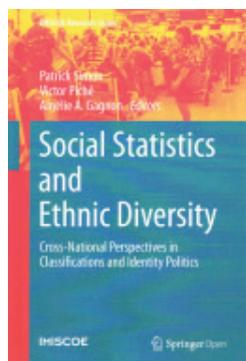


BOOK REVIEW



Social Statistics and Ethnic Diversity: Cross-National Perspective in Classifications and Identity Politics

Editor: Patrick Simon, Victor Piche, Amelia A Gagnon

Publisher: IMISCOE Research Series

Year of Publication: © 2015

ISSN 2364-4087 (print) and 2364-4095 (electronic)

ISBN 978-3-319-20094-1 (print) and 978-3-319-20095-8 (electronic)

Mister Gidion Maru

Universitas Negeri Manado

Email: mrgidionmaru@unima.ac.id

Being published as one of the book series concentrating upon the issues related to the different aspects of international migration, this edited book is published in 2015 entitled *Social Statistics and Ethnic Diversity: Cross-National Perspectives in Classifications and Identity Politics*. This book, edited by Patrick Simon, Victor Piche and Amelia A Gagnon, presents empirical and theoretical researches on ethnic and racial classifications in official statistics which are viewed as the reflection of the representations of population and an interpretation of social dynamics through different lenses. As results of the works of the specialists of the field, this book responds toward the resurgence of the ethnic questions in the area of statistics as portrayed in effort of the increasing number of the countries in the world that regularly launch data concerning with ethnicity or race of their population.

The attempts to deal with the curiosity on the type of data on ethnicity and race, definitions and purposes characterize the aim of this edited publication. Within such context, the book is actually divided into three primary issues to tackle namely comparative accounts of ethnic statistics, enumeration and identity politics, and measurement issues and competing claims. The elaboration and exploration of these issues are significant to illustrate the challenge addressed to ethnic statistics. Yet, it begins with one chapter serving as

the introductory one expounding the topic on “The Making of Racial and Ethnic Categories: Official Statistics Reconsidered”. This first chapter, underlining the transformational emergence of the ethnic question into the statistics matters seen as to the various legacies of the various countries in the world, provides the background of the book series and explains the core ideas. Within this chapter, the editors prescribe statistical categorization of the ethnic implies the existing social constructions with their variety of facets. The second chapter constitutes the first chapter for the first primary issue, “Comparative Accounts of Ethnic Statistics which blows up the global diversity practices and classifications of ethnic enumeration. This chapter bringing forth the topic on “Ethnic Classification in Global Perspective: A Cross-National Survey of the 2000 Census Round” reports the approaches of the ethnic enumeration carried out in 141 nations using the data of the United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD). Examining and comparing the type of ethnic question used in the enumeration practices in cross nations, the author highlights that enumeration strategies “must reckon with the fact that census construction is not merely an exercise in survey design; it is fundamentally a political process”.(p.31). The census is not simply a matter of methodological implementation or guidelines but it is most importantly the implementation of political interpretation of the existing social

construction in every nation. The third chapter on 'Inside Out': The Politics of Enumerating the Nation by Ethnicity", elaborates the comparison and test of two premises of ethnic enumeration such as the recognition of ethnic differences in forums such as the census is influenced by factors that have similar effects across states, and ethnic classification and counting is influenced as much by factors exogenous to states, as by domestic conditions (p.39-40). The discussion on the question of which forces are more dominant in the ethnic enumeration; internal or external pressures, colors the arguments presented within this chapter. Kukutai and Thompson, the authors of the chapter, further defines that ethnic enumeration subjects not only to the domestic factors but also subjects to the external factors whenever states run the enumeration.

The second primary part of the book consists of longer discussions and more chapters to deal with. Entitling this part with "Enumeration and Identity politics", it builds its argument on the connection of the enumeration system with identity politics based upon circumstances occurred in some countries. Those situations are treated as a series of case studies in order to explore the debate due to the distinct criteria and reasons for the inclusion of ethnic question in the official statistics. Belonging to this part, the fourth chapter of the book describes the growing and conflicting interest in the issue of statistics in France due to the debate of whether keeping up the Republican strategy; "Equality through invisibility" as the promotion of the ignorance to any reference to ethnic or racial origin from policies or laws.(P.66). It is in fact pictured in the title of this chapter that is "The Choice of Ignorance: The Debate on Ethnic and Racial Statistics in France". Simon, the author of the chapter, reveals that despite the remaining official enumeration framed in the Republican perspective, there awaits a new frontier to define the inclusion of 'ethno-racial' categories and the procedure to produce such categories in the official population counting. Unlike in France, The fifth chapter written by Victor Piché on the topic "Ethnic and Linguistic Categories in Quebec: Counting to Survive" depicts the question of identity amidst the increasing diversity of Quebec society in Canada. It begins with the historical overviews of the civic

nationalism and immigration to the making of the political use of ethnic and linguistic categories in census questions. The chapter outlines that, in Canada, since the beginning the "interethnic relations were examined from the dual perspective of French Canadians versus English Canadians" (p.96). Further, Piché shows that by the advent of the modernist and the universal projects as well as the intensive voice of assimilation policy marks the intense linguistic debates opposing ethnic and civic nationalists in Quebec society, which actually tends to confirm the contribution of the ideological and political premises underlying the ethnics and linguistic categories in census.

The crucial point of the ethnic questions in population data continues to energize the following chapter. The sixth chapter takes the case of Brazilian with the topic on "Brazilian Ethno-racial Classification and Affirmative Action Policies: Where Are We and Where Do We Go?" by José Luis Petrucci. The proposition delineated in this chapter relates to the use of the element of the ethno-racial as the parameter of social classification which allows the prevailing discriminatory implementations in the enumeration. Petrucci elaborates the synthesis that "people are the object of discrimination when they are perceived by a culturally shared construction as carrying features that remit to racial categories" (p.108). In relation to this synthesis, it is common to see the flourish of the ethnic racial in the practices of the enumeration since "when classification is followed by discrimination, the stigmatized groups see themselves through the eyes of the discriminator, thereby reinforcing race" (108). For such context, the chapter concludes the urgent call for the development of a better ethno-racial classification system due to the phenomena of flourishing multiculturalism and multiethnic reality in Brazil. The other case of the link of enumeration with political identity is that of Great Britain as demonstrated in the chapter seven on topic "The Ethnic Question: Census Politics in Great Britain". This chapter commences its stance by putting forward the dynamic understanding on census with its implication as the governmental instrument for both monitoring and managing policies. It is followed by the author's attempt to present the experience of Great Britain in

counting race over time. Thompson believes “the British state has transitioned from not counting in the name of multiculturalism in the 1981 census to counting to justify positive action after the introduction of the ethnic question in 1991 and finally, counting in the name of multiculturalism with the modifications to the question in 2001” (p.114). This belief organizes the division of her arguments in the chapter. The discussion comes to the end as it proposes that census categories and classifications are the result of the complicated interplay of ideational and institutional factors (p.131). The dynamic of the institutional and ideational factors clarifies the census politics in Britain. This Great Britain experience marks the final chapter of the second primary part of the edited book.

The third primary part of the book concerns with Measurement Issues and Competing Claims“. The main idea of this part is that countries in the world witness the unparalleled techniques of inclusion of the ethnic and racial categories in the practice of the enumeration. The official data related to the ethnic questions have been the results of various paradigm emerged in the context of each countries implementing the census. The intervention of racial stigma and discrimination as well as civic mobilization and policy making stimulates the contestations, negotiations, compromises, and development due to the different interpretations working within socio-political aspects of society. That means the implemented measurement is not merely a technical matter but also it reflects other dimensions of social statistics. The chapter eight on “Counting Ethnicity in Malaysia: The Complexity of Measuring Diversity” demonstrates the role of the official ethnic data as the instrument for government to evaluate and reveal the enactment of policies for many ethnic groups in Malaysia. It is noteworthy that Malaysia has long been dealing with the ethnic issue. The debates go into how the issue is managed in the field of education or politics. Thus, the ethnic diversity dimension is “a critical and powerful driver in the design and implementation of many public policies” (p.144). Such perspective leads to the knowledge of the importance of the official ethnicity data. It may function as the means of monitoring and strengthening public policies in order to tackle

the potential of unjust perceptions and treatment concerned with ethnic interaction and existence in the country. This chapter concisely illustrates that measuring ethnicity in Malaysia is in fact beyond the decennial census and is crucial factor in the production of official statistics. The pivotal revelation is designated by the historical glance that Malaysia’s experience in measuring national/ race/ ethnic group in a regular decennial census can be traced back to the late 1800s. Regular censuses, other than during war years, have been carried out despite the difficulties of taking census in a population ‘with so many races speaking different tongues’ (p. 149). Besides, it is also important to emphasize that data on ethnicity are also very crucial for the collection of information of other information on population. It is not surprising that, Shyamala Nagaraj, Tey Nai-Peng, Ng Chiu-Wan, Lee Kiong-Hock, and Jean Pala, the author of the chapter, reveal that ethnicity information is collected and measured by many institutions to maintain the availability of necessary information for policy monitoring and balance, not to mention the policy making. For example, the strategic position of *Bumiputera* as the majority in the official and economic realms can be detected through the ethnicity data. Hence, the population census categories have provided a guide for many areas to synchronize the governmental and other institutional purpose and need with ethnic categories.

The ninth chapter, as the authors, Wanda Cabella and Rafael Porzecanski, explained, aims at sharing the result of an analysis of the statistical growth of the Afro- descendant and indigenous populations in Uruguay during the last decade. Entitling the chapter “The Growth of Ethnic Minorities in Uruguay: Ethnic Renewal or Measurement Problems?”, Cabella and Porzecansk note that despite the recognition of a remarkable social impact of race and ethnicity, obtaining reliable ethno-racial statistics is still a hard challenge to pose in Latin America as Uruguay. Within this chapter, the authors point out the dynamic of ethnic and race relations as the consequence of the prevailing national myths of racial democracy, homogeneity and equality of opportunities. The acceptance of the myth actually links with the historical experience of

the Uruguayans. It constitutes the national effort to establish a highly integrated society. Yet, this later is found to deny the result of the studies carried out at the end of the twentieth century showing that ethnic minorities played a higher role in Uruguayan history than that attributed by the dominant intellectual and political perspectives (p.177). Such circumstance may occur since, as a nation, Uruguay did not measure ethnic or racial variables in studying demography and economy of the population. It can be traced by the fact that “official surveys or censuses did not collect data on race or ethnicity until the end of the twentieth century, together with the abovementioned national myths of racial homogeneity and democracy, probably explains the remarkable dearth of social scientific analysis of ethno-racial minorities” (p.178). For these reasons, the comparisons of the surveys done by different institutions of different periods seem to gain their contributive place in the discussion within this chapter. The outputs of the comparisons head for the assumptions that the increase of the ethnic minorities in the statistics reflects the inclusion of the race questions in the survey and the revival of indigenous and Afro-descendant identities in recent times due to a variety of social processes.

In similar issues of dynamic approaches for ethnic measurement, the tenth chapter of this edited book begins the presentation with the tradition of French speaking regions in Belgium that perceive the ethnic reference as a touchy issue, even a taboo including in national based statistics. It does not come from vacuum. Being wedged between France and the Netherlands whose approaches to understanding diversity differs each other may define that matter. Nicolas Perrin, Luc Dal , and Michel Poulain put the topic for this chapter “The Objective Approaches of Ethnic Origins in Belgium: Methodological Alternatives and Statistical Implications”. This chapter demonstrates the attempt to develop and implement methodological choices in national based statistics on objective criteria such as the place of birth and nationality of an individual and his/her ascendants. The competing ideological perspectives of whether or not continuing the origin based statistics in spite of the rise of the hope for more information of the immigrant population. The authors of the chapter

claims that nationality-based statistics are useful to understand the populations affected by the limitations of foreigner rights but do not provide any information on the impacts of migration because of the interactions between migration and nationality dynamics. Thus, continuing to capture the origin of the population based on nationality and refusing to develop new origin indicators are seen to be not neutral choices. Responding toward this intersected views, Perrin, Dal, and Poulain proposes the alternative by the argument that “even if objective data makes it possible to better understand immigrant populations, the possibility of collecting data on the ethnicity declared by individuals would help experts better understand the discrimination process and better appreciate the limitations and biases that impact the official statistics that objective elements yield” (p.207). This proposition concludes the chapter.

A bit different from the previous chapter, the chapter eleven, not fully concentrating on the population identity in the census question, sheds the light on defining the position of the indigenous population in census. Chapter eleven deals with the topic on “Social Inequalities and Indigenous Populations in Mexico: A Plural Approach”. Olivier Barbary, the author of the chapter, accentuates that once the linguistic point of view served to be the main element in determining the circle and groups of the indigenous. Yet, the persistent migration and urbanization bring a new nuance for approaching the indigenous population in census, putting aside the use of linguistic criterion. Barbary appears to advocate the proposition claiming that “the linguistic criterion causes an underestimation of contemporary indigenous

population, and reality particularly outside regions historically populated by Indians” (p. 210). In other words, the linguistic criterion does not longer meet the present census of the indigenous population in Mexico. It is in this frame that the chapter offers an approach comparing several possible statistical definitions that combine two ways; individual and collective, of understanding ‘indigenous identity’ using census information. It becomes systematic by the involvement of “a multivariate analysis of demographic and socio-economic profiles of the various segments of the country’s population and

particularly in highlighting the high heterogeneity of the indigenous universe” (p.210). The chapter also expounds that, in the implementation of the approach, indigenous households are seen in terms of their socio-economic differentiation to further understand the differentiation of non-indigenous and indigenous households as well as the members in the close circle of the indigenous groups. It reveals that the self-declared ethnic identification importantly occurs among the households adds and clarifies the attempt to define of the socio-differentiation of indigenous population in census.

In the similar notion of exemplifying the challenge of comprehending the place of the indigenous population in the social statistics, the twelfth chapter as the final chapter of the book accounts the demographic experience of the aboriginal population as summarized in the topic on “Fuzzy Definitions and Demographic Explosion of Aboriginal Populations in Canada from 1986 to 2006”. This chapter puts forward that it is not simple attempt to address the issue of defining the Aboriginal populations in Canada including the connection with the object of the development programs and policies. Despite the existence of the legal definition of the Aboriginality as that of the Indian Act or that categorized in the Census of Canada, defining the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal subjects to multidimensional group boundaries which prove to be difficult to specify. The dynamic and changing Aboriginal affiliation results in not only in fuzzy definition of the group boundaries and statistics but also the level of success of the development program; for instance, the education program as indicated by the proportion of the university graduates of the Aboriginal populations. Ethnic mobility is viewed to be the main drive for such phenomena. The intra-generational ethnic mobility to population growth, picturing the demographic explosion, contribute significantly to the growth of Aboriginal populations in Canada into the new millennium which may define the fertile ground for the growing fuzziness of ‘group boundaries.

Finally, this book is comprehensive and remarkable in addressing the ethnic questions in the enumeration practice. The profound elaboration the racial and ethnic classification in official statistics in different lenses enriches

reader’s conceptual and theoretical perspectives. Using various case studies from various countries representing Americas, European, and Asia, the book interestingly serves the readers with scientific evidences of how census is actually fundamentally political entity situated within broader domestic and international policy debates concerning the nature of race, citizenship and belonging. In spite of a limitation on taking other Asian experiences dealing with the Indigenous people, this book, as the work of experts, also deserves to be a part of collections for those who develop and grow their interest in exploring the place of the Aboriginal or Indigenous populations in national development program and policy. To conclude, it is a big disadvantage to let this book unread for its practical and scientific contributions for further researches, statistical practices and policy making.

REFERENCE

- Simon, P., Piche, Victor., & Gagnon, A A. (2015). *Social Statistics and Ethnic Diversity : Cross-National Perspectives in Classifications and Identity Politics*. IMISCOE Research Series.