



The Life and Death of the Long Form Census

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The Long-Form Census

- From 1961 to 2006, this was a census instrument that went out in addition to the short form received by the entire population of households.
- It was sent to 20% of households in 2006.
- It was long, taking up to an hour to complete.

What Cost?

- Roughly \$500m per census year financial cost to government.
- But the long form took about 3m hours to fill out. This implicit cost amounts to another \$60m or so.
- It asked questions people might not want to answer.
 - E.g.: income; religion; marital status of same-sex couples;

What Kind of Information?

- It collected information on many topics.
 - In 2006, questions on household work hours, pension income, commute times, ethnic origin and immigration status.
 - Typically, government departments interested in an issue would pay StatCan to add a question.
 - It was expensive, e.g., ethnicity questions cost Canadian Heritage upwards of \$2m.
 - Since they had to pay, they only asked for questions with serious policy relevance, and usually financial importance.

What Use? Public and Private Uses

- Short form provides sufficient info for electoral stuff (e.g., riding sizes, etc).
- Long form provided different types of data.
 - Government agencies used the data to calibrate their programming.
 - E.g., government assessments of the future cost of OAS/GIS depend heavily on data about current savings patterns of people at different income levels.
 - Private sector used the data for analysis and prediction.

What Use? Small Groups

- Because the long form went out to about 3m households, we could use it to learn about small groups in the population.
 - E.g., Aboriginal people are only 3% of the population, but there are 100,000 long forms.
- In contrast, other data sources are radically smaller.
 - E.g., the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics also collects data on ancestry and income, but has only 15,000 cases: about 450 Aboriginal people.

What Use? Baseline Other Data

- Other data sources are *sample surveys*.
 - These ask a small number of people in the country a bunch of questions.
 - The art of statistics is to use data from the sample to learn about the population in the country as a whole.

Baselining

- Some people do not respond to surveys.
- The long form census allows StatCan to correct sample surveys for non-response, *because the long form census was filled out by everyone who was asked.*
- Now, we will use the short form to correct for non-response.
 - But the short form has less data upon which to base the correction

National Household Survey

- The National Household Survey is *voluntary*, and so cannot be used to baseline other data sources.
- It will go out to 4.5m households. They expect 50% to 60% response.
- Its response rate will vary across income levels, ethnic groups, etc.
- It will cost more than the long form.

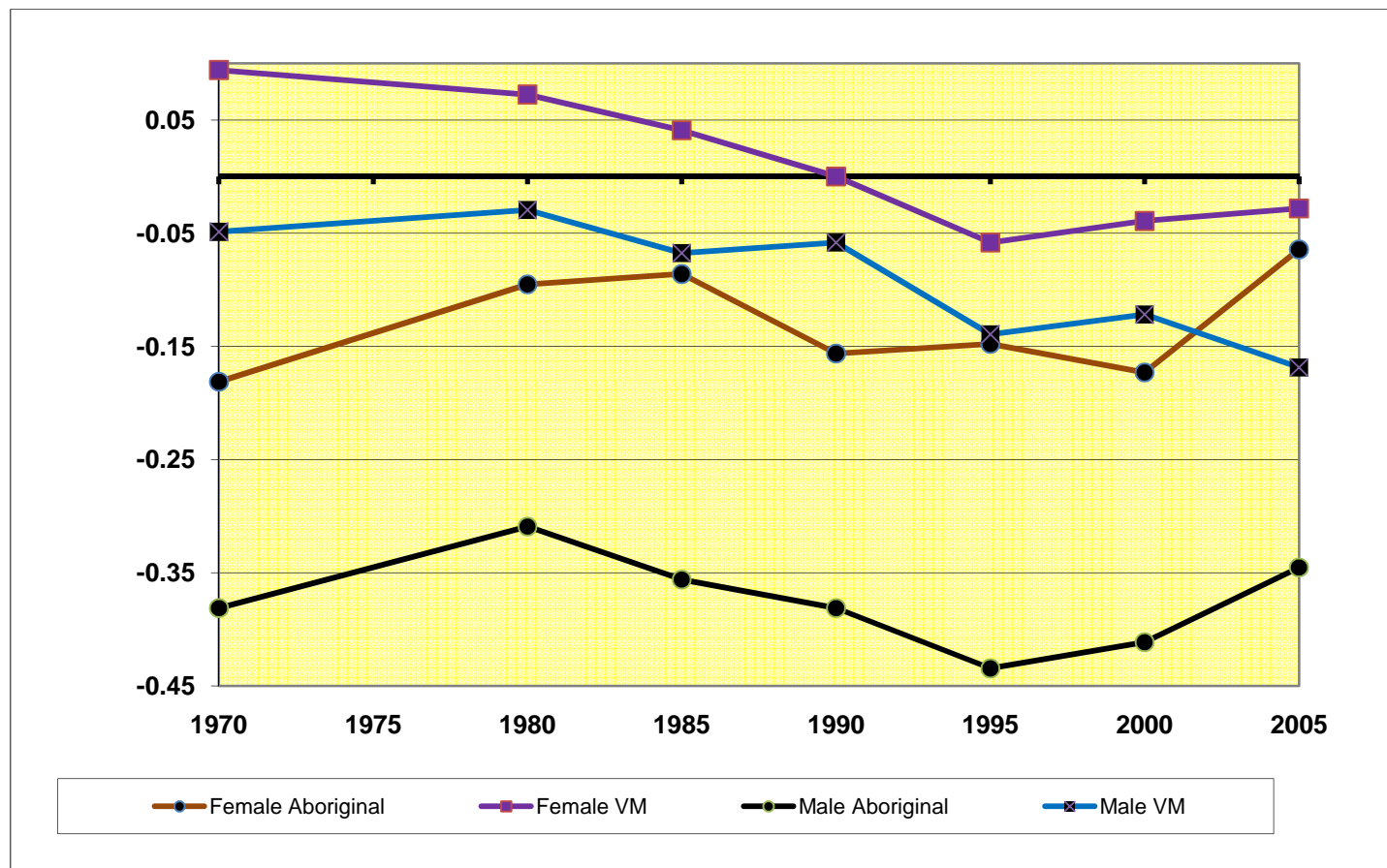
Long Form Data, Cities, Groups

- With Long Form micro-data, we can learn about small groups in the population.
 - Cities; ethnic groups; age groups; etc
- We can look at the earnings attainment of Canadian-born ethnic minorities, even though they're less than 1% of the working age population.
- Pendakur, Krishna and Ravi Pendakur, "Colour by Numbers", Journal of International Migration and Integation, forthcoming.

The Evilometer

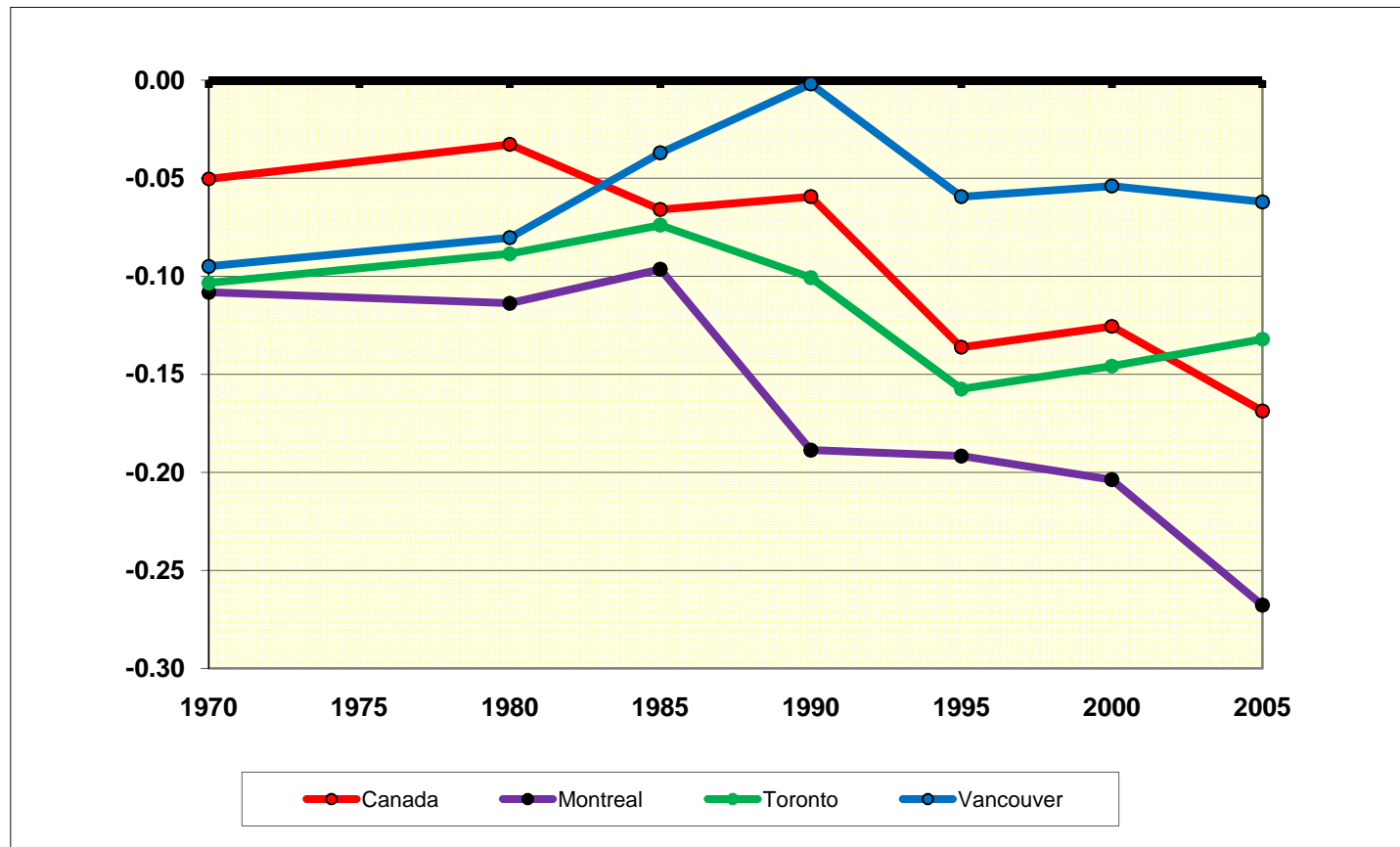
- We want to compare the earnings of white, visible minority and Aboriginal workers.
- But, they have different characteristics: e.g., visible minority workers are more educated, Aboriginal workers are younger.
- So, we use *regression analysis* to compare apples to apples, and measure earnings differentials between workers with similar age, education, place-of-residence, etc.
- We examine only Canadian-born workers.

% difference in earnings between Aboriginal and visible minority vs white men and women, 1970 - 2005



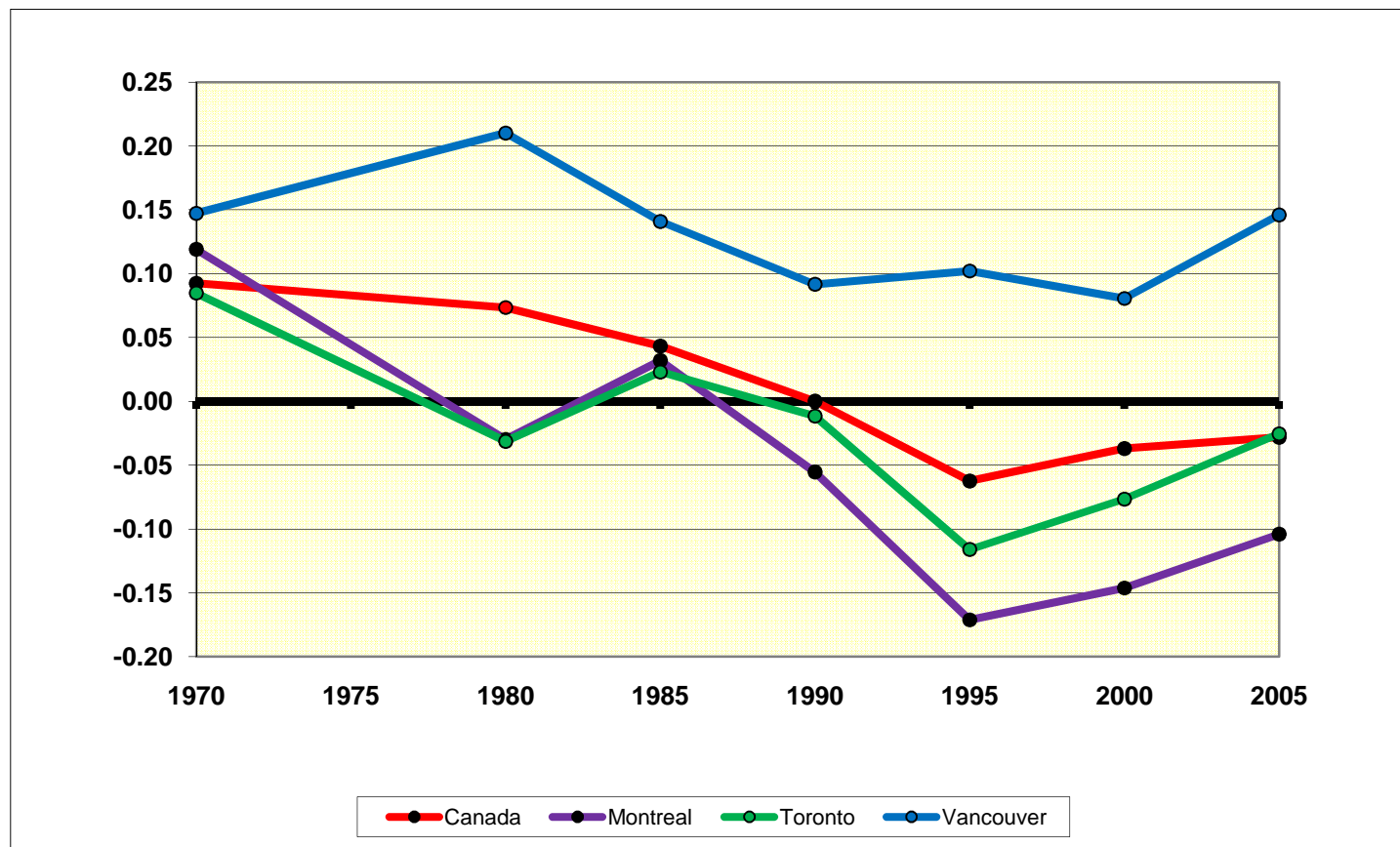
Controls include: age, education, marital status, official language knowledge, household size and CMA of residence

% difference in earnings between visible minority vs white men, Canada, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver 1970 - 2005



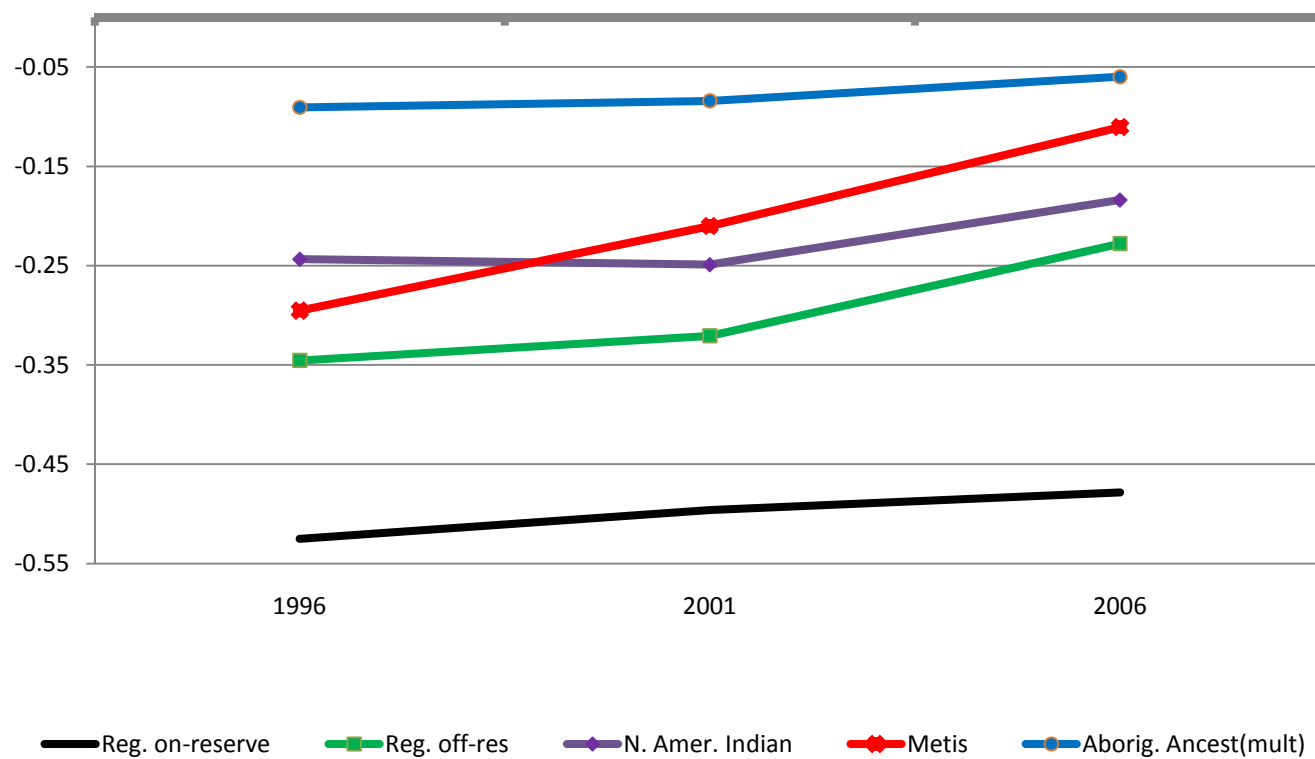
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% difference in earnings between visible minority vs white women, Canada, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver 1970 - 2005

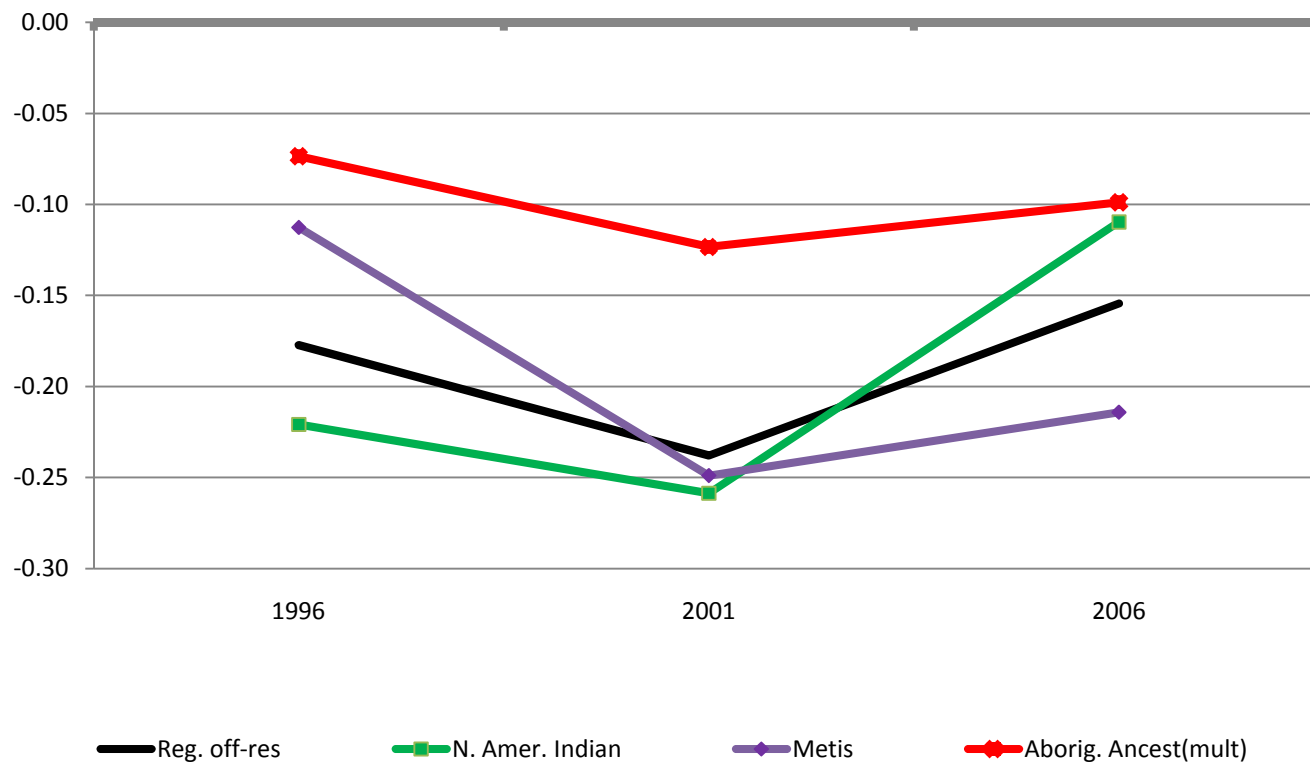


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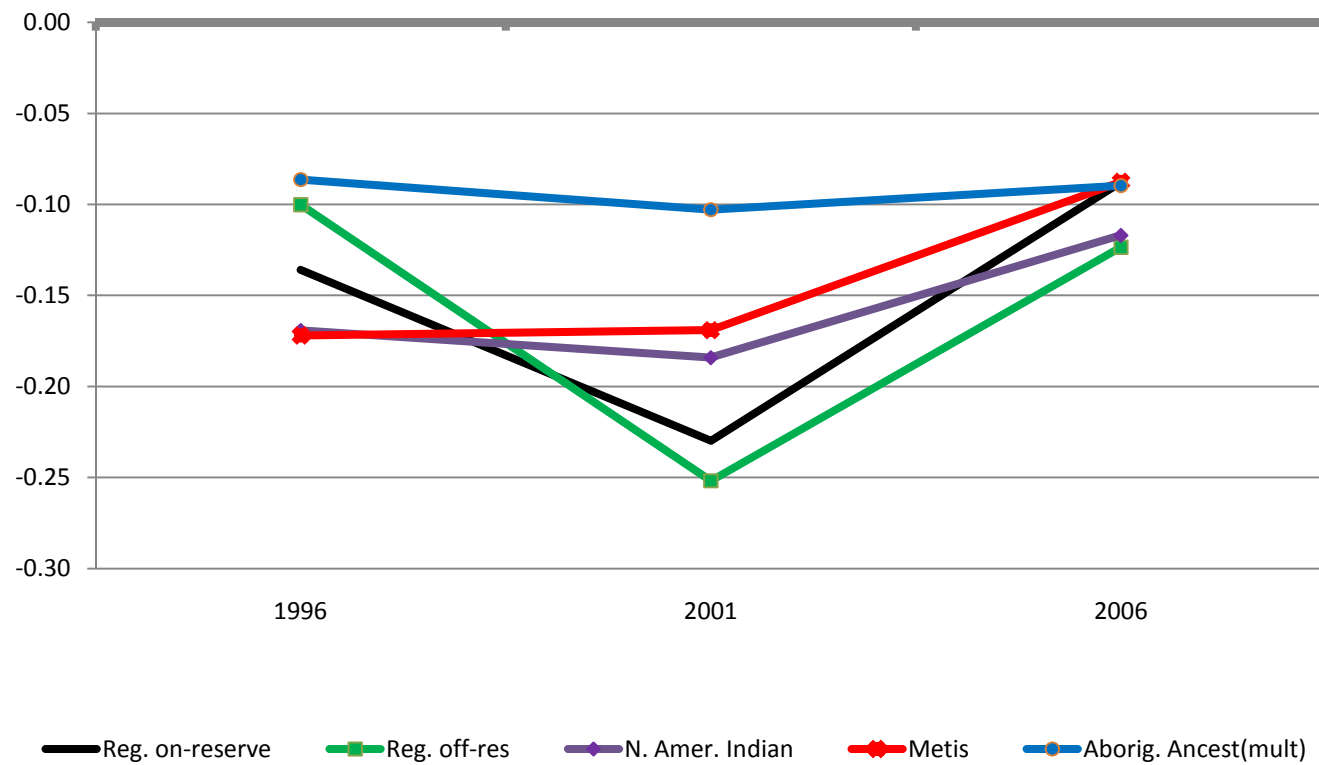
% difference in earnings between Aboriginal and White males, Canada, 1996 - 2006



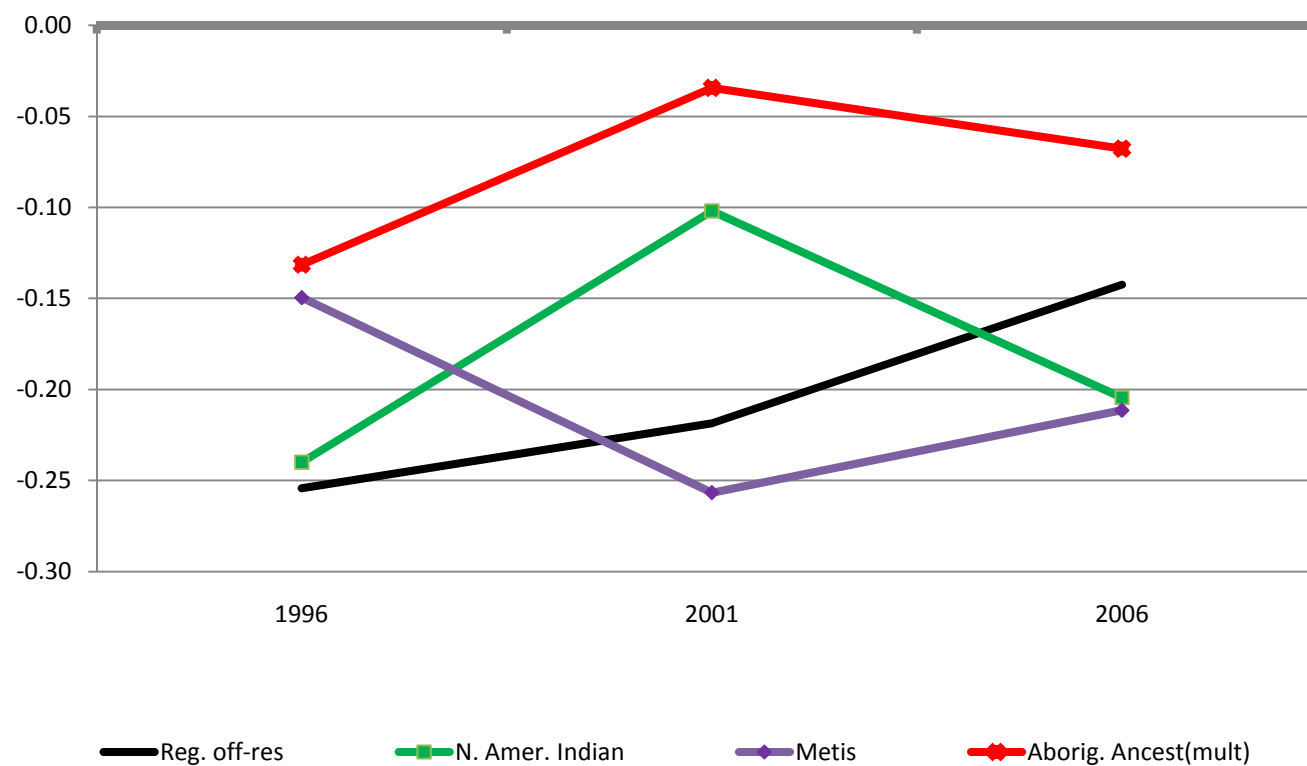
% difference in earnings between Aboriginal and White Males, Montreal, 1996 - 2006



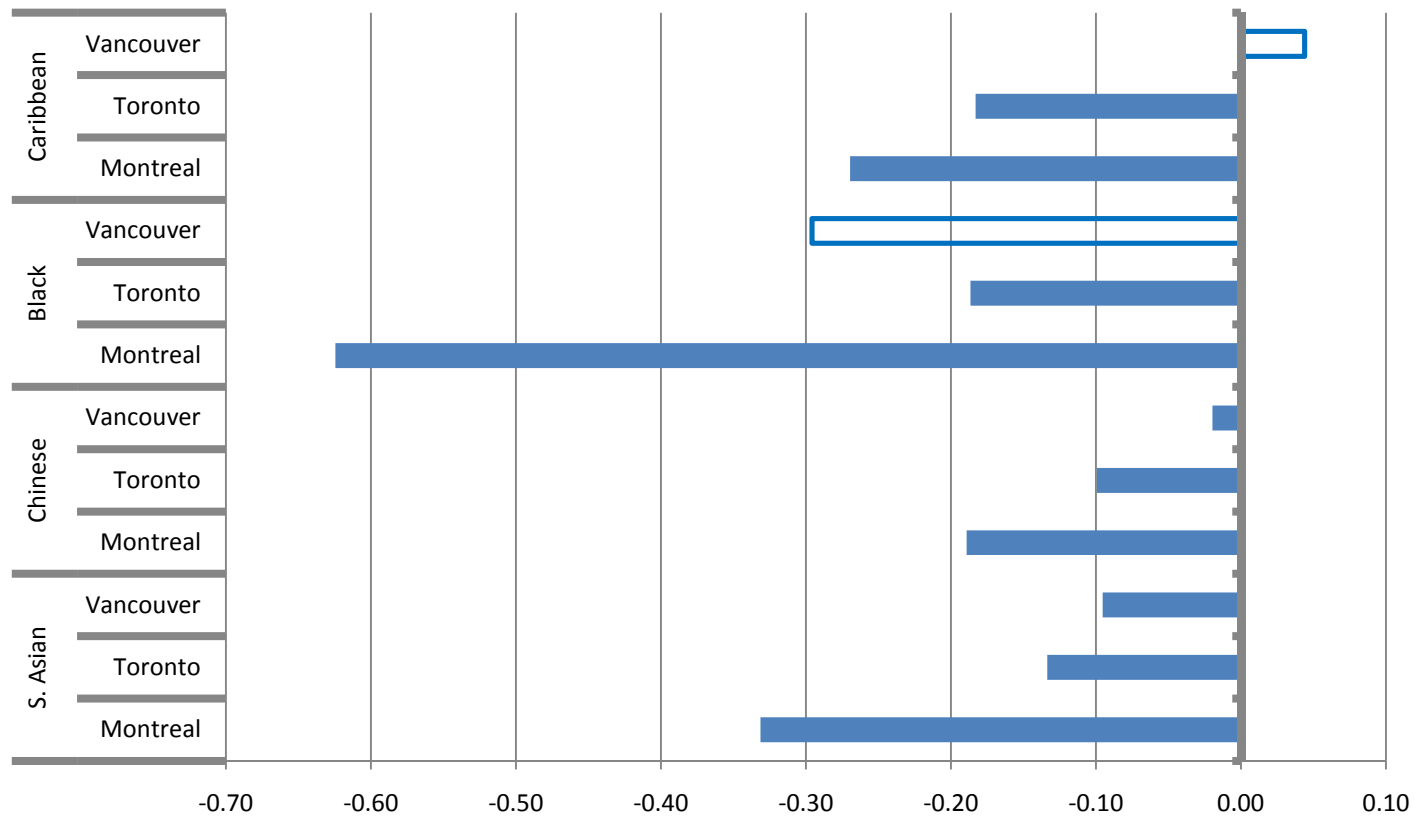
% difference in earnings between Aboriginal and White females, Canada, 1996 - 2006



% difference in earnings between Aboriginal and White females, Montreal, 1996 - 2006



% difference in earnings, selected groups, males 2006



% difference in earnings, selected groups females, 2006

