (unique identifiers) the particular combination of every person identifiers is usually unique.²³ As Simmel observes, ‘the larger the number of groups to which an individual belongs, the more improbable is it that other persons will exhibit the same combination of group-affiliations, that these particular groups will ‘intersect’ once again in another individual’ (Simmel 1955: 140). It is in this sense that each individual is unique, having a unique combination of identification categories. So while generalised categories are preformatted (à la Latour) each articulation into the census can be conceived as individual.

Thus the subject’s individuality can be considered as her identification with a unique combination of census categories. Her identification is simultaneously individual and collective as it comes into being through her identification with generalised categories that are shared amongst a large number of people.²⁴ Through census categories we thus articulate our common features as subjects, a general similarity, through which we can identify with others and thus be ‘close’ to them; at the same time, our common features are shared by a large number of other people and thus make us ‘distant’ from them for ‘what is common to two is never common to them alone’ (Simmel 1950: 422). Categories are common to many and thus the census subject is a particular type of stranger to whom we are both near and far.

If authoritative categories arise out of practical ones, then agents must have the capacity to challenge, change, modify, invent, and refuse the categories in circulation. To be sure, agents can and do refuse identification with authoritative categories or claim different ones than those circulated by the state. They also can and do obfuscate and misreport their identification and use identification as a tactical resource. As such we must also consider census taking as not only a subjectifying technology but also a strategy. That is, the subject can and does engage in different strategies of identification (both intentionally and unintentionally). He can absolutely refuse to identify with the census and any of its categories. While legally and ethically compelled to participate (for the good of the collective he has a responsibility to

articulate himself into the population) he can refuse and remain 'outside' of the population. Alternatively, he can identify and be part of the population through his association or solidarity with its categories. To resist or challenge particular categorisations would thus represent a classification struggle. The understanding I want to develop here is that the census category is not only a subjectifying technology but also a strategy and as such always results in categories that are non-authoritative. For while professing completeness and attempting to incorporate all identifications, censuses always produce 'others,' as the following examples illustrate.

Censuses always create 'marginal' people. They are subjects who do not neatly occupy one but multiple categories of a particular classification and thus occupy the 'borderlands' of categories (Bowker and Star 1999). For example, prior to the 1951 census of Canada, identification with more than one origin was not possible. While the 1951 and subsequent census forms permitted multiple identification, up until 1971 only single responses were published. In the hands of the census authority, subjects who claimed multiple origins thus disappeared from official reports of the population. They were marginal and thus did not 'exist.' The U.S. census further illustrates how censuses create marginal subjects (Bowker and Star 1999). Prior to 2000, individuals who identified with more than one racial group could only do so by selecting the 'other' category. Subjects could only maintain and assert their difference by identifying as 'others.' Their identification as 'other' was a challenge to the census categories as revealed in the lobbying efforts of civil rights organisations (Nobles 2002) including a march on Washington by people demanding multiple racial identification. When the ability to select multiple racial categories was introduced for the first time in the 2000 census, many African American and Hispanic civil rights groups protested that this was a 'whitewash' against which ethnic and policy-related distinctions would be lost while others argued for the category 'multi-racial.' The example underscores the politics of classification and the fractures and convergences between different systems of classification previously discussed (practical and authoritative). It also illustrates how the 'other' category is ubiquitous and immanent in all classification systems and thus constitutive of the whole architecture. For even when multiple race identification was recognised in the U.S. census, an 'other' remained, that of multi-racial identification. Thus to identify with the categories of the census is to be simultaneously against others in two ways: against different categories and against 'others.' Since the identification with census categories is the basis on which certain rights are conferred (such as political representation and resource allocation), census classification can also be considered a site in the struggle over citizenship rights.

The protests by African American and Hispanic civil rights groups illustrated that the political consequences of identification, of being other, can be significant. The consequences of census classification systems for political rights can be illustrated in another example. The regime of racial classification instituted by the census in apartheid South Africa radically affected individual rights (Bowker and Star 1999). Many people could not be unambiguously categorised by racial typologies derived from the 1951 census racial categories: White/European, Asians, Coloured/Mixed, African/Bantu. In the absence of any uniform or scientific classification of race, and as a result of the rejection of descent as a determining factor, both officials and subjects strategically deployed practical and mixed criteria of 'appearance and general acceptance and repute'.²⁵ Many people categorised as 'coloured' sought to be identified as 'white' in order to have access rights to white schools and residential areas. They therefore had to creatively prove their whiteness by appealing to evidence such as photos of white ancestors and claims that their primary language was English. On the other side, officials sought to defend the white category with many subjective tests from assessments of complexion, hair, bone structure, to eating and sleeping habits. These practices again illustrate the 'articulation work' involved in categorising that is often invisible in classification systems (Bowker and Star 1999).

The claiming of a 'new' identification category constitutes a controversy and challenge to authoritative knowledge. When identification with authoritative categories is refused or a new one is claimed, a new form of associating with the population is potentially innovated and discovered. Identification thus produces a new technology – a category or 'non-human actor' that can also come to 'do things' albeit not necessarily in intentional ways. For what the strategy puts into circulation is once again the category that with centripetal force can mobilise others to identify as well as create new 'others.' In this instance, producing population is mediated by the non-human actant in the form of the category.

Move 3: The non-human actant

It will save time and trouble both for the enumerators and for the heads of the households if answers to all questions set forth on the census schedules are in readiness for the enumerator when he calls. These questions have to be answered in respect of every person residing in every house and heavy penalties can be inflicted for failure to supply the sought for information. Any heads of households, therefore, who are likely to be absent from home during the period that the enumerator may call, should endeavor to leave some responsible person in possession of such information as is required. For that purpose the 41 questions of the schedule and which are given below, should be carefully studied: [Lists all questions].

(The Morning Leader, 1 June 1911: 1)

The connection between the numerous sites and actors involved in census taking, especially in an age that communicates primarily through the written medium, is via the census manuscript form. Interactions are thus not principally between humans but between humans and forms. Each step requires subjects who are capable of comprehending the practice and its requirements and the ability to interact with the census form (whether one is a subject, enumerator, compiler, statistician). In the previous move I introduced the self-disciplining and reflexive political subject. I now want to insert the non-human actant into the chain of relations—the census manuscript form—as the connector between the state, its agents and subjects. Census manuscript forms make subjects do things but can also be made to do things, that is, transport back to the state alternative and competing categorisations. As I will document in the case of the Canadian census in Part 4, the form is not only variously interpreted but its categories challenged, changed, and mutated at several points on its way back to the central offices of the state. As such it may be immutable in its form but not in its categories. The form thus mediates the interaction and structures rather than determines the field of possible action of the subject.

Interaction thus understood is mediated by the categories circulated with the census form. The power of categories is often a consequence of their taken-for-grantedness, which results from their incorporation over a long period of time (Latour 1987). Categories become naturalised when the contingencies of their creation, their situated nature have been forgotten or the 'messy' work involved in maintaining and creating their meaning have been black boxed (Bowker and Star 1999: 299). Part of the messy work includes the circulation of the manuscript form through many sites and its interaction with different subjects that I summarised in the opening narrative. At the site of the census authority, the 'centre of calculation', compilers and statisticians interact with census manuscripts to transform them into statistical formats as Curtis documents. But transformation and articulation work also happens during census taking when the manuscript arrives at the subject's door. It arrives as a structured template, a classification system represented in a set of questions. However, for each classification or question, different categories (not stated on the form) overflow the form. There are the expected and accepted authoritative categories contained in enumerator instructions, and directives and memoranda circulated by an army of officials and statisticians. There are also practical classifications and those circulated in newspapers and by

other communities of practice (discussed below). Myriad agents are thus simultaneously at work, as well as past enumerations and interactions between the state and the individual.²⁶ Numerous times, sites and actors are thus connected to the performance of census, which can thus be conceived of as an actor-network. All of these ingredients are transported via the census form. It is the census manuscript form then that connects and brings all of these agencies to the subject's door and it is with the form that she interacts. This interaction, as I have already argued, is one of subjectification and active engagement whereby the category is a thing with which she creatively and politically conspires or contests.

In sum, interaction occurs between many different actants including the manuscript form and all are potential mediators. While preformatted by the state categories are also overflowed by many other templates and classification systems in circulation such as practical classifications discussed earlier. Individuals draw from a repertoire that contributes to their ability to render the event interpretable and which does not limit subjectivity but offers possible forms of subjectivation (Latour 2005). While difficult to account for the repertoire overflowing census taking, there are numerous traces that can be identified such as those put into circulation by other 'communities of practice.'

Move 4: Multiple sites producing population

One of the outstanding features of the annual exhaustive report compiled by Governor John Harmon of Sandwich jail and just now completed....The total number of prisoners committed during the past fiscal year was 191, there being 175 males and 16 females. 54 of these were either acquitted on trial or discharged on suspended sentence... In nationality of the prisoners were divided as follows: Canadian, 94 males, 10 females; English 18 males; Irish 10 males and 1 female; Scotch, 3 males; United States, 26 males and 5 females; other countries, 24 males. In religion the prisoners were divided as follows; Roman Catholics 74 males and 7 females; Anglican, 38 males; Presbyterians 18 males and 1 female; Methodists, 30 males and 6 females; other denominations 15 males and 2 females.'

(Evening Record, 19 Oct 1911: 1)

This report of an institutional population is by no means unique. Numerous government and non-government authorities regularly report the results of their classification systems and procedures for producing population. Municipal and provincial governments, and religious, penal, charitable and social service organisations all engage in circulating classification systems and identification categories, collecting and then assembling them into population.²⁷ While much attention is drawn to their accuracy and competing claims to 'better know' population, their efforts reveal both a capacity and investment in similar techniques of constructing and producing population. In the nineteenth-century, they constituted the new statistical thinking that was often invented outside of the state by different makers of population such as doctors and clergymen (Joyce 2003). The creation of and investment in classification systems and statistical forms is also underwritten by practices and procedures of statistical societies, organisations, and international congresses. Various groups and organisations also directly participate in the state's procedures and influence census taking and making. We must thus attend to understanding these dispersed and de-centred workings of government, of the network of power/knowledge on which the state relies both for its techniques and authority, but also for the cultivation of a particular subjectivity. Just as we need to introduce the individual agent's capacity to think of herself as part of the population so too must we insert the capacities and investments in constructing and producing population at these dispersed sites.

We have already identified practical classification systems. To this we need to add the more structured classification systems of non-state institutions and governing authorities. There are

numerous governmental technologies that seek to classify and categorise and the census is but one (social surveys and parish records, for example). A flood of possible identifications is thus in circulation at the moment that the individual is mobilised to identify with those of the census. An individual's subjectivity is not a whole, it is composed of layers from different times, places and events, and 'depends on a flood of entities allowing them to exist' (Latour 2005). Can we consider census categories as part of the flood of entities in circulation that enable the individual to identify with the population, from the less-structured practical classifications of the everyday to the more structured of governing authorities? If so, what is the relationship between different entities?

Granted, the flood of entities and the different identifications that constitute the repertoire from which an individual draws are difficult to trace. Somers's work on narrativity and identity provides some useful insights: that people construct identities (however multiple and changing) by locating themselves or being located within a repertoire of emplotted stories or different dimensions of narrativity: ontological, public, conceptual and metanarratives (Somers 1994). The census and discourses surrounding it constitute such repertoires through which individuals locate themselves and are part of the flood of entities in circulation that make identification possible.

Classification systems are produced, maintained and naturalised in particular contexts and by particular 'communities of practice;' the task then is to understand how different classification systems manage to 'speak to each other' (Bowker and Star 1999). One mechanism or vehicle is the 'boundary object,' which Bowker and Star identify as a mediator between classification systems developed by different practices. It simultaneously inhabits several practices and satisfies the requirements of each yet is sufficiently flexible to adapt to local needs and sufficiently robust to maintain commonality across sites. It can thus be weakly structured in common use across practices and more strongly structured in individual practices. I consider identification categories—such as particular races or ethnicities—as boundary objects that circulate between different practices of meaning and use. Census taking is thus one practice involved in their circulation and always in relation to the movement of the boundary object through numerous other practices. If so then to what extent does the census manage boundary objects and maintain coherence amongst intersecting practices?

A fourth move then accounts for how producing population depends on the capacities and abilities of numerous other practices, and how census taking is involved in managing identification categories as boundary objects. Other efforts at producing population are not disconnected but part of a general will to know and not simply efforts subordinated to that of the state. Indeed, it is in his effort to recover the central role of the state, which he says has been de-emphasised in the governmentality literature in favour of an understanding of a 'general will to govern,' that Curtis omits the governing role of other sites. If we consider that the state's capacity to take and make censuses is connected to dispersed capacities then we need to attend to the multiple ways in which this capacity is developed and the numerous other circulating agencies and identification categories. The census thus understood is not only a state practice of assembling (and constantly reassembling) the autonomous domain of population but also a historically contingent knowledge practice that involves a complex assemblage of practices involved in producing population.

We can briefly illustrate these four moves in the birth of the 'Canadian' as a category of 'ethnic' identification.

4: Identifying as Canadian

Breathes there a man.
I thought I was, / I often boasted of it, / And once / Climbing a high hill / And looking
around, / I thanked the Lord / For having made me / A Canadian.
But now, / Some census guy has said / That this great honor / Is only for those few /
Who still remain / On our reserves, / Say!
What right has he / To take the joy / Outta my life. / I'll bet / He'd stick a pin / Into a
kid's balloon / And laugh / To see him cry. / Henry Nine.

(*Toronto Daily Star*, 22 Feb 1922: 6)

The classification of racial or ethnic origin has been an object of inquiry in every Canadian census since its beginnings.²⁸ Until 1986, the census discouraged and advised against 'Canadian' as a category in the classification of racial or ethnic origin.²⁹ However, numerous respondents did indeed report 'Canadian' as their origin and by 1971 Statistics Canada for the first time reported their numbers: over 71 000 respondents insisted on Canadian as their single response (Boyd 1999).³⁰ By 1986, when multiple responses to the ethnic origin question were permitted for the first time, 0.5% of respondents reported Canadian; in 1991 this rose to 4% and by 1996, when 'Canadian' was added to the list of possible categories the percentage increased to 31% (Ibid.). By the end of the twentieth century the category became the fastest growing 'ethnic' origin group in Canada (Boyd and Norris 2001).

Interpreters have variously attributed this phenomenon to state encouragement and promotion of a Canadian identity (Howard-Hassmann 1999), ethnic intermarriage (Kalbach 1999), the over 200-300 year residency of British and French groups for whom immigration is but a distant memory (Boyd and Norris 2001), changes in the wording of the question or the influence of media and political campaigns that mobilise dormant responses (Boyd 1999). The question itself has been criticised for emphasising identification with ancestral origins (ethnic ancestry) and thus assuming that ethnicity is a biological and primordial identity (Howard-Hassmann 1999). The alternative interpretation of ethnicity as a social and cultural identity has led to the recognition that there are numerous dimensions and practices of ethnic identification, which census questions cannot possibly capture (Boyd 1999). Additionally the meaning of responses is brought into question since many subjects conflate ethnic ancestry and ethnic identity (Kalbach 1999). These questions have led some researchers to conclude that, 'to date little evidence exists as to what is actually captured by the Canadian census question on ethnic origins' (Boyd and Norris 2001: 2).³¹

Much has been debated, interpreted and theorised about identity in general and in relation to this specific example of ethnic identity. The approach I have sketched allows us to enter into this debate in a new way. Rather than interpret the meaning or ontology of group identities, I pose a different question: how does the production of population and the creation of the census subject activate practices of identification? I am not suggesting that it is only through the census that such practices occur. As I have already argued there are many practices of identification and census taking is one of these. Rather, I am suggesting that by analysing census taking as a site of contestation of identification we can gain insights about the conditions and agencies that mobilise identification more generally. I will now briefly consider the origin of 'Canadian' as a category of double identification that is connected to the cultivation of census subjects and the production of population, as an actant that makes people do things and has things done to it, and as a boundary object that circulates between different practices.

The debates about the origin of 'Canadian' noted above are concerned with censuses since 1971. However, as early as 1871, individuals were claiming their ancestral origins as

'Canadian' on census manuscript forms (Curtis 2001). In that year, while the list of categories circulated by the census did not include 'Canadian,' some respondents declared and were categorised as Canadian on the manuscript forms, only to be scratched out by compilers after the fact, and re-categorised often on the basis of surnames.³² As manuscript forms from the early twentieth century reveal, the practice did indeed continue into the next century. So, while the manuscript forms and enumerator instructions did not encourage or permit the category 'Canadian' as an origin, respondents stubbornly or habitually claimed it as an identification. Regardless of the wording of the question, and no matter how much the state attempted to guide responses through its various relations of communication (formatting of questions and forms, instructions, statements in the media, and so on) the category was asserted. Thus, many governing agents, from the enumerators to the heads of households, engaged actively in the articulation work required to interpret, resist and create the category through which they could identify. Even before self-enumeration (1971) and the contemporary practice of 'blank' boxes for 'other' responses, capacities of reflexivity and self-categorisation were thus being exercised. Subjects creatively engaged in the practice rather than being simply objectified by it. But this is only one half of the process of identification. Respondents were census subjects in a second way: as subjects of political rule. In the hands of the state, which alone could reveal the truth about the population, the census was a political technology. Through corrections, erasures and reclassification, the state made Canadians disappear from official reports of the population. Subjects were forced into accepted categories suggesting a much more disciplinary rule than that afforded by the introduction of the 'other' category later in the twentieth century.³³

However, the category 'Canadian' was transported and communicated back to the state via the manuscript form, and with each census the state had to contend with 'Canadians' as a disruption to its disciplinary efforts. This is evident in changes to the instructions and the wording of questions in subsequent enumerations, which was in part due to insistent citizens. The practice thus involved an interaction between the subject and the state through the vehicle of the census form, albeit one mediated by many other actants including the instructions, the enumerator and the newspaper media.

For example, in 1921, a few weeks before census taking and in light of just-released enumerator instructions, a media campaign against a change in the wording of the instructions concerning the categories of racial origin occurred. The 1911 instructions stated briefly that the 'racial or tribal origin' should be recorded. A list of possible categories was provided (English, Scotch, Irish, Welsh, and so on). However, in 1921 the list of categories was followed by the direction that 'The words "Canadian" or "American" must not be used for this purpose, as they express "Nationality" or "Citizenship" but not a "Race of people".' The explicit direction was perhaps a response to the increasing occurrence of 'Canadian' (and 'American') as an origin in the 1911 census, though I have not yet been able to confirm this.

One paper reported, 'There is no 'Canadian' or 'American' race, according to the regulations' (*Sudbury Star*, 7 May 1921: 1). News headlines in the English speaking press across the country declared 'No Canadian Race, Census Takers Say' (*Victoria Daily Times*, 10 May 1921: 1).³⁴ Arguments against the instructions included: 'No matter how far back a man can trace his Canadian source, he is of foreign origin, unless he happens to be an Indian, or the child of an Indian mother' (*Camrose Canadian*, 23 June 1921: 7); 'Though a man's ancestors for six or seven generations have lived in Canada and helped to make this country what it is today, he cannot describe himself simply as a Canadian' (*Border Cities Star*, 4 July 1921: 4). An article reproduced in five western newspapers asked, 'Who and what are we? Is there such a person as a Canadian? The Government of Canada says there is not.'³⁵

When an editorial in the national daily asserted 'Let Us Be Canadians!' R. H. Coats, Dominion Statistician, entered the fray in a lengthy Letter to the Editor (*The Globe*, 22 Feb 1922: 4). He argued that seven questions were related to the determination of a Canadian

identity and that ‘origins’ was but one.³⁶ He defended primordial identification on the grounds that it was necessary for knowing the ‘basic ethnic stock of the present Canadian population’ from ‘both a practical and scientific view’ (though these views were not elaborated). He did though ‘recognize the fact that the Canadian race is still in the making, and that its constituent elements and the general process of making may conceivably be worthy of study.’ The editorial in the same issue challenged each of his points and concluded, ‘Perhaps in the course of a few centuries one of Mr. Coats’ successors will permit the descendants of the first white settlers who came to Canada the privilege now accorded Canadians of aboriginal status. By that time they may be able to form the society of ‘The Later Aborigines,’ and so at last earn a place in scientific records as the Canadian race.’

While many editorialists and letters to the editor used nationality, citizenship and racial origin interchangeably, they nonetheless asserted a challenge to the authoritative categories circulated by the census. Canadian as a bona fide origin category was variously defended on the grounds of patriotism, nationalism, as a means of ethnic integration and assimilation, against watered-down ‘hyphenated identities,’ and with the consternation that ‘the only persons who are really entitled to be called Canadians are the hundred thousand Indians whose ancestors held the land when Jacques Cartier sailed up the St. Lawrence almost four centuries ago’ (*The Globe*, 15 Feb 1922: 4). It was thus a category that established the difference of a group – the Canadians—in relation to all others (e.g., immigrants).

What happened as a result? In 1931, an elaborate definition was included in the instructions to enumerators that stated ‘The purpose of the information sought in this column is to measure as accurately as possible the racial origins of the population of Canada, i.e., the original sources from which the present population has been derived.... The object of this question is to obtain a knowledge of the various constituent elements that have combined from the earliest times to make up the present population of Canada.’ ‘Canadian’ was no longer explicitly singled out as an incorrect category. While some editorialists continued to complain that ‘Canadian’ was still not being accepted as an origin, others expressed satisfaction that there was a legitimate inquiry into ‘ancestral’ origins and that so long as a Canadian nationality was recognised and upheld, as the Dominion Statistician assured, then the issue of race was of less importance (e.g., *The Globe*, 18 Aug 1931: 3). And, as the manuscript forms reveal, ‘Canadian’ was still not permitted as an origin for when it did appear it was edited out.

As the foregoing account illustrates, the census subject was not the only actant. While difficult to account for all the possible narratives overflowing census taking, there are numerous traces that can be identified such as those put into circulation by the newspaper media. Indeed, the role of the press as mediators of census making has been analysed elsewhere.³⁷ Certainly, categorisations and narratives of ‘ethnicity’ and ‘race’ were also in circulation and independent of the census. For example, around the time of census taking there were various discussions and debates about what it meant to define oneself as Canadian, who constituted a ‘good’ immigrant, and problematisations of foreigners and aliens, which expressed understandings of these different identification categories. It is in this regard that we can conceive of the category as a boundary object that circulates between practices, with newspaper narratives providing traces of some of these.

Whatever the political reasons and other factors that might have been at work, the event illustrates a symbolic and conceptual struggle over the recognition of a particular identification that was mediated by the categories circulated by the census. For it is worth repeating that the census form and its categories mediated the state-subject relationship in the dispute. Census manuscript forms could make individuals do things (identify with its categories) but was also made to do things, that is, transport back to the state alternative and competing categories.

Identification as ethnically ‘Canadian’ occurred before being recognised amongst the authoritative categories of the census and before the newspaper media took up the issue. I would suggest that the production of population and the creation of the census subject were conditions that made identification with and the eventual recognition of the new category possible (subjectification). Indeed, after much time and controversy it was finally included amongst the authoritative categories and reported in the official statistics of the census authority, and could then be investigated and acted upon (as well as made an object of social science research) (objectification). The inclusion of the category also mobilised ever more subjects to so identify illustrating how the categories circulated by the census and the individuals to which they are linked are simultaneously created. That the number of ethnic ‘Canadians’ increased from 4% to 31% in 5 years attests to the power of the category to mobilise identification and ‘make’ Canadians. As Hacking reminds, this is a historically contingent outcome, and as I have documented above it was only through political and classification struggles (both represented on the manuscript forms and in the political and media debates) that it came to be included amongst the authoritative. Canadian thus understood is the result of co-construction and convergence: between the authoritative classification system of the census authority and the practical systems of subjects.

The example also brings us back to the aim of this paper, which is to understand how the census produces population by creating census subjects. The Dominion Statistician argued that seven questions were related to the determination of Canadian identity: nationality, year of immigration, year of naturalisation, birthplace, mother and father birthplace, language spoken, and racial origin. In so doing he highlighted how census *making* understood Canadian citizenship as a status differentiated according to nationality, immigration and race. Nationality was a necessary but insufficient identification, as it did not provide the state with the ‘practical’ knowledge about things such as the nation’s ‘basic ethnic stock’ as pointed out by the Dominion Statistician. But in the process census *taking* brought into being the capacity to reflect on one’s similarities and differences in relation to the categories circulated by the census and in turn challenge and create new identifications and in the case of being Canadian, claim a new differentiated status. Along these lines we can open up an investigation of the connections between the capacities of being a census subject and those of being a citizen and, as I stated earlier, the claiming of social and political rights.

The birth of ethnic Canadians was thus not an event that the census simply recorded. It was through both social and political struggles that ethnic Canadians were born. Only when the category was recognised by both the state (objectification) and subjects (subjectification) through the practice of double identification (state-subject) was it possible for someone to be recognised as an ethnic Canadian. While it is tempting to interpret the making of censuses as simply the recording of data and the construction of population, census taking and its attendant practices including struggles over categories play too important a role to overlook.

¹ The account is based on both original census manuscript forms and textual databases currently being assembled by the Canadian Century Research Infrastructure Project (CCRI). The CCRI is a five-year interdisciplinary and multi-institutional initiative involved in building a set of interrelated databases concerning the 1911-1951 Canadian censuses of population. As one of eleven Team Leaders from seven universities across Canada, I am involved in the construction of databases including digitised data from original census manuscript forms, and documentary data derived from Statistics Canada files, newspaper commentaries and parliamentary and legislative debates. The examples I provide in this paper are principally drawn from data related to the 1911 to 1931 census enumerations. For further information see a recently published special issue of *Historical Methods* (2007): 40(2).

² This is a brief summary of accounts documented by Gaffield (2007) and Curtis (2001).

³ Curtis argues that Foucault often conflated three terms: populousness, social body and population. The latter is a statistical concept, he contends, and so could only be ‘discovered’ once techniques of generating equivalences between bodies had been invented.

⁴ The importance of an administrative infrastructure to the mediation of knowledge and the incorporation of individuals guided another investigation by Curtis, a study commissioned by the Canadian Ministry of Agriculture to find the facts about rural agricultural conditions in the district of Quebec in 1853-4 (Curtis 1998). The British North American colonies at this time were called the Canadas: the southern parts of the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Quebec from 1841-67. He argues that this was one of the first enquiries by a Canadian social scientific agency to know the social. Lacking an effective administrative grid, established practices of investigation or bureaucratic expertise, the investigator, Jacques-Pierre Rheaume relied upon his own understanding of the sources of reputable intelligence (respectable members of the dominant classes), which ensured that the ‘facts’ were a codification of the opinions of respectable men of property. Lacking other forms of expertise, respectability was a necessary criterion.

⁵ He provides the example of the re-enumeration of the city of Montreal in 1871. The Canadian state challenged and successfully discredited enumerations undertaken by other authorities such as local governments.

⁶ He specifically discusses the early work of Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose, *Governing Economic Life*, which understands the diffused practices of governing. They write, ‘Instead of viewing rule in terms of a State that extends its sway throughout society by means of a ramifying apparatus of control, the notion of government draws attention to the diversity of forces and groups that have, in heterogeneous ways, sought to regulate the lives of individuals and the conditions within particular national territories in pursuit of various goals. Rather than ‘the State’ giving rise to government, the state becomes a particular form that government has taken, and one that does not exhaust the field of calculations and interventions that constitute it’ (Miller and Rose 1990: 3).

⁷ Curtis documents Taché’s interest in ensuring high enumerations of ‘census French,’ Catholics and rural inhabitants; and his commitment to the establishment of a truly scientific census of the new national state, Canada as evidenced in his efforts to systematise and standardise the process by, for example, marginalising interpretive discretion and narratives of observers and compilers.

⁸ Latour and other scholars of ANT have well responded to the critique about the ‘absence’ of structured power relations (see Latour 2005). Power relations become embodied and crystallised in an institution but their anchorage may well be sited outside the institution (Foucault 1983: 222).

⁹ Dominion Bureau of Statistics. Fifth Census of Canada, 1911. Instructions to Officers, Commissioners and Enumerators. If the head could not give information on ‘boarders, lodgers or other inmates’ and if ‘such persons are out of reach when the enumerator calls, he shall leave with the head of the family or household one copy of special Form ‘A’ for each such person, to be filled up by a date and hour required in a notice given thereon by the enumerator, and the names of all such persons and the information concerning them shall be entered by the enumerator in Schedule No. 1 under the name of the head of the family or household of which such persons are members’ (21).

¹⁰ The concept of head of household was dropped in the 1980s in a move to de-gender statistical outputs. This was replaced by the concept of Person one (or Reference person) and other persons in the household were identified according to their relationship to that person.

¹¹ While Curtis attends to the necessity of an administrative infrastructure he does not connect this to the capacities and investments in constructing population at non-state sites.

¹² Foucault conceived of subjectification as involving the exercise of relations of power (that existing between individuals or groups), relations of communication (that involving the transmission of meaning) and objective capacities (that exerted over things) (Foucault 1983).

¹³ While census taking was principally conducted by door-to-door interviews in the early twentieth century, in some instances special forms were provided for individuals absent on enumeration day and

for whom the head of the household could not furnish the necessary information. These would be completed by a householder and later picked up by the enumerator and then transcribed by him onto the manuscript form.

¹⁴ In 1911, enumerator instructions state that in apartment buildings the janitor could be consulted to ensure the enumerator had not missed anyone.

¹⁵ For the purposes of this paper and for ease of discussion I will focus on the practice of individuals identifying themselves rather than the practices of other governing agents.

¹⁶ Curtis notes but does not develop the point that subjects are not passive; they can oppose, subvert and embrace categorisations.

¹⁷ He specifically identifies the invention of the Penny Post in 1840s Britain, which linked names to addresses and residences and accelerated the numbering of house doors and fixing of street signs. The Penny Post, which replaced delivery that was dependent on local knowledge and face-to-face contact, can be understood as simultaneously an individualising technique whereby each person was attached to a particular house address and totalising technique whereby all houses and names were circulated and assembled into the city. People and their houses thus could be identified as individual and collective subjects and objects of governance.

¹⁸ See (Caplan and Torpey 2001) for a discussion of how ‘every person identifiers’ enabled linking observable regularities to individuals.

¹⁹ The unit of enumeration in earlier censuses was the household. In England the nominal return was introduced in 1841 as part of the state’s centralization of administrative arrangements and as a way to monitor and govern the conduct of enumerators. The colonies were urged to follow suit and conduct enumeration by name to ensure accuracy (Curtis 2001: 92-93).

²⁰ For instance, newspaper editorials in the early twentieth century often lamented and chastised those individuals (especially ‘foreigners’) who did not comprehend how to articulate themselves properly into census categories.

²¹ Curtis (as do other researchers interested in this question) does grant that census making must also ‘reflect social relations’ (Curtis 2001: 34). He notes, for instance, that ‘statistical knowledges are conditioned by the materiality of the social relations they attempt to appropriate; they are historically specific knowledges that are adequate to particular kinds of social objects and, by implication, inadequate to others’ (308). The latter Curtis says feeds off other ways of configuring and knowing social relations and in turn come to shape those very social relations.

²² Bowker and Star address this question in their discussion of the relationship between formal or scientific classification systems and informal or practical classification systems deployed in the everyday (1999). They cite in particular Mary Douglas’s work on how practical classifications of the everyday become reified, and Durkheim and Mauss, for whom primitive, practical social classifications are linked to the first scientific classifications.

²³ This is especially revealed when researchers deal with confidential census microdata (individual level data), which demands not only removing names and addresses, but also aggregating some individual records to prevent the identification of a specific individual.

²⁴ It is a subjectivity that has affinities to Simmel’s definition of the stranger: ‘The stranger is close to us, insofar as we feel between him and ourselves common features of a national, social, occupational, or generally human, nature. He is far from us, insofar as these common features extend beyond him or us, and connect us only because they connect a great many people’ (Simmel 1950: 421).

²⁵ Subjective judgments also underpinned the categorisation of race in U.S. censuses prior to 1960; enumerators determined a person’s race by visual observation and based on official instructions and ‘indicators’ (Nobles 2002).

²⁶ Indeed, census categories and definitions are always in flux, being adjusted and modified with each new enumeration based on the results and controversies of previous enumerations, much to the chagrin of users of the data who wish to do longitudinal studies.

²⁷ See for example the various governmental practices of identification discussed in (Caplan and Torpey 2001).

²⁸ The inclusion of questions on racial and ethnic origins in Canadian censuses is connected to the demographic, economic and political stakes in the relations of power between different minority and majority groups that have constituted Canada: three 'founding nations' (Aboriginal, French, and British) and diverse immigrant groups. Census statistics have thus always formed the basis of political and institutional organisation, group recognition, constitutional rights and the implementation of equality and anti-discrimination laws (Potvin 2005).

²⁹ In the first half of the twentieth century, the census inquired into 'racial or tribal origins' defined on the basis of the father's ancestral lineage: 'as in English, Scotch, Irish, Welsh, French, German, Italian, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, Bohemian, Ruthenian, Bukovinian, Galician, Bulgarian, Chinese, Japanese, Polish, Jewish, etc.' ('Instructions to Commissioners and Enumerators,' *Extract from the Manual of Instructions to Officers Employed in the Taking of the Sixth Census of Canada* (1921)). With the 1951 census, 'ethnic origin' replaced the racial focus and conflated country of origin, race and religion, continued paternal lineage (until 1981) and the question was worded such that the expectation was non-Canadian ancestral designation (up until 1986).

³⁰ Census publications for 1971 listed 71 325 single responses to 'Canadian' as ethnic origin (Boyd 1999). However, it was also claimed alongside other origins but not listed separately from other multiple responses.

³¹ Additionally, every census in the twentieth century made changes to the list of possible responses, the wording or presentation of the question, enumerators' instruction and data processing rules (Potvin 2005).

³² Curtis notes how the attribution of origin was based on different criteria in Quebec and other provinces. Census commissioner Taché was concerned with ensuring a high count of French Canadians; in Quebec, children were thus categorised as 'French' if either parent was of French origin. In other provinces, attribution was based solely on the paternal line (Curtis 2001: 284-286).

³³ As far as I know, a genealogy of the 'other' category is yet to be written. In 1951, however, an 'other' box was included for enumerators to write-in groups not listed on the census form. However, enumerator instructions discouraged the use of 'Canadian' in this box and the census authority re-categorised any such entries based on a set of coding rules. However, in 1971, though still discouraged, the number of people who self-reported 'Canadian' were for the first time reported in the final tabulations.

³⁴ 'Can't say race is Canadian' (*News Chronicle* (Port Arthur), 11 May 1921: 5); 'Census takers now on the job' (*Cobalt Nugget*, 4 June 1921: 6); 'How Census Takers Classify Nationalities' (*Camrose Canadian*, 23 June 1921: 7).

³⁵ *Banff Crag and Canyon*, 2 July 1921: 2; *Strathmore and Bow Valley Standard*, 27 July 1921: 2; *Lloydminster Times*, 21 July 1921: 6; *The Vegreville Observer*, 29 July 1921: 6; *The Gleichen Call*, 10 Aug 1921: 6.

³⁶ The seven questions were: Nationality, Year of Immigration, Year of Naturalization, Birthplace, Mother and father birthplace, Language Spoken, Racial Origin.

³⁷ Monica Boyd for example concludes that the most influential factor responsible for the upsurge in the number of self-identified ethnic Canadians in 1996 was a high profile 'Count Me-Canadian' campaign waged by major media outlets (Boyd 1999). See (Bellavance, Normand, and Ruppert 2007) for an analysis of the influence of the media during 1911 census taking.

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