Transitory versus Durable Boundary Crossing: What Explains the Indigenous Population Boom in Mexico?[1]

René D. Flores
University of Chicago

Regina Martínez Casas
Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social

María Vignau Loría
University of Washington

Ethnic boundary crossing takes two different forms that have distinct triggers, traits, and potential outcomes: transitory crossing, which is typically short-term, reversible, and triggered by microcontextual cues, and durable crossing, which is a longer-lasting, gradual process motivated by macropolitical forces such as social movements and government policies. This theoretical distinction helps explain the unexpected growth in the long stigmatized self-identified indigenous population in Mexico, which has tripled since 2000. Using a demographic projection model, the authors find that natural demographic processes contributed little to this sudden growth. Instead, using experimental and census data, they find that transitory crossing into the indigenous category was activated by phrasing changes to the 2010 census identification question. The authors theorize that durable crossing is being simultaneously activated by the growing salience of the indigenous movement and the Mexican government's embrace of multiculturalism. These political factors appear to be shaping the social meaning of indigeneity itself.

INTRODUCTION

As indigenous languages decline throughout Latin America, local governments are increasingly relying on self-identification to capture indigenous

[1] We thank Andrew Abbott, Charles Hirschman, Ariela Schachter, Stewart Tolnay, and Ilana Ventura for their helpful suggestions and valuable comments. We also thank Pablo

 https://doi.org/10.1086/725337

ethnicity (INEGI 2020). However, the social dynamics that animate indigenous identification are still not well understood. In particular, the number of people who identify as indigenous has grown rapidly throughout the region in recent years. According to national censuses, while the nonindigenous population in Latin America grew by 13.1%, the self-identified indigenous population increased by 49% between 2000 and 2010 (Del Popolo 2017). This trend has perplexed policy makers and scholars alike. The case of Mexico is especially puzzling. For decades, the government had deployed strong assimilationist policies to compel indigenous people to adopt the country's national culture and Spanish language (Zavala, Miranda, and Caso 1954; Stavenhagen 2001). As a result, many observers believed that indigenous ethnicity would inevitably succumb to cultural assimilation (González-Casanova [1965] 2003). Paradoxically, Mexico's self-identified indigenous population registered the largest growth in the region. It went from 6% in 2000 to 15% in 2010, an increase of more than 11 million indigenous people. This rise in indigenous identification seemingly challenges the long-held view that indigenous ethnicity is destined to disappear. Several explanations for this unexpected demographic phenomenon have been proposed (González 2014; Barbary and Martínez Casas 2015; Vázquez Sandrin and Quezada 2015; Del Popolo 2017), but they have not yet been systematically examined. Understanding the dynamics behind these identity processes is a critical task given that indigeneity is strongly related to poverty and social exclusion, and indigenous identification is a primary way to measure indigenous ethnicity (Telles and PERLA 2014).

We address this gap by assessing two popular explanations for this unexpected growth: (1) natural demographic growth and (2) wording changes in the census identification item. We focus on Mexico, which despite having the largest indigenous population in Latin America experienced the biggest absolute and relative gains in self-identified indigenous people. Further, Mexico significantly changed its indigenous identification question in its census between 2000 and 2010, which allows us to test the power of item wording on self-identification.

To address these questions, we conduct three separate studies. In study 1, we use a demographic projection model and find that natural demographic processes contributed little to this "ethnic explosion." Therefore, in study 2, we take a constructivist approach using census and experimental data to examine the social mechanisms that are fueling this rise in ethnic identification. We find that this growth is driven by two different forms of ethnic boundary crossing that

Parás and Carlos López for their assistance collecting data. All errors are uniquely our own. Direct correspondence to René D. Flores, Department of Sociology, University of Chicago, 1126 East 59th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60637. Email: renedf@uchicago.edu

have distinct triggers, traits, and potential outcomes. First, *transitory* crossing, which is typically short-term, reversible, and triggered by microcontextual cues, was activated by phrasing changes in the 2010 census identity question. These changes presented indigeneity in ways that made it more appealing to a broader segment of the population. We identify two mechanisms, through the application of two nationally representative survey experiments, that largely account for the phenomenon: avoiding essentialist language to define indigeneity (*essentialism*) and not treating indigeneity as a collective or grouped condition (*groupness*).

However, changes to census items are insufficient to fully explain this growing trend. Indigenous self-identification grew again in the 2020 census, even if a similar identification question was used. This continuous resurgence in ethnic identification represents a second form of boundary crossing that we name *durable* crossing, which is a longer-lasting, gradual process motivated by macropolitical forces such as social movements and government policies. We theorize that this second form of boundary crossing is being activated by the growing salience of indigenous organizations and Mexico's embrace of multiculturalism. These political factors appear to be shaping the social meaning of indigeneity itself. In study 3, we rely on census data and find that the post-2010 growth in indigenous identification is concentrated among urban, educated, and Spanish monolingual individuals, which is the population expected to be more attuned to changes in elite rhetoric and government policies.

Apart from increasing our theoretical understanding of ethnic boundary processes more generally, our study can also inform the decisions of policy makers interested in measuring ethnic identification via surveys. By identifying the precise mechanisms through which identity questions may trigger ethnic boundary crossing, our research can help explain the ebbs and flows of ethnic identification in Mexico and beyond.

ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION AND ETHNORACIAL BOUNDARIES

The notion of collective identity is grounded in classic sociological concepts like Durkheim's "collective conscience" and Weber's *Verstehen*. This notion addresses the "we-ness" of a group and emphasizes the shared traits around which group members coalesce (Cerulo 1997). In turn, ethnicity can be defined as subjective feelings of belonging based on the belief in shared culture and common ancestry (Wimmer 2008).

Individuals' identities may be different from external categorization made by others (Guillaumin 1995; Calhoun 1997; Harris and Sim 2002; Telles 2002). External categorization often homogenizes within-group differences and is linked to processes of racialization and stigmatization. In contrast, ethnic self-identification is typically voluntary (Guillaumin 1995; Telles

2002), but it can serve as a powerful foundation for group identities, social movements, and even armed conflicts (Horowitz 1985; Yashar 2005). Further, scholars and policy makers commonly rely on self-identification to examine social stratification patterns by ethnicity and race (Telles and PERLA 2014).

Early scholars approached ethnic identity from a primordial perspective, treating ethnicity "as a given" (Corntassel 2003, p. 83). From this point of view, ethnicity emanates from "essential" unchanging attributes of people rooted in their psychological makeup or the properties of structured locations (Cerulo 1997, p. 387). More recently, constructivist scholars have criticized these essentialist views of ethnicity. Instead, they define ethnic identities as "interactional accomplishments," as "identities continually renegotiated via linguistic exchange and social performance" (p. 387). These scholars pay attention to "the ways in which ethnic boundaries, identities, and cultures, are negotiated, defined, and produced through social interaction inside and outside ethnic communities" (Nagel 1994, p. 152). These scholars consider collective identities to be fluid, situational, dynamic, and changeable (Waters 1994). They believe that as individuals move through their daily lives, they carry "portfolios" of ethnic identities that become more or less salient according to the situation or audiences at hand (Nagel 1994).

Within the constructivist camp, the boundary-making approach is a prominent perspective (Lamont and Molnár 2002; Loveman and Muniz 2007). This perspective is rooted in Barth's seminal work on the nature of ethnic boundaries between groups (Barth 1969). Contemporary scholars have documented how ethnic boundaries are made through everyday interactions and by political movements (Brubaker 2004, 2006; Wimmer 2008). They have also identified three different mechanisms through which boundaries change: *boundary crossing* refers to the movement of individuals across racial boundaries, *boundary shifting* identifies the movement of racial boundaries across individuals, and, finally, *boundary blurring* captures situations in which the character of the boundary itself changes (Zolberg and Woon 1999; Alba and Nee 2003; Loveman and Muniz 2007).

Scholars have identified national censuses as an important factor shaping ethnoracial boundary processes (Hout and Goldstein 1994; Kertzer and Arel 2002; Hochschild and Powell 2008). Mora (2014) examines the creation and institutionalization of the panethnic category of "Hispanic" in the United States in the 1970s. She documents efforts by census bureaucrats, ethnic activists, and businesspeople to motivate Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and other Latin Americans, who had been traditionally classified as "white" by the census, to start identifying as "Hispanic." In the end, Mora argues, including the "Hispanic" category in the census institutionalized this ethnic label and may have motivated millions of individuals to cross ethnic boundaries to identify with it.

Similarly, Loveman (2014) finds that Latin American states have historically used censuses as instruments for national development. Through these instruments, local elites, influenced by notions of Western supremacy and eugenics, sought to examine the racial composition of their societies in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. They believed that national progress could be obtained only through "whitening" and cultural assimilation, and the census gave them information about the degree to which these goals were attainable (see also Telles and Flores 2013). Therefore, Loveman argues, national censuses are race-making institutions—not only did they influence how policy makers viewed national populations, they have also shaped the identities and political strategies of ethnoracially marginalized populations in Latin America.

Prior studies of shifts in racial/ethnic populations in national censuses have mostly tried to assess whether racial or ethnic reclassification has indeed taken place. But these studies stop short of identifying precisely how racial boundaries changed. This is so because boundary changes "are hard to operationalize in a precise way" (Alba and Nee 2003, p. 60). One notable exception is Loveman and Muniz's (2007) study of the whitening of the Puerto Rican population. Using demographic and historical data, they conclude that the significant growth in the proportion of white Puerto Ricans, as captured by the census between 1910 and 1920, was a result of boundary shifting. In their words, between 1910 and 1920, there was a "cultural shift in how whiteness was socially defined" (p. 919).

Nevertheless, it is not self-evident that the same mechanisms and boundary dynamics would apply to the Mexican case. The boundary processes identified in Puerto Rico involved a renewed preference for "whiteness" in the context of a US colonial intervention (Loveman 2007). In the Mexican case, no sudden foreign intervention took place, and, as we describe in the next section, the ethnic category that experienced unexpected growth, *indigenous*, has been consistently stigmatized. This article builds on this constructivist perspective by investigating the boundary dynamics that facilitated the sudden growth of the self-identified indigenous population in Mexico.

INDIGENEITY IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

Far from indigeneity's being an essential attribute of individuals, constructivist scholars have documented that larger social and political forces such as government policies and social movements can influence individuals' decisions to identify as indigenous (Nagel 1995; Telles and PERLA 2014). In the United States, the population identifying as Native American in the census has grown rapidly since the 1960s beyond what is demographically possible (Eschbach, Supple, and Snipp 1998). This process was set into motion by changes in government policies, ethnic activism, and shifting public

perceptions of Native Americans. Since the 1800s, federal Indian policy aimed to assimilate Native Americans into the Euro-American cultural mainstream. However, around World War II policies were crafted to urbanize Native Americans, which resulted in the creation of an urban, educated, English-speaking population that ended up providing a constituency for Native American organizations during the civil rights era (Nagel 1995). In turn, participation in political activism increased ethnic consciousness. A gradual destigmatization of Indian identity accompanied these political processes (Cornell 1988; Nagel 1995), which further encouraged self-identification (Eschbach et al. 1998). In short, this literature hints at the capacity of government policies and ethnic movements to influence the configuration of ethnic boundaries.

In Latin America, government action and ethnic social movements are also thought to influence indigenous identification (Yashar 2005; Telles and Flores 2013). In the 1900s, elites in countries like Brazil, Mexico, and Peru developed national ideologies attempting to unify their nations using a positive evaluation of race mixing (Sue 2013). They rejected Anglo-European assumptions that racial hybridity was degenerative. Instead, these intellectuals embraced racially hybrid individuals as the foundation of their nations. While they recognized the contributions of indigenous peoples, they also believed that cultural homogeneity was a precondition for national development, and, thus, they devised assimilationist policies to turn Indians into "modern" national citizens.

Today, indigenous communities face high levels of marginalization and exclusion throughout the region. But their cultural rights are increasingly recognized, particularly after the wave of multicultural citizenship reform that swept across Latin America (Hooker 2005). Facing increased pressure from both indigenous social movements and international agencies from the Global North, local governments have embraced the ideas of multiculturalism (Yashar 2005; De la Peña 2006). The advent of multiculturalism in the mid-1990s has seemingly tempered the assimilationist impetus of older race-mixing ideologies. Instead of seeking the cultural erasure of indigenous people, these new sets of rights recognized their right to be different (Hale 2002).

Scholars have theorized that the official embrace of multiculturalism may have encouraged ethnic consciousness. As Telles and Flores (2013, p. 426) put it: "Whereas mestizaje sought to homogenize or downplay racial and ethnic diversity throughout the region, this new period of multiculturalism has witnessed the emergence of indigenous and Afro-descendant identities, allowing ethnic minorities, to varying degrees, to make claims on the state."

Could the shift away from assimilationist rhetoric and policies have encouraged ethnic identification among contemporary Latin Americans much like it occurred among Native American communities in the United States?

Such a shift was particularly pronounced in Mexico, a country that has made a dramatic change in its national narrative and ethnic policies by going from a strong assimilationist model under mestizaje ideology to a multiculturalism model, in which ethnic differences are formally celebrated. Census data appear to support such an expectation. With the multiculturalism turn, several Latin American nations included questions on indigenous self-identification for the first time in the 2000 round of their national censuses. Table 1 shows that, despite facing high levels of discrimination and social exclusion, the number of individuals who identify as indigenous grew not only in Mexico but in every country except for Bolivia. At the same time, competing explanations, which include natural demographic processes as well as changes in census instruments to capture ethnicity, have not been fully examined.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF INDIGENEITY IN MEXICO

As Mexico began to consolidate as a nation in the 1800s, intellectuals like Vicente Riva Palacio argued that cultural and racial homogeneity were needed to ensure Mexico's national development and overcome the country's divisions. Spanish and indigenous blood had to be blended to create a "New Mexican" people: the mestizos. Mestizos were seen as superior to both the European and indigenous "races," since they incorporated these races' best traits. Therefore, they represented the future of the Mexican nation (Martínez Casas et al. 2014). José Vasconcelos (1882–1959), founder of the federal Ministry of Education (1921), helped to institutionalize mestizaje ideology. Under the banner of the "cosmic race," Vasconcelos promoted a program of cultural missions, funded public murals, and disseminated a vast program of publications, all of which touted this ideology. He also aimed to consolidate a national identity based on assimilation and integration of indigenous individuals, who were regarded as an obstacle to a prosperous Mexico (Hale 1968).

One consequence of Mexican elites' efforts to position cultural homogeneity as the bedrock of mestizaje ideology was that "otherness" was constructed on the basis of cultural differences. Therefore, cultural attributes such as language became the primary way to differentiate indigenous from nonindigenous people. Starting with the 1895 census, the Mexican government has used language as the primary criterion to identify the indigenous population. Such census data allowed public officials to measure the success of the government's assimilationist policies (Loveman 2014). The one exception to this cultural way of defining indigeneity was the 1921 national census, which included a race item that classified Mexicans as White, Indian, or Mixed (*mezclado*). However, in the 1930 census Mexican officials replaced this racial item with a question on indigenous language ability (González Navarro 1968). Census officials' justification for dropping the race question was that race was an "unscientific" concept and that, due to high rates of miscegenation,

TABLE 1
INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS IN LATIN AMERICAN CENSUSES

COUNTRY/YEAR	% OF TOTAL POPULATION	AVERAGE INTERCENSAL ANNUAL GROWTH RATE (%)	COUNTRY CHANGED QUESTION?	QUESTION TEXT	
				Spanish/Portuguese	English
Argentina:		9.6	Yes		
2001*	. . .			¿Existe en este hogar alguna persona que se reconozca descendiente o perteneciente a un pueblo indígena? (Sólo a nivel de hogar)	Is there a person in this household who identifies as descendant or as belonging to an indigenous pueblo? (Only at the household level)
2005	1.6			. . .	. . .
2010	2.4			¿Alguna persona de este hogar es indígena o descendiente de pueblos indígenas (originarios o aborígenes)?	Any person in this household is indigenous or descendant from indigenous pueblos (native or aboriginal)?
Bolivia:		−5.7	Yes		
2001	62.19			¿Se considera perteneciente a alguno de los siguientes pueblos originarios o indígenas . . .?	Do you consider yourself as belonging to any of the following native or indigenous pueblos . . .?
2012	41.52			¿Como boliviana o boliviano, ¿pertenece a alguna nación o pueblo indígena, originario, campesino o afro-boliviano?	As Bolivian, do you belong to any nation or pueblo that is indigenous, native, campesino, or afro-Bolivian?
Brazil:		2	Yes		
2000	.4			A sua cor ou raça é: (branca, preta, amarela, parda, indígena)	Your race or color is . . .? is: (white, black, yellow, brown, indigenous)?
2010	.5			A sua cor ou raça é: (branca, preta, amarela, parda, indígena) ¿Voce se considera indígena? (Sim/Não)	Your race or color is: (white, black, yellow, brown, indigenous)? Do you consider yourself indigenous? (Yes/No)

Chile:		10.2	Yes		
2002	4.6			¿Pertenece Ud. a alguno de los siguientes pueblos originarios o indígenas? (Alacalufe/ Kawashkar, Atacameño, Aimara, Colla, Mapiche, Quechua, Rapa Nui, Yámana/ Yagán, ninguno de los anteriores)	Do you belong to any of the following native or indigenous pueblos? (Alacalufe/ Kawashkar, Atacameño, Aimara, Colla, Mapiche, Quechua, Rapa Nui, Yámana/Yagán, none of the above)
2012[†]	11.1			¿Se considera perteneciente a algún pueblo indígena (originario)? Sí/No	Do you consider yourself as belonging to any indigenous (native) pueblo? Yes/No
Costa Rica:		4.5	Yes		
2000	1.7			¿Pertenece . . . a la cultura . . .? (Indígena, afrocostarricense o negra, china, ninguna de las anteriores)	Do you belong to culture . . .? (Indigenous, Afro-Costarican or black, Chinese, none of the above)
2011[‡]	2.4			¿(Nombre) se considera indígena?	Do you consider yourself indigenous?
Ecuador:		2.3	Yes		
2001	6.8			¿Cómo se considera . . .? (Indígena, negro/ afroecuatoriano, mestizo, mulato, blanco, otro)	How do you consider yourself . . .? (Indigenous, black/afroecuatorian, mestizo, mulatto, white, other)
2010	7.0			¿Cómo se identifica (nombre) según su cultura y costumbres: indígena, afrodescendiente/ afroecutoriano, negro, mulato, montubio, mestizo, blanco, otro?	How do you identity (name) based on your culture and customs: indigenous, afrodescendent/afroecuatorian, black, mulatto, montubio, mestizo, white, other?
Mexico:		10.7	Yes		
2000	6.3			¿Es . . . náhuatl, maya, zapoteco, mixteco o de otro grupo indígena?	Are you . . . náhuatl, Mayan, Zapotec, Mixtec, or from other indigenous group?

TABLE 1 (*Continued*)

Country/Year	% of Total Population	Average Intercensal Annual Growth Rate (%)	Country Changed Question?	Question Text	
				Spanish/Portuguese	English
2010	15.1			¿De acuerdo con la cultura de (nombre), ella (él) se considera indígena?	According to your culture, do you consider yourself indigenous?
Panama:		3.9	No		
2000	10			Filto: ¿Vive aquí alguna persona indígena? Si sí, ¿A qué grupo indígena pertenece?	Filter: Does an indigenous person live here? What indigenous group does he/she belong to?
2010	12.3			Filto: ¿Vive aquí alguna persona indígena? Si sí, ¿A qué grupo indígena pertenece?	Filter: Does an indigenous person live here? What indigenous group does he/she belong to?
Paraguay:		2.6	Yes		
2002	1.6			¿Vive aquí alguna persona indígena?	Does an indigenous person live here?
2012	1.7			¿De las personas que viven habitualmente en este hogar, alguna se considera indígena o perteneciente a una etnia (pueblo) indígena?	Regarding people who live in this household regularly, do any of them consider themselves indigenous or belonging to an indigenous pueblo?
Venezuela:		3.7	Yes		
2001	2.3			¿Pertenece a algún pueblo indígena? (Sí/No)	Do you belong to an indigenous pueblo? (Yes/No)
2011	2.7			¿Pertenece a algún pueblo indígena o etnia? ¿Cuál? (Sí/No)	Do you belong to an indigenous pueblo or *etnia*? Which one? (Yes/No)

Source.—Del Popolo (2017).

* This was only asked at the household level. It was used to define the sample for the 2005 Complementary Survey of Indigenous Peoples.

† The Chilean census of 2012 had several quality problems. As such, the government did not consider its results official.

‡ The 2011 census in Costa Rica included a second question: (Name) considers themselves . . . (black or afrodescendent, mulatto, Chinese, white/mestizo, other).

most Mexicans were unaware of their racial ancestry (Dirección General de Estadística [1930] 1993). Language became henceforth the official way to define who was indigenous.

In 1948, the Mexican government created the Instituto Nacional Indigenista, whose mission was to transform indigenous peoples into Mexicans (Zavala et al. 1954; Saldívar 2008). Its guiding principle was that for Mexico to become a modern nation, indigenous people had to embrace cultural mestizaje. The Instituto Nacional Indigenista predicted that indigenous ethnicity would disappear by the 1970s. After 1970, however, the government's integration policies, which were intended to construct a unified national identity, were strongly criticized (Stavenhagen 2001). Not only had the policies failed to solve the country's vast social inequalities (De la Peña 1999), but growing numbers of observers began questioning the goal of cultural homogeneity for Mexico (Bonfil Batalla 1996). Indigenous social movements played a key role in raising awareness about the plight of indigenous communities (Reina 2011). Groups like the Zapatista Army of National Liberation publicly demanded increased cultural, political, and legal recognition of indigenous peoples (Jung 2003). In 2000, Mexico decided to recognize individuals' right to self-identify and added an indigenous identity question to its national census (Del Popolo 2001). This decision was influenced by this growing social pressure and the region's multiculturalist turn. In addition, Mexican officials were interested in finding alternative ways to capture ethnic belonging because they had noted the "gradual and growing abandonment of indigenous languages" (INEGI 2020, p. 204).

Past research has shown that, just like speaking an indigenous language, espousing an indigenous identity may be stigmatizing in Mexico. In a classic ethnographic study of a village in central Mexico conducted in the 1960s, Friedlander (2006) finds that indigenous status is often used as an epithet. Villagers were often embarrassed about their Indian identity, and they often accused individuals further down the social status ladder of being "Indian." She also observed that Indian status was closely intertwined with class. People who were poor or who could not read or write were often classified as "Indian" by others.

Today, many indigenous people continue to report high levels of discrimination, and ethnic inequality remains high (Telles, Flores, and Urrea-Giraldo 2015; Asad and Hwang 2019). At the same time, indigenous people are often portrayed by political and cultural elites as a vestige of Mexico's glorious past. Folkloric tones are used to describe indigenous cultures and their contributions to Mexican identity (Stavenhagen 2001). This duality highlights the complex social status of indigenous people in Mexican society.

Recent research shows that there are important differences between individuals who speak indigenous languages and those who identify as indigenous

(Telles and Torche 2018). The population who speaks an indigenous language is smaller, more traditional, and typically more disadvantaged than the self-identified population (Villarreal 2014). However, there is also a strong association between poverty and indigenous identity as well as cultural traits.[2] Recent survey data show that, while low educational attainment and rural residence are important determinants of indigenous identification, having indigenous-speaking parents is the strongest predictor (Martínez Casas et al. 2014). Interestingly, skin color is not a significant predictor of indigenous identification (Martínez Casas et al. 2014). Since becoming mestizo is in many cases a sociocultural process and not a biological one (Knight 1990), many self-identified indigenous and mestizos have similar physical appearances and skin tones (Telles et al. 2015).

Despite the general disdain for indigenous people in Mexico, in certain social settings it may be advantageous to identify as indigenous (Martínez Novo 2006). Presenting oneself as indigenous may make it easier to access certain social programs (Martínez Casas 2010; Flores and Sulmont 2021). But the same identity may result in discrimination in other situations, such as when searching for jobs or trying to penetrate nonindigenous social networks. Thus, individuals may over- or underemphasize their indigenous identity, depending on the situation (see Martínez Novo 2006; Martínez Casas 2007).

Figure 1 shows the size of the indigenous population historically as measured by the Mexican census. It shows that the share of the population classified as indigenous by the government using spoken language has gradually decreased (even if the indigenous-speaking population has grown in absolute numbers). With regard to self-identification, figure 1 shows that in 2000 around 6% of Mexicans identified as indigenous, similar to the 6% of Mexicans who spoke an indigenous language. In 2010, the census included both language and identification items again. A similar proportion of Mexicans reported speaking an indigenous language (6.6%), but 15% of Mexicans now identified as indigenous. In other words, the percentage of Mexicans who identified as indigenous in the census more than doubled (a growth rate of 150%). This represented a net gain of more than 11 million new self-identified indigenous people.

Scholars labeled this unexpected growth an "ethnic explosion" (Barbary and Martínez Casas 2015). It seemingly contradicted the predictions of generations of scholars in Mexico that indigenous ethnicity would eventually perish under the weight of cultural assimilation (Vasconcelos [1925] 1992; Stavenhagen 2001; González-Casanova 2003). Scholars have advanced multiple

[2] Past research shows that ethnoracial inequality in Latin America is greater when ethnicity is captured through external categorization rather than self-identification (Telles and Lim 1998; Flores and Telles 2012; Monk 2016; Campos-Vázquez and Medina-Cortina 2019).

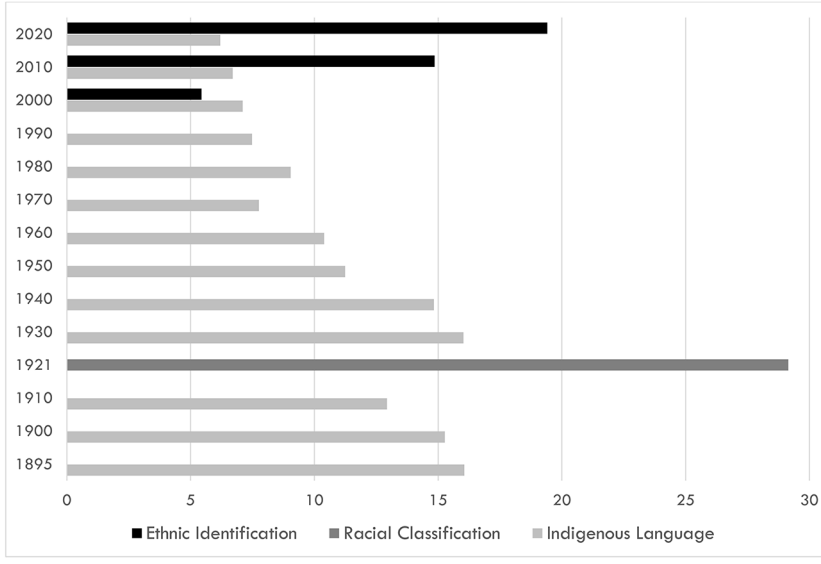

FIG. 1.—Indigenous population as captured by Mexican national censuses, 1895–2020. Adapted from Telles and PERLA (2014) using data from the Mexican national census.

hypotheses to explain this apparent revival of indigeneity, including natural demographic growth, changes in the census identification question, and a growing ethnic consciousness (González 2014; Barbary and Martínez Casas 2015; Vázquez Sandrin and Quezada 2015). To date, however, no satisfactory explanation has been provided. In the next section, we test the first hypothesis: whether the increase in indigenous self-identification was driven by natural growth of the indigenous population of Mexico.

STUDY 1: NATURAL DEMOGRAPHIC GROWTH

Following Hout and Goldstein (1994), we distinguish between "natural" and "social" sources of ethnic/racial population growth. Natural growth is caused by differential mortality and fertility plus international migration, whereas social growth stems from changes in individuals' categorical membership. Perhaps the most obvious explanation for these apparent population changes would be natural demographic patterns. After all, it is plausible that, given their higher fertility rates and increasing access to healthcare, the indigenous population could have grown faster than the nonindigenous population, which we test in this section.

To assess a purely demographic explanation for the sizable population increase observed between 2000 and 2010, we estimate a 10-year demographic

projection of the population that self-identified as indigenous in 2000. The results obtained from our projection would be the 10-year growth in ethnic self-identification under the assumption that only demographic variables affect it. We then compare the results from our projection with the size of self-identified indigenous population that was actually observed in 2010. The difference between the projected and the observed self-identified indigenous population would be growth that cannot be explained by demographic processes.

Following Loveman and Muniz (2007), we employ a cohort component method to carry out this population projection. This approach accounts for the age distribution of the population. In other words, it accounts for the differential exposure to the risks of fertility, mortality, and international migration by age and sex (Preston, Heuveline, and Guillot 2001). We make some assumptions that are commonly made in demographic projections of ethnic and racial populations. First, we assume that individuals' ethnoracial status remains stable over the projected time interval (Loveman and Muniz 2007). Second, we assume that new births during the examined time interval share the same ethnoracial status as their mothers. Demographers typically recommend assigning new births to mothers' subgroups, particularly when this corresponds to local empirical patterns (Preston et al. 2001). Thus, we follow a female-dominant model, and we classify all new births projected by our model in the same ethnic category as their mothers. We apply the same logic to young children and classify them under the same ethnic category as their mothers (see the appendix for more details).

Our projection method consists of a three-step process. First, we estimate the number of individuals in each sex and age group that are alive in 2010 using age and sex specific survival probabilities. Second, we estimate the number of births over the time interval and add those who survived to 2010. Third, we add/subtract migrants on the basis of age and sex specific estimations for immigration and emigration during the 10-year interval. The difference between the projected and the actual (enumerated) population by indigenous status provides a crude measure of changes in ethnic identities over time.

In 2000, 6.08 million individuals self-identified as indigenous in the census. By accounting for the differential exposure to mortality, fertility, and migration by sex and age groups, our cohort component projection yields an expected population of 7.37 million individuals in 2010. However, in the 2010 census 16.72 million Mexicans self-identified as indigenous (including those under three years old with self-identified indigenous mothers). This results in a surplus population of 9.35 million individuals that cannot be explained by natural increase. To achieve those levels of growth, the indigenous population would have to grow at a rate of 10.1% per year between 2000 and 2010, which is inconsistent with historic trends

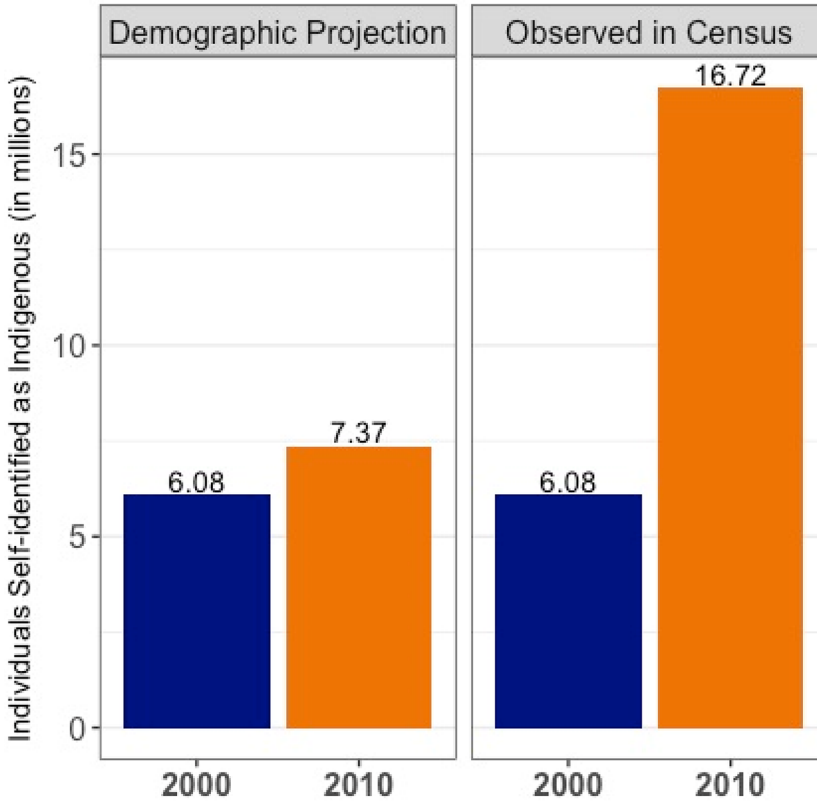

FIG. 2.—Self-identified indigenous individuals by Mexican census and demographic projection. Data are from the Mexican census (2000 and 2010).

in human population growth (where 3% annual growth is considered very high).[3]

In sum, demographic processes can only explain 12% of the population growth observed between 2000 and 2010. This is illustrated in figure 2. Given this evidence, we discard a purely demographic explanation for these trends.

[3] To calculate the annual growth rate needed to go from a population of 6.08 to 15.88 million in a space of 10 years, we apply the formula below. Given this formula, we can solve for r, which is the rate of natural increase between 2000 and 2010: $P_{t+n} = P_t e^{rn}$, where P_{t+n} is the observed population in 2010, P_t is the observed population in 2000, e is the mathematical constant, r is the rate of natural increase, and n is the length of the interval, 10 years. So, $r = [\ln(P_{t+n}/P_t)]/n$, and $r = .101$.

STUDY 2: QUESTION WORDING CHANGES

If natural demographic processes cannot account for most of the sudden growth of self-identified indigenous people in Mexico between 2000 and 2010, how else can it be explained? A potential culprit of these identity shifts is the fact that the Mexican census changed its ethnic identification question in 2010.[4] Survey methodologists have found that seemingly small changes in question wording can affect individuals' responses (Rasinski 1989; Schuman and Presser 1996). Changes in the format of questions on ethnicity (i.e., open vs. closed ended) and variations in the number of categories listed as choices of examples can produce different responses (Pryor et al. 1992; Hirschman 1993; Sulmont 2010). In study 2, we take a constructivist approach to examine whether these changes fueled ethnic boundary crossing and led to changes in Mexicans' identification choices. We use experimental and census data to understand why the 2010 census question leads to such high increases in indigenous identification relative to the 2000 question.

The 2000 census asked, "Are you Nahuatl, Mayan, Zapotec, Mixtec, or from another indigenous group?" In 2010, the question was, "According to your culture, do you consider yourself indigenous?" These questions are markedly different. The 2000 question mentions the four largest indigenous groups in Mexico and defines indigeneity as a "group" condition. The 2010 census defines indigeneity in terms of culture and emphasizes its subjective and individual nature. Prominent voices have argued that the changed wording may be responsible for the sudden increase in the self-identified indigenous population in 2010 (Martínez Casas et al. 2014; Vázquez Sandrin and Quezada 2015; Del Popolo 2017). We test this hypothesis and seek to identify the mechanisms involved in the next few sections. We explore four social mechanisms through which changes in the ethnic identification question used by the census could influence indigenous identification: cultural precondition, representation, essentialism, and groupness.

One compelling way to test the effect of wording changes on ethnic identification would be by asking both census questions at the same time. If we asked both questions today and we found that they produced different ethnic identification levels, we would have strong evidence that changes in the questions' phrasing are causing the disparity. To do so, we designed and implemented a survey experiment with a nationally representative sample of Mexicans. As table 2 shows, respondents were randomly asked one of three identity questions: (1) the census 2000 question, (2) the census 2010 question, and (3) a slightly modified version of the census 2010 question, which we analyze in a different section. This experimental approach allows us to isolate the effect of wording changes on Mexicans' ethnic identification.

[4] The basic indigenous language question used by the Mexican census during the 2000–2020 period was: "(Name) speak an indigenous dialect or language?" (INEGI 2020, p. 210).

TABLE 2
First Experimental Design: Data OPM National Mexico Survey

Hypothesis	Experimental Design	Question	Sample Size
NA	Census 2000 question	Are you Nahuatl, Mayan, Zapotec, Mixtec, or from another indigenous group? (Yes/No)	427
NA	Census 2010 question	According to your culture, do you consider yourself indigenous? (Yes/No)	380
Cultural precondition	Census 2010 question minus "according to your culture"	Do you consider yourself indigenous? (Yes/No)	401

Note.—$N = 1{,}208$.

Data OPM, a private polling firm in Mexico, applied the survey door to door in March 2016. The final sample size was 1,208. The sampling process follows a multistage probabilistic design based on Mexico's electoral sections, blocks within these sections, and households within these blocks.[5] The resulting sample is representative of the Mexican adult population living in Mexico at the time of the interviews. Table 3 shows the sociodemographic characteristics of the survey respondents. In table A5, we compare these estimates to those from a large intercensal survey of 6.1 million households conducted by the Mexican census in 2015. We find a remarkable degree of similarity between both samples along every indicator, which seems to confirm the validity of our survey. To apply the survey, administrators used a handheld device that automatically randomized the treatment conditions of our experiment, which minimized human error.

As mentioned earlier, 6.1% of Mexicans self-identified as indigenous in 2000 and 15% did so in 2010, which represents a growth rate of 145%. To test whether question phrasing had an effect, we randomly assigned some respondents to either the 2000 or the 2010 census question. Since we employ relatively small random samples, we avoid sample-to-census comparisons. Instead, we perform sample-to-sample comparisons and assess how levels of indigenous identification change within our sample as a result of randomly varying the identification questions used. We use logistic regression with robust standard errors to test whether the experimental treatments caused

[5] The primary sampling units were based on the electoral sections designed by the National Electoral Institute. In the second stage, two blocks were randomly selected within each electoral section. A maximum number of five interviews were conducted in each block. Finally, one adult respondent in each household was randomly selected to respond to the survey based on sex and age distributions from the 2010 census.

changes in individuals' identification choices. In these models, shown in the appendix, we include controls for pretreatment covariates like sex, age, region, and education. Their inclusion should improve the precision of the estimated treatment effects without increasing any bias because treatment assignment is unrelated to these traits (Gelman and Hill 2007; Auspurg and Hinz 2014). Effects do not significantly vary when control variables are not included in the models.

In figure 3, we show the average marginal effects of our experimental conditions. It shows that we would expect a 17-point increase in the proportion of respondents who identify as indigenous when they are asked the 2010 census question rather than the 2000 census one. This represents a growth rate of 150%, which is remarkably similar to the growth rate in self-identification found by the census between 2000 and 2010.

We consider this to be compelling evidence that a significant portion of the changes in the size of the indigenous population was driven by changes in the questions the census used. But why does asking the 2010 question increase self-identification so markedly? We now systematically explore the differences between the questions and test four distinct mechanisms through which they could produce such different population estimates.

TABLE 3
Descriptive Statistics of Data OPM National Samples

	2016	2017
Age	40.7	42.3
Female	49.5	50.9
Rural	19.1	...
Education	9.0	10.4
Income:		
Less than $4,001	42.4	40.7
$4,000 to $8,000	24.6	21.6
More than $8,000	7.0	15.0
Don't know/no response	25.8	22.5
Region:		
North	24.3	25.0
Western	21.5	21.1
Central	34.0	34.8
South	20.1	19.0
Speaks indigenous language	7.2	7.6
N	1,208	1,206

Note.—Data are from the Mexico Omnibus Survey, 2016 and 2017. Education ranges from 0 to 20 years of educational attainment. Household income is expressed in Mexican pesos. Community type (rural or urban) was not available in the 2017 survey. Indigenous language question read, "Do you speak or understand an indigenous dialect or language?"

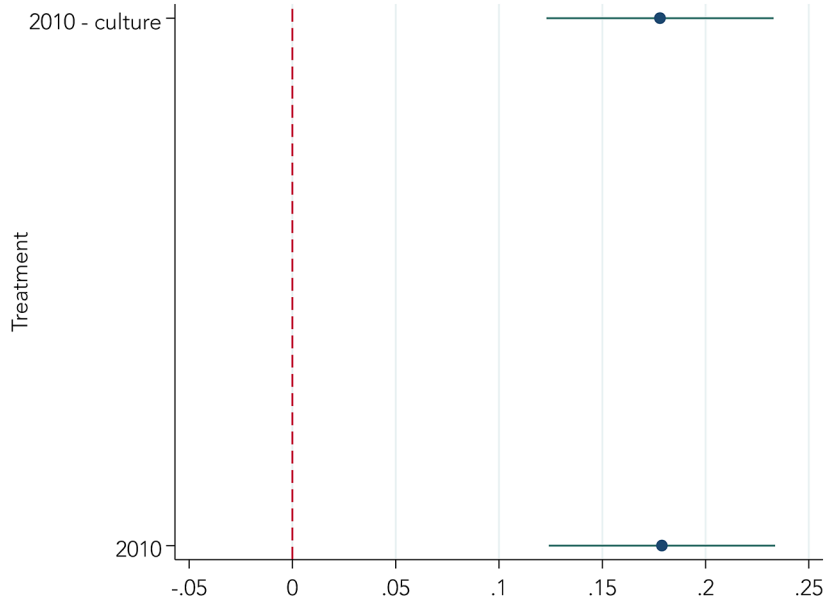

FIG. 3.—Effect of experimental conditions on indigenous identification. Data are from the Mexican census and Mexico Omnibus Survey, 2016. Average marginal effects of asking different versions of the 2010 census identification question relative to the 2000 census identification question, which is represented by the dashed line (value = 0). In the 2010 condition, respondents were asked the 2010 census question. Respondents in the 2010 − culture condition were also asked the 2010 census question minus the reference to culture. Estimates are based on a logistic regression model predicting indigenous identification that adjusts for age, gender, education, and number of lightbulbs in respondents' residences.

Mechanism 1: Cultural Precondition

As table 2 shows, one of the ways that the 2000 and 2010 census questions differed was that the 2010 question added a precondition for ethnic identification. It asked individuals whether they identified as indigenous "according to their culture." In official documents, the census says that it changed the 2000 question because it "doesn't include any element that helps to understand the indigenous condition" (INEGI 2011, p. 41). Adding a cultural precondition, the census personnel reasoned, would add "an element about the indigenous essence," which would help respondents to better understand the identity question. They justified their decision using the experiences of other countries in which "this sentence has been used." In such countries, the census documents claimed, "the question is understood and the responses are spontaneous" (INEGI 2011, p. 10).

But what does "culture" mean? There has been a long and often contentious debate about how best to conceptualize culture in the social sciences

(Omi and Winant 1994; Wimmer 2008). Nevertheless, most researchers define culture in terms of learned behaviors and rituals but also attitudes and values (Swidler 1986; Sewell 1999; Spillman 2020). The Mexican census itself provided a similar definition: "The term 'culture' has many implicit elements like language, customs, values, and traditions" (INEGI 2011, p. 50).

By defining indigeneity as a set of acquired practices and values, the census moved away from naturalistic views of ethnicity. Denaturalizing ethnicity may have made indigenous identification more palatable to respondents since it implies defining indigeneity not as a racial condition or biological attribute. Instead, it repositions indigeneity within the more malleable realm of culture. During our conversations, Mexican census officials themselves believed that including the culture precondition had probably "softened" the question, leading more people to identify as indigenous in 2010.[6] This expectation was shared by Mexican scholars who believed that references to culture in identity questions create a "surplus declaration" of indigeneity (Vázquez Sandrin and Quezada 2015). Nevertheless, the direction of this effect is uncertain. References to "indigenous culture" may also suppress identification. Culturally assimilated individuals may recognize having indigenous ancestry but may not believe they have indigenous cultural traits.

We tested the impact of including this "cultural" precondition on the estimated size of the indigenous population by adding a third experimental condition to our 2016 nationally representative survey experiment. In this condition, we include the 2010 question but omit any reference to culture. In other words, instead of asking respondents "Based on your culture, do you consider yourself indigenous?" as in the original 2010 census question, we simply asked respondents "Do you consider yourself indigenous?"

In figure 3, we show the effect of asking this slightly modified version of the 2010 question relative to asking the 2000 census question. The average marginal effect, 17.8 points, is almost identical to the effect of asking the regular 2010 census question, which suggests that omitting a reference to culture does not make a significant difference. Therefore, we reject the hypothesis that making a reference to culture affected the propensity of Mexicans to identify as indigenous.

Mechanism 2: Representation

The two census questions varied in another key respect. While the 2000 census question mentioned specific indigenous groups, the 2010 question used the panethnic term "indigenous" instead. Could this difference be responsible for the growth in self-identified indigenous people?

[6] Personal interview with Mexican census official Argisofía Pérez Moreno on February 12, 2015.

The 2000 census question makes reference to the four largest indigenous groups in Mexico: Nahuatl, Mayan, Zapotec, and Mixtec. According to the census manual, survey workers were instructed to replace these four groups with the most important local indigenous groups (INEGI 2011). In practice, however, census officials suspected that survey administrators may have read the question as printed, thus mentioning only these four groups.[7] The census itself admitted that "there is a risk that indigenous groups that are not mentioned may have omitted" identifying as indigenous (INEGI 2011, p. 49). In addition, census officials told us they were concerned that due to fatigue some interviewers may not have read the final part of the question, which specified "or from another indigenous group." Therefore, some members of smaller indigenous groups may not have identified as indigenous in the 2000 census either because their group was not explicitly mentioned in the question or because the panethnic "indigenous" category was not read to them. We refer to this possibility as the "representation" hypothesis.

To test it, we take advantage of the fact that the census captures two different indigeneity dimensions: identity and language. The availability of language data could help us test whether there were differences in the propensity to identify as indigenous between members of the four mentioned indigenous groups and members of smaller indigenous groups that were not mentioned. To do so, we analyze census data to compare the degree to which speakers of different indigenous languages identified as "indigenous" in 2000 and 2010. If minority language speakers were less likely to identify as indigenous in 2000 but had a significantly higher propensity to do so in 2010, this could account for at least part of the dramatic growth in the self-identified indigenous population.

We separate indigenous language speakers into two groups: those who speak one of the four largest languages that were explicitly mentioned in the 2000 census questionnaire (i.e., Nahuatl, Mayan, Zapotec, and Mixtec) and those who speak any other indigenous languages, which we label "minority languages." Our empirical strategy consists of using the ethnic identification patterns of minority language speakers as a counterfactual to assess the identification effects of being explicitly mentioned in the census identification question. Since minority languages were not explicitly mentioned in the 2000 question, this allows us to understand the effect of not being "represented" in the question on levels of ethnic identification.

According to census data, 68.4% of individuals who spoke one of the four most common indigenous languages identified as indigenous in 2000. In contrast, only 64.1% of speakers of minority languages did so. By 2010, the numbers had flipped. Minority language speakers were now somewhat more likely to identify as indigenous than majority language speakers (95% vs. 92.5%).

[7] Personal interview with Mexican census official Argisofía Pérez Moreno on February 12, 2015.

To what extent do these identification patterns by different linguistic groups affect the unexplained surplus of self-identified indigenous people in 2010? Although these trends appear to follow the expectations of census officials that minority language speakers are less likely to identify as indigenous using the 2000 question, they only explain a small proportion of the dramatic growth in the self-identified indigenous population. If minority indigenous people had had the same propensity to identify as indigenous as their majority group counterparts did, the estimated size of the self-identified indigenous population would have grown by 2.5%, a net gain of 133,010 individuals. This means that the estimated size of the self-identified indigenous population would have gone from 6.14% to 6.3% of the total Mexican population, which would account for 1.2% of the surplus indigenous population.

However, we also have to consider that minority indigenous speakers were slightly more likely to identify as indigenous in the 2010 census. If minority speakers had had the same propensity to identify as indigenous in 2010 as the speakers of the four main languages, this would have shrunk the estimated size of the self-identified indigenous population by 89,150 individuals. This process explains 0.8% of the population growth. Thus, despite the expectations of census officials, these processes together account for only 2% of the dramatic growth.

Although there were some minor differences, both minority and majority indigenous language speakers had relatively similar levels of indigenous self-identification when asked both the 2000 and 2010 census questions. Minority and majority language speakers alike were much more likely to identify as indigenous in the 2010 census, which contributed to the growth of the self-identified indigenous population. Nevertheless, as stated earlier, the largest source of new self-identified indigenous people was the Spanish monolingual population. In 2000, 1,106,986 of Spanish monolinguals identified as indigenous. By 2010, this number had grown to 9,147,666. What could have motivated such a large number of individuals to identify as "indigenous" in 2010? We test two final hypotheses: essentialism and groupness.

Mechanism 3: Essentialism

Other key differences separate the questions asked in both censuses. Whereas the 2000 census asked respondents if they "are" indigenous, the 2010 one asked them if they "considered themselves" indigenous. This subtle difference in phrasing could have substantial effects for at least two reasons. First, the 2000 census implies an essentialist definition of "indigeneity." Only if a person *is* indigenous can she identify herself as such in the census. This leaves little room for ambiguity. This question seems to rest on an older conception of indigeneity as an essential condition that is self-evident and easy to ascertain

(De la Cadena 2000; Telles and Torche 2019). In contrast, by asking whether respondents "consider themselves" indigenous, the 2010 question offers a more flexible definition of indigeneity, one that allows for greater ambiguity.

Second, the 2010 question may encourage indigenous self-identification by another, related mechanism. By asking respondents whether they consider "themselves" indigenous, it puts the onus of this classification solely on them. A perhaps more stringent question could ask whether the respondent is considered indigenous by others in her community, which may have lowered self-identification rates. While the 2000 census question does not do this explicitly, it also does not suggest to respondents that this is their call to make, using their own personal criteria. In contrast, the 2010 question specifically states that indigeneity is each respondent's subjective opinion.

To investigate the impact of this change in phrasing we fielded a second nationally representative survey experiment in Mexico. This experiment was conducted by the same private polling firm (Data OPM) and used the same sampling strategy. Table 2 shows the sociodemographic characteristics of the survey respondents. The survey was applied door to door to 1,206 Mexicans in May and June 2017.

We show our research design in table 4. Respondents were randomly assigned to one of six different experimental treatments.[8] Apart from asking the census 2000 (condition 1) and census 2010 (condition 4) questions, we introduced slightly modified versions of these questions. In condition 3, we asked the 2000 census question but replaced "Are you" with "Do you consider yourself." We left the rest of the 2000 question intact. In condition 6, we did the opposite. We altered the 2010 question so that instead of asking "Do you consider yourself indigenous?" it said "Are you indigenous?" We describe experimental conditions 2 and 4 in the next subsection.

The introduction of conditions 3 and 6 allowed us to perform a twofold test of the effect of these phrasing changes on identification levels. If, as we theorize, using essentialist language has a negative effect on indigenous identification, indigenous identification should increase when the 2000 question does not use essentialist language. Similarly, indigenous identification should decline when essentialist phrasing is used in the 2010 question. This is a particularly strict test of the effect of essentialist language.

This second nationally representative survey experiment confirms our first experiment's findings. We find that essentialist language is highly consequential. We again rely on logistic regression models (shown in the appendix) that adjust for key covariates including sex, age, education, and region. Figure 4

[8] Each condition had about 200 respondents. A power analysis established that this was an appropriate sample size for the experiment given conventional statistical significance levels and the effect sizes uncovered in our first experiment.

TABLE 4
SECOND EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN: 2017 DATA OPM NATIONAL MEXICO SURVEY

Condition	Hypothesis	Experimental Design	Question	Sample Size
1	NA	Census 2000 question	Are you Nahuatl, Mayan, Zapotec, Mixtec, or from another indigenous group? (Yes/No)	200
2	Groupness	Census 2000 question minus "group"	Are you Nahuatl, Mayan, Zapotec, Mixtec, or other indigenous? (Yes/No)	184
3	Essentialism	Census 2000 question plus "consider yourself"	Do you consider yourself Nahuatl, Mayan, Zapotec, Mixtec, or from another indigenous group? (Yes/No)	197
4	NA	Census 2010 question	According to your culture, do you consider yourself indigenous? (Yes/No)	226
5	Groupness	Census 2010 question plus "group"	According to your culture, do you consider yourself from an indigenous group? (Yes/No)	194
6	Essentialism	Census 2010 question minus "consider yourself"	According to your culture, are you indigenous? (Yes/No)	205

NOTE.—$N = 1{,}206$.

shows the average marginal effects of our experimental conditions on indigenous identification levels. It shows that using less essentialist language in the 2000 census question increases indigenous identification levels by 5%, relative to using the official 2000 census question, which is statistically significant at conventional levels. Further, the effect on the 2010 question is substantially larger. When essentialist phrasing was used, indigenous identification decreased by 13.71 points, which represents a negative growth rate of −28.13.

We conclude that the use of essentialist wording alone explains 46% of the gap found between both questions. While this is a substantial amount, it also means that a large part of this gap remains unexplained. To account

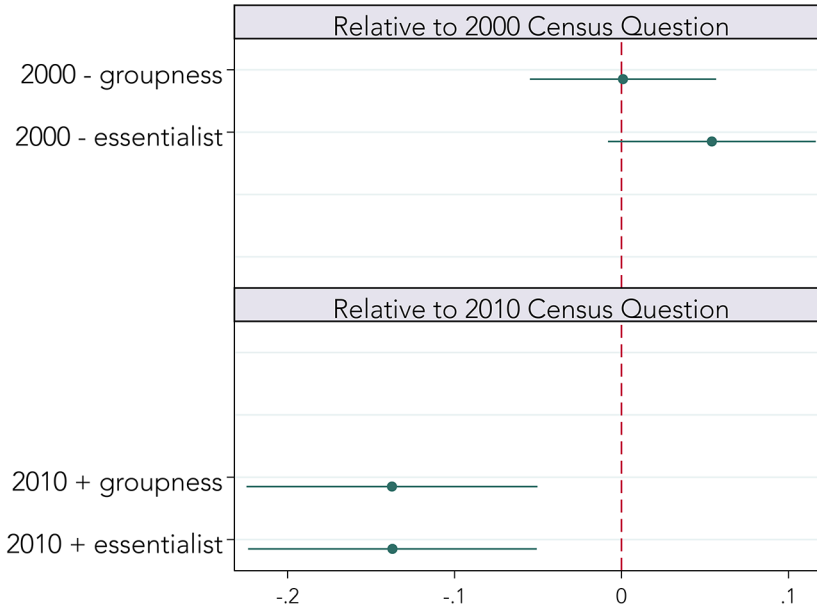

FIG. 4.—Effect of experimental conditions on indigenous identification. Data are from the Mexico Omnibus Survey, 2017. Average marginal effects of experimental conditions on indigenous identification based on two separate logistic regression models. The first model predicts the effect of being exposed to variations of the 2000 census question on indigenous identification (reference category is the 2000 census question). The second model predicts the effect of being exposed to variations of the 2010 census question on indigenous identification (reference category is the 2010 census question). "Groupness" questions contained references to indigenous groups. "Essentialist" questions used essentialist language to refer to indigeneity. Effects were adjusted for age, gender, education, and number of lightbulbs in respondents' residences.

for the remaining gap, we examine our last hypothesis: the assumption of groupness in the 2000 census question.

Mechanism 4: Groupness

In recent years, scholars have called attention to the tendency of researchers to take groups for granted when studying ethnicity, race, or nationhood (Brubaker 2004, 2006). This "groupism" involves taking "discrete, sharply differentiated, internally homogeneous and externally bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis" (Brubaker 2002, p. 164). Instead of assuming the existence of ethnic groups, researchers should study when and how group feeling becomes crystallized. In other words, from this perspective,

groupness is not a natural feature of ethnicity but a specific outcome that comes about through distinct social and political processes.

One of the key tasks for scholars is to distinguish between ethnic groups and ethnic categories. Individuals may identify with specific ethnic categories, but this is at best a potential basis for group formation or groupness (Brubaker 2002). It is not that category membership is meaningless or unimportant: individuals may use ethnic categories to make sense of the social world, to make evaluative judgments, to gain access to resources, or to avoid punishments. The point, though, is that none of these uses requires the existence of ethnic groups as substantial entities (Brubaker 2002).

This theoretical discussion is of special interest to our case because the 2000 census question treats indigeneity as a group condition. As shown earlier, the question asked, "Are you Nahuatl, Mayan, Zapotec, Mixtec, or from another indigenous *group*?" This phrasing reflects the way elites have typically incorporated "Indians" as members of collective units (like the Repúblicas de Indios in the colonial period; Lomnitz-Adler 1992). According to census documents, this question was criticized by some indigenous organizations, which proposed to replace "indigenous group" with "indigenous peoples" (*pueblos indígenas*). Although their arguments were not recorded in the census documents, indigenous leaders may have preferred this term because it alludes to bounded communities settled in specific ancestral territories (Martinez Casas et al. 2014). In other words, although this term does not necessarily challenge the groupness implicit in the original 2000 question, it calls attention to their sensitivity to the word "group." The census rejected this proposal, however, because it was "problematic operationally" (INEGI 2011, p. 49).

The census may not have followed indigenous leaders' recommendations, but it did eliminate any reference to groups from the 2010 identity question. Instead of asking respondents whether they are part of an indigenous group, the 2010 census question asks whether they "consider themselves indigenous." Indigeneity, according to the 2010 census question, is not necessarily a collective or group condition.

According to Brubaker (2002), groupness is a specific event that is neither constant nor enduring and may not be common even in ethnicized settings. If groupness is a relatively rare occurrence, we should expect that including a reference to "groups," as the 2000 census question did, will depress indigenous identification because only a subset of people may identify with that particular version of ethnicity. In contrast, we should expect that, since the 2010 census question does not treat indigeneity as a collective condition, more people would identify with it. This is so because among all individuals who identify with a specific ethnic label only a subset identifies with the strongest version of it, which assumes group belonging. At the same time, even if scholars recognize the significance of the concept of groupness, it is not clear that common people also recognize the conceptual implications

of the term "group" in a survey setting. In other words, it is not clear that the concept of "group" is just a category of analysis or whether it is also a category of practice (Loveman 1999; Brubaker 2013).

To test the effect of treating indigeneity as a collective condition, we introduced two more treatment conditions to our 2017 survey experiment. In condition 2, respondents were asked a slightly modified version of the 2000 census question in which the reference to "groups" was deleted. It read, "Are you Nahuatl, Mayan, Zapotec, Mixtec, or other indigenous?" According to the literature covered above, we expect that respondents assigned to this condition would have a higher propensity to identify as indigenous relative to those assigned to the control condition (who were asked the unaltered 2000 census question). We further test this hypothesis by modifying the 2010 census question in condition 5 to refer to indigenous people as a group. This question read, "According to your culture, do you consider yourself from an indigenous group?" If treating indigeneity as collective belonging indeed has an impact, we should expect that including references to "groupness" should also depress indigenous identification in the 2010 question.

Figure 4 shows that treating indigeneity as a group condition is consequential. When we add the term "group" to the 2010 question, in condition 5, the proportion of individuals who self-identify as indigenous shrinks by 13.74 points, which amounts to a negative growth rate of −28.23. This substantial effect can explain 42% of the gap in identification levels between the 2000 and 2010 census questions. At the same time, we do not observe any change when we remove references to "groupness" from the 2000 census question in condition 2. As figure 4 shows, such a change in the identification question produces no effect relative to individuals who were asked the 2000 census question. One possible explanation for this lack of an effect is that the mere mention of indigenous "groups" like Nahuatl and Mayan may implicitly convey a definition of indigeneity as composed of groups. This may reduce identification levels among people who do not see themselves as part of an indigenous collectivity, even if the term "group" is not explicitly mentioned.

In sum, we find that phrasing changes in the ethnic identification question used by the Mexican census spurred significant short-term boundary crossing and led to a sizable increase in indigenous identification among Mexicans. Nevertheless, not all the growth in indigenous identification is due to changes in the census question. As we see in the next section, a secondary and more durable form of boundary crossing is also present in Mexico.

STUDY 3: POST-2010 GROWTH IN IDENTIFICATION

In study 1 we find that natural demographic growth contributed little to the increase in indigenous self-identification among Mexicans between 2000

and 2010. In contrast, in study 2 we find that changes in the census identification question drove a substantial portion of this sudden growth. Nevertheless, indigenous self-identification has continued to grow in Mexico after 2010. Despite the fact that the census used a similar identification question in 2020 relative to 2010, the percentage of Mexicans who identified as indigenous grew by 31% and came to represent 19.4% of the national population. In contrast, the percentage of Mexicans who speak an indigenous language declined by 7.5%. This suggests that other factors are animating indigenous identification beyond phrasing changes to the identity question. In study 3, we examine post-2010 census data, and, based on them, we theorize that political factors such as state policies and ethnic activism may be encouraging ethnic identification by shaping the social meaning of indigeneity itself.

In terms of state policies, Mexico's recent shift away from a national ideology of mestizaje, which equated mestizo identity with Mexicanness and sought to assimilate all other groups, to an ideology of multiculturalism, where cultural diversity is nominally celebrated, may be encouraging the expression of alternative identities including the indigenous one (Telles and Flores 2013). The mestizaje era officially came to an end in 2001 when Mexico embraced multiculturalism and reformed its constitution to recognize the country's "multicultural and pluriethnic" nature (Olivé 1999). This shift in state ideology has also been reflected in the millions of school textbooks that are required reading for Mexican primary school students (Martínez Casas et al. 2014).

Under multiculturalism, indigeneity is less in tension with being Mexican. Instead, indigeneity is formally regarded as a legitimate component of a pluriethnic nation. The official endorsement of multiculturalism by Mexican political and cultural elites may be gradually weakening the status of the Mestizo identity as the normative national identity, which could be making it easier for individuals to embrace nonmestizo identities without jeopardizing their Mexicanness. Tellingly, the 2015 intercensal survey included an Afro-Mexican category for the first time, which was included again in the 2020 census (Sue and Riosmena 2021).

In addition, social movements may have also contributed to the social resignification of indigeneity. Instead of defining indigeneity in terms of traditional attributes like speaking an Indian language or living in communal lands, indigeneity has been increasingly defined by some in terms of political activism (De la Peña 1999; Yashar 2005). Indigenous social movements and activist groups like the Zapatista Army of National Liberation have become increasingly visible since the 1990s (Gutiérrez Chong 2012). They have demanded solutions to indigenous poverty and exclusion, as well as requested recognition for cultural and political rights. In doing so, they may have increased political sympathy and identification with indigenous causes among Mexican urbanites, a phenomenon labeled the "Zapatista effect" (Telles

and PERLA 2014). Indigenous ethnicity, in certain quarters, has become a political platform from which to struggle for social and ethnic inclusion (De la Peña 1999).

Table 5 provides suggestive evidence of the gradual resignification of indigenous identity in Mexico by showing that the self-identified indigenous population has changed both quantitatively and qualitatively in recent years. This table presents key traits of the self-identified indigenous population based on the 2000 and 2010 Mexican censuses as well as the 2015 intercensal survey. It shows that individuals who self-identified as indigenous have become increasingly urban, monolingual, educated, and more likely to reside in highly developed areas including the Mexico City metropolitan area. While in 2000, 79% of self-identified indigenous people spoke an indigenous language, only 26% did so in 2015. In addition, 36% of the individuals who identified as indigenous lived in urban areas in 2000. By 2015, that number had increased to 61%. Similarly, the average years of education of this population nearly doubled, going from 3.8 to 7.2 between 2000 and 2015. In contrast, the average for indigenous language speakers has only increased from 3.6 to 4.9 and the national average from 7.1 to 8.8 years of education. This highlights the fact that the increasing educational profile of self-identified indigenous

TABLE 5
Selected Characteristics of the Self-Identified Indigenous Population, 2000, 2010, and 2015

	2000	2010	2015
Living in urban areas (%)	36.55	53.69	61.41
Region in Mexico:*			
North	9.53	10.65	13.09
West	4.49	10.70	15.04
Center	24.33	34.02	34.40
Southeast	61.65	44.64	37.47
Speaks an indigenous language (%)	79.05	41.74	25.99
Mean years of education (age 25 and older):			
Self-identified indigenous	3.8	5.9	7.2
	[4.02]	[4.7]	[4.9]
National average	7.1	8.2	8.8
	[4.9]	[5.0]	[4.96]
Indigenous language speakers	3.6	4.3	4.9
	[3.9]	[4.2]	[4.4]

Note.—Data are from the 2000 and 2010 Mexican censuses and 2015 intercensal survey. Numbers in brackets are SDs.

* North: Baja California, BCS, Chihuahua, Sinaloa, Sonora, Coahuila, Durango, Nuevo León, SLP, Tamaulipas. West: Aguascalientes, Colima, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacán, Nayarit, Querétaro, Zacatecas. Center: Distrito Federal, Estado de México, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Morelos, Puebla, Tlaxcala. Southeast: Campeche, Chiapas, Oaxaca, Quintana Roo, Tabasco, Veracruz, Yucatán.

is not driven by a national trend. It also reveals that the language and identification questions seem to be increasingly capturing different populations. Post-2010 growth in indigenous identification is concentrated among urban, educated, and Spanish monolingual individuals, precisely the population expected to be more attuned to changes in state policies and elite rhetoric (Nagel 1995).

Thus, we identify two different types of ethnic boundary crossing that can help us explain recent shifts in indigenous identification in Mexico. *Transitory* boundary crossing refers to short-term changes in identification triggered by microcontextual cues such as modifications to the indigenous identification question enacted by the Mexican census in 2010. In addition, a second form of ethnic boundary crossing, which we label *durable*, is fueling the growth in indigenous identification in Mexico. We theorize that durable boundary crossing has been activated by the resignification of the indigenous label due to changes in state policies and the actions of indigenous social movements.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Summary of the Results

What explains the sudden rise in indigenous identification in contemporary Mexico? This unexpected growth seems to challenge long-held expectations that indigenous ethnicity would inevitably disappear in Mexico. Although the reasons for this demographic shift have been widely debated, no satisfactory explanation has been advanced. We conduct three separate studies to tackle this puzzle.

In study 1, we find, via a demographic projection model, that natural demographic processes contributed little to this sudden growth. Therefore, we take a constructivist approach and examine how changes in ethnic identification may have contributed to these demographic shifts. We identify two different forms of ethnic boundary crossing that helps to explain them. Transitory crossing, which is typically short-term and reversible, was activated by phrasing changes in the 2010 census identity question. In study 2, we use experimental and census data and find that these changes made indigenous identification more appealing to a wider segment of the population. We identify two mechanisms that largely account for the phenomenon: avoiding essentialist language to define indigeneity (essentialism) and not treating indigeneity as a collective or grouped condition (groupness).

Nevertheless, not all the recent growth in indigenous self-identification is due to changes in the census question. Identification increased again in the 2020 census even when a similar question was used. We theorize that these identity shifts are being driven by a second form of ethnic boundary crossing that we label durable. Durable crossing is a longer-lasting, gradual process

motivated by macropolitical forces such as social movements and government policies that encourage identification by gradually shaping the social meaning and status of ethnic categories. We theorize that durable crossing is being simultaneously activated by the salience of the indigenous movement and the Mexican government's embrace of multiculturalism. These political factors appear to be shaping the meaning of indigeneity itself. In study 3, we rely on census data to show that the post-2010 growth in indigenous identification is concentrated among urban, educated, and Spanish monolingual individuals, precisely the population expected to be more attuned to changes in elite rhetoric and state policies.

Implications for the Study of Ethnic Boundaries

We contribute to the constructivist literature on boundary dynamics by identifying two distinct forms of boundary crossing: transitory and durable. Each type has different triggers, traits, and likely consequences, which are summarized in table 6. These stylized forms are meant to illustrate ideal types in a Weberian sense. In everyday life, boundary crossing may sometimes take elements from both types.

Transitory boundary crossing refers to short-term changes in identification triggered by microcontextual cues. Such cues may include phrasing features of identification questions, perceptions of potential rewards for ethnic identification, or fears of discrimination within a certain context (Bailey 2008; Flores and Sulmont 2021). Identity shifts motivated by transitory boundary crossing are contextual, ephemeral, and reversible. As such, transitory crossing represents a shallower form of ethnicity. It is characterized by lower levels of ethnic consciousness and a tempered sense of linked fate. We hypothesize that this type of boundary crossing may be less likely to result in collective action.

Transitory crossing may be more common among individuals outside of the ethnic core (i.e., those who have more tenuous ethnic attachments; Telles and Sue 2019). In the Mexican case, these individuals will primarily consist of Spanish monolinguals in urban areas. These individuals will cross an ethnic boundary transitorily and identify as indigenous given certain contextual primes such as perceived rewards for ethnic identification or

TABLE 6
Characteristics of Transitory and Durable Boundary Crossing

	Triggers	Duration	Ethnicity Type	Mobilization
Transitory	Microcues	Short term	Shallower	Low
Durable	Macroforces	Long term	Deeper	Low/medium

specific phrasing of identity questions. In contrast, individuals closer to the ethnic core will be more likely to consistently identify as indigenous regardless of contextual circumstances or resignification processes. In the case of Mexico, the ethnic core is primarily made up of individuals who live in indigenous communities or who speak indigenous languages (Telles and Torche 2019). This does not mean that indigeneity is a primordial or essential condition for them. Rather, through cultural reproduction processes, indigenous ethnicity is more deeply entrenched in their everyday lives, influencing their cultural outlooks, practices, and identities (Martínez Casas 2007).

Yet, durable crossing refers to gradual changes in identification motivated by macropolitical and social forces such as government policies and social movements. These macroforces may encourage ethnic identification by gradually shaping the social meanings and status associated with ethnic labels. Durable identity shifts are more stable and consistent across multiple settings. They represent a deeper type of ethnicity, with higher levels of ethnic consciousness. This could translate into collective action. Individuals with more stable attachments to their ethnic identities may be more likely to act on the basis of these identities (Abdelal et al. 2006).

Although we focus on Mexico, this conceptual framework could help us understand identity shifts across varied historical contexts and geographic settings. Transitory crossing seems present in some Latin American countries today. After modifying their indigenous identification questions, several national censuses witnessed significant changes in identification levels. While some of these changes may be attributed to implementation issues like in the case of Bolivia (Del Popolo 2017), other countries changed their identification questions in similar ways to Mexico. As table 1 shows, the self-identified indigenous population in Chile and Costa Rica increased significantly after adopting less essentialist questions, which may have triggered transitory boundary crossing. For example, in Costa Rica, the question went roughly from "Do you belong to an indigenous culture?" to "Do you consider yourself indigenous?" Our research shows that the term "culture" is not very consequential for identification. Instead, just like in Mexico, using less essentialist and more subjective terms like "consider" may be key. In addition, we expect that the indigenous count in Panama would increase if the local census stopped referring to indigeneity as a collective condition ("indigenous group") in their identification question.

In turn, durable crossing may have been at work in the postwar United States as Native American identification grew steadily. US scholars have discounted the role of changes to census items and procedures in causing these identity shifts. Instead, they have argued that macropolitical forces played a bigger role (Nagel 1995). Other historic examples of durable crossing may include the gradual resignification of previously stigmatized

ethnic identities like "Chicano" in the United States or "negro" in Brazil. In both cases, political movements embraced these identities, which increased their appeal over time (Muñoz 2007; Bailey and Fialho 2018). Thus, the conceptual distinction between transitory and durable boundary crossing may help explain the ebbs and flows of ethnic identification beyond the Mexican case.

Implications for the Study of Ethnic Identity

Our research reveals that common people can recognize different dimensions and types of ethnicity, which has direct consequences for measuring ethnic identity. While researchers have found that the format of identity questions and the ethnic categories offered may affect individuals' responses (Pryor et al. 1992), we find that responses are also affected by the type of ethnicity primed by the question.

Scholars and government officials typically rely on questionnaire items to measure ethnicity. Such items are often modified across time and space. Seemingly slight changes in the phrasing of ethnic identity questions may convey different dimensions of ethnicity and, hence, influence identification patterns. This is what occurred when Mexican census officials changed the ethnic identity question in 2010. The 2010 question increased the number of self-identified indigenous people because it conjured up a more appealing conception of ethnicity. Indeed, relative to the 2000 census question, the 2010 one almost seems to have been purposely constructed to maximize the number of self-identified indigenous people. It lacks all the dimensions of ethnicity that depress ethnic identification: it does not mention specific indigenous labels, does not use essentialist language, and does not refer to indigenous people as composed of groups.

Thus, our work suggests that definitions of ethnic labels may powerfully shape ethnic identification patterns. Rather than treating these meanings as black boxes in academic research, scholars should directly examine how common people conceptualize ethnic labels and how these conceptualizations relate to their identification choices. Further, more flexible methodologies could be implemented. Traditional quantitative methodologies that rely on fixed identify categories in surveys presuppose a rigidity in ethnic meanings that may be more a reflection of the methodologies used than of individuals' cognitive worlds. In actually, the meanings of ethnic labels may be fluid, contextual, and contested, especially in countries like Mexico (Friedlander 2006).

Understanding these ethnic meanings also requires examining the role that the census plays in shaping them. Census identification questions are not arbitrary. Theoretically, they should at least partially reflect the social meanings and cultural trends census officials perceive. After all, census

officials' nominal goal is to employ questions that are broadly understood. Nevertheless, we show that their choices are consequential. The questions they ultimately choose affect the size and makeup of the ethnic populations they uncover, which suggests that multiple ethnic meanings coexist in society at any given time. By choosing one set of meanings over others when designing identification questions, census officials may inadvertently legitimize them, which could influence the meanings associated with specific identity labels.

Implications for the Study of Indigeneity

Villarreal (2014) argues that relying on indigenous identification rather than language proficiency to measure indigeneity is more likely to capture a weaker form of ethnicity and a population that is less disadvantaged. Nevertheless, our research suggests that the kind of identification question used can also shape the type of ethnicity captured, which may shape the size of the indigenous population obtained and its level of disadvantage. We theorize that the more symbolic the type of ethnicity conveyed by identity questions, the larger the population it will capture and the less disadvantaged this population will be.

For Gans (1979), "symbolic ethnicity" is an abstract attachment to an ethnic identity often expressed with displays of foods and traditional clothes. It is private, voluntary, intermittent, and nondemanding. It does not involve membership in an ethnic group. We believe that the 2010 identity question captures a larger and less disadvantaged indigenous population because it signals a more symbolic (or "weaker") form of ethnicity than the 2000 one. Such symbolic ethnicity is based on subjective belonging, not linked to any specific subgroups, and it does not require communal living. We suspect that this is the type of ethnicity uncovered by the 2010 census question, which triggered transitory crossing. Therefore, interpreting this rise of indigeneity as a challenge to long-standing acculturation processes in Mexico may not be warranted.

Individuals who have come to identify as indigenous as a result of the gradual resignification of indigeneity in Mexico (what we term durable crossing) may also exhibit symbolic ethnicity. Many of these individuals seem to be so-called new Indians: educated urban dwellers with no knowledge of ancestral indigenous languages (Telles and Torche 2019). Nevertheless, if their identities are relatively stable, they could serve as the basis for collective action (Abdelal et al. 2006). We need research that examines how the different types of boundary crossing we identify, transitory and durable, are related to different outcomes such as the measurement of ethnic inequality, the maintenance of cultural practices, and the likelihood of political mobilization.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Some caveats are in order. Future scholars could examine whether our findings apply to nonindigenous identities. Perhaps ethnoracial categories like the indigenous label that are typically defined as cultural may be more susceptible to wording effects than identities more commonly defined on the basis of ancestry or color such as Afro-descendant labels (Hooker 2005). In addition, phrasing effects in identification questions may be stronger in settings like Latin America known for a high degree of racial fluidity (Telles and Paschel 2014), which future studies using a comparative research design could examine.

REFERENCES

Abdelal, Rawi, Yoshiko M. Herrera, Alastair Iain Johnston, and Rose McDermott. 2006. "Identity as a Variable." *Perspectives on Politics* 4 (4): 695–711.

Alba, Richard, and Victor Nee. 2003. *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Asad, Asad L., and Jackelyn Hwang. 2019. "Indigenous Places and the Making of Undocumented Status in Mexico-US Migration." *International Migration Review* 53 (4): 1032–1077.

Auspurg, Katrin, and Thomas Hinz. 2014. *Factorial Survey Experiments*, vol. 175. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.

Bailey, Stanley R. 2008. "Unmixing for Race Making in Brazil." *American Journal of Sociology* 114 (3): 577–614.

Bailey, Stanley R., and Fabrício M. Fialho. 2018. "Shifting Racial Subjectivities and Ideologies in Brazil." *Socius* 4. https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023118797550.

Barbary, Olivier, and Regina Martínez Casas. 2015. "L'explosion de l'autodéclaration Indigène entre les Recensements Mexicains de 2000 et 2010." *Autrepart* 74–75 (2): 215.

Barth, Fredrik. 1969. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*. Boston: Little, Brown.

Bonfil Batalla, Guillermo. 1996. *México Profundo: Reclaiming a Civilization*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Brubaker, Rogers. 2002. "Ethnicity without Groups." *European Journal of Sociology/Archives européennes de sociologie* 43 (2): 163–89.

Brubaker, Rogers. 2004. *Ethnicity without Groups*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Brubaker, Rogers. 2006. *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Brubaker, Rogers. 2013. "Categories of Analysis and Categories of Practice: A Note on the Study of Muslims in European Countries of Immigration." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36 (1): 1–8.

Calhoun, Craig J. 1997. *Nationalism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Campos-Vázquez, Raymundo M., and Eduardo M. Medina-Cortina. 2019. "Skin Color and Social Mobility: Evidence from Mexico." *Demography* 56 (1): 321–43.

Casanova, Pablo González. (1965) 2003. *La democracia en México*. Mexico City: Ediciones Era.

Cerulo, Karen A. 1997. "Identity Construction: New Issues, New Directions." *Annual Review of Sociology* 23 (1): 385–409.

Cornell, Stephen. 1988. "The Transformations of Tribe: Organization and Self-Concept in Native American Ethnicities." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 11 (1): 27–47.

Corntassel, Jeff. 2003. "Who Is Indigenous? 'Peoplehood' and Ethnonationalist Approaches to Rearticulating Indigenous Identity." *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 9 (1): 75–100.

De la Cadena, Marisol. 2000. *Indigenous Mestizos: The Politics of Race and Culture in Cuzco, Peru, 1919–1991*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
De la Peña, Guillermo. 1999. "La ciudadanía étnica y la construcción de los 'indios' en el México contemporáneo." In *La sociedad civil: De la teoría a la realidad*, edited by Alberto J. Olvera. Mexico City: El Colegio de Mexico.
De la Peña, Guillermo. 2006. "A New Mexican Nationalism? Indigenous Rights, Constitutional Reform and the Conflicting Meanings of Multiculturalism." *Nations and Nationalism* 12 (2): 279–302.
Del Popolo, Fabiana. 2001. *Características Socioeconómicas y sociodemográficas de la población en América Latina*. Santiago: CEPAL.
Del Popolo, Fabiana, ed. 2017. *Los pueblos indígenas en América (Abya Yala): Desafíos para la igualdad en la diversidad*. Santiago: CEPAL.
Dirección General de Estadística (1930) 1993. Censo de Población. Mexico City: INEGI.
Eschbach, Karl, Khalil Supple, and C. Matthew Snipp. 1998. "Changes in Racial Identification and the Educational Attainment of American Indians, 1970–1990." *Demography* 35 (1): 35–43.
Flores, René D., and David Sulmont. 2021. "To Be or Not to Be? Material Incentives and Indigenous Identification in Latin America." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 44 (14): 2658–78.
Flores, René D., and Edward Telles. 2012. "Social Stratification in Mexico: Disentangling Color, Ethnicity, and Class." *American Sociological Review* 77 (3): 486–94.
Friedlander, Judith. 2006. *Being Indian in Hueyapan: A Revised and Updated Edition*. Dordrecht: Springer.
Gans, Herbert J. 1979. "Symbolic Ethnicity: The Future of Ethnic Groups and Cultures in America." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2 (1): 1–20.
Gelman, Andrew, and Jennifer Hill. 2007. *Data Analysis Using Regression and Hierarchical/Multilevel Models*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
González, Susana G. 2014. "Aumenta en México la población indígena: Cepal." *La Jornada*, July 6.
González Navarro, Moisés. 1968. "El *mestizaje Mexicano en el periodo nacional*." *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 30 (1): 35–52.
Guillaumin, Colette. 1995. *Racism, Sexism, Power, and Ideology*. London: Routledge.
Gutiérrez Chong, Natividad. 2012. *Mitos nacionalistas e identidades étnicas: Los intelectuales indígenas y el Estado Mexicano*. Mexico City: UNAM—Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales.
Hale, Charles A. 1968. *Mexican Liberalism in the Age of Mora, 1821–1853*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press.
Hale, Charles R. 2002. "Does Multiculturalism Menace? Governance, Cultural Rights and the Politics of Identity in Guatemala." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 34 (3): 485–524.
Harris, David R., and Jeremiah Joseph Sim. 2002. "Who Is Multiracial? Assessing the Complexity of Lived Race." *American Sociological Review* 67 (4): 614–27.
Hirschman, Charles. 1993. "How to Measure Ethnicity: An Immodest Proposal." Pp. 547–60 in *Challenges of Measuring an Ethnic World: Science, Politics, and Reality*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.
Hochschild, Jennifer L., and Brenna M. Powell. 2008. "Racial Reorganization and the United States Census, 1850–1930: Mulattoes, Half-Breeds, Mixed Parentage, Hindoos, and the Mexican Race." *Studies in American Political Development* 22 (1): 59–96.
Hooker, Juliet. 2005. "Indigenous Inclusion/Black Exclusion: Race, Ethnicity and Multicultural Citizenship in Latin America." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 37 (2): 285–310.
Horowitz, Donald L. 1985. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Hout, Michael, and Joshua R. Goldstein. 1994. "How 4.5 Million Irish Immigrants Became 40 Million Irish Americans: Demographic and Subjective Aspects of the Ethnic Composition of White Americans." *American Sociological Review* 59 (1): 64–82.

INEGI (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía). 2011. "Marco Conceptual del Censo General de Población y Vivienda 2010." INEGI, Mexico City.
INEGI (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía). 2020. "Marco Conceptual del Censo General de Población y Vivienda 2020." INEGI, Mexico City.
Jung, Courtney. 2003. "The Politics of Indigenous Identity: Neoliberalism, Cultural Rights, and the Mexican Zapatistas." *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 70 (2): 433–61.
Kertzer, David I., and Dominique Arel, eds. 2002. *Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Language in National Censuses*, vol. 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Knight, Alan. 1990. "Racism, Revolution, and Indigenismo: Mexico, 1910–1940." Pp. 71–113 in *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870–1940*, edited by Richard Graham. Austin: University of Texas Press.
Lamont, Michèle, and Virág Molnár. 2002. "The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences." *Annual Review of Sociology* 28:167–95.
Lomnitz-Adler, Claudio. 1992. *Exits from the Labyrinth: Culture and Ideology in the Mexican National Space*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
Loveman, Mara. 1999. "Is 'Race' Essential?" *American Sociological Review* 64 (6): 891–98.
Loveman, Mara. 2007. "The US Census and the Contested Rules of Racial Classification in Early Twentieth-Century Puerto Rico." *Caribbean Studies* 35 (2): 79–114.
Loveman, Mara. 2014. *National Colors: Racial Classification and the State in Latin America*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Loveman, Mara, and Jeronimo O. Muniz. 2007. "How Puerto Rico Became White: Boundary Dynamics and Intercensus Racial Reclassification." *American Sociological Review* 72 (6): 915–39.
Martínez Casas, Regina. 2007. *Vivir Invisibles: La resignificación de los otomíes urbanos en Guadalajara*. Mexico City: CIESAS.
Martínez Casas, Regina. 2010. *Profesionalización de Jóvenes Indígenas: El caso del IFP en México*. Mexico City: CIESAS.
Martínez Casas, Regina, Emiko Saldívar, René D. Flores, and Christina A. Sue. 2014. "The Different Faces of Mestizaje: Ethnicity and Race in Mexico." Pp. 36–80 in *Pigmentocracies: Ethnicity, Race, and Color in Latin America*, edited by Edward Telles and PERLA. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
Martínez Novo, Carmen. 2006. *Who Defines Indigenous? Identities, Development, Intellectuals and the State in Northern Mexico*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.
Monk, Ellis P., Jr. 2016. "The Consequences of 'Race and Color' in Brazil." *Social Problems* 63 (3): 413–30.
Mora, G. Cristina. 2014. "Cross-Field Effects and Ethnic Classification: The Institutionalization of Hispanic Panethnicity, 1965 to 1990." *American Sociological Review* 79 (2): 183–210.
Muñoz, Carlos. 2007. *Youth, Identity, Power: The Chicano Movement*. London: Verso.
Nagel, Joane. 1994. "Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Ethnic Identity and Culture." *Social Problems* 41 (1): 152–76.
Nagel, Joane. 1995. "American Indian Ethnic Renewal: Politics and the Resurgence of Identity." *American Sociological Review* 60 (6): 947–65.
Olivé, León. 1999. *Heurística, multiculturalismo y consenso*. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico.
Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. 2014. *Racial Formation in the United States*. New York: Routledge.
Preston, Samuel H., Patrick Heuveline, and Michel Guillot. 2001. *Demography: Measuring and Modeling Population Processes*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell.
Pryor, Edward T., Gustave J. Goldmann, Michael J. Sheridan, and Pamela M. White. 1992. "Measuring Ethnicity: Is 'Canadian' an Evolving Indigenous Category?" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 15 (2): 214–35.

Rasinski, Kenneth A. 1989. "The Effect of Question Wording on Public Support for Government Spending." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 53 (3): 388–94.
Reina, Leticia. 2011. *Indio, campesino y nación: Historia e historiografía de los movimientos rurales*. Mexico City: Siglo XXI.
Saldívar, Emiko. 2008. *Prácticas cotidianas del estado: Una etnografía del ndigenismo Mexico*. Mexico City: Universidad Iberoamericana.
Schuman, Howard, and Stanley Presser. 1996. *Questions and Answers in Attitude Surveys: Experiments on Question Form, Wording, and Context*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
Sewell, William H. 2004. "The Concept(s) of Culture." Pp. 76–95 in *Practicing History*. New York: Routledge.
Spillman, Lyn. 2020. *What Is Cultural Sociology?* Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley.
Stavenhagen, Rodolfo. 2001. *La Cuestión Étnica*. Mexico City: COLMEX.
Sue, Christina A. 2013. *Land of the Cosmic Race: Race Mixture, Racism, and Blackness in Mexico*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Sue, Christina A., and Fernando Riosmena. 2021. "Black and Indigenous Inequality in Mexico: Implications for Multiracialism and Intersectionality Research." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 7 (4): 488–511.
Sulmont, David. 2010. "Raza y etnicidad desde las encuestas sociales y de opinión: Dime cuántos quieres encontrar y te diré qué preguntar." Unpublished manuscript. Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú.
Swidler, Ann. 1986. "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies." *American Sociological Review* 51 (2): 273–86.
Telles, Edward, and René Flores. 2013. "Not Just Color: Whiteness, Nation, and Status in Latin America." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 93 (3): 411–49.
Telles, Edward, René D. Flores, and Fernando Urrea-Giraldo. 2015. "Pigmentocracies: Educational Inequality, Skin Color and Census Ethnoracial Identification in Eight Latin American Countries." *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 40:39–58.
Telles, Edward, and Tianna Paschel. 2014. "Who Is Black, White, or Mixed Race? How Skin Color, Status, and Nation Shape Racial Classification in Latin America." *American Journal of Sociology* 120 (3): 864–907.
Telles, Edward, and Christina A. Sue. 2019. *Durable Ethnicity: Mexican Americans and the Ethnic Core*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Telles, Edward, and Florencia Torche. 2019. "Varieties of Indigeneity in the Americas." *Social Forces* 97 (4): 1543–70.
Telles, Edward E. 2002. "Racial Ambiguity among the Brazilian Population." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 25 (3): 415–41.
Telles, Edward E., and Nelson Lim. 1998. "Does It Matter Who Answers the Race Question? Racial Classification and Income Inequality in Brazil." *Demography* 35 (4): 465–74.
Telles, Edward E., and PERLA (Project on Race and Ethnicity in Latin America). 2014. *Pigmentocracies: Ethnicity, Race, and Color in Latin America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
Vasconcelos, José. (1925) 1992. *La raza Cósmica*. Mexico City: Espasa Calpe.
Vázquez Sandrin, Germán, and María Félix Quezada. 2015. "Los indígenas autoadscritos de México en el censo 2010: Revitalización étnica o sobreestimación censal?" *Papeles de Población* 21 (86): 171–218.
Villarreal, Andrés. 2014. "Ethnic Identification and Its Consequences for Measuring Inequality in Mexico." *American Sociological Review* 79 (4): 775–806.
Waters, Mary C. "Ethnic and Racial Identities of Second-Generation Black Immigrants in New York City." *International migration Review* 28, no. 4 (1994): 795–820.
Wimmer, Andreas. 2008. "The Making and Unmaking of Ethnic Boundaries: A Multilevel Process Theory." *American Journal of Sociology* 113 (4): 970–1022.
Yashar, Deborah J. 2005. *Contesting Citizenship in Latin America: The Rise of Indigenous Movements and the Postliberal Challenge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Zavala, Silvio, José Miranda, and Alfonso Caso. 1954. *Métodos y Resultados de la Política Indigenista en México*. Memorias del Instituto Nacional Indigenista 6. Mexico City: Ediciones del Instituto Nacional Indigenista.

Zolberg, Aristide R., and Long Litt Woon. 1999. "Why Islam Is Like Spanish: Cultural Incorporation in Europe and the United States." *Politics and Society* 27 (1): 5–38.