

RACE, GENDER, AND WORK IN SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL, 1960–2000

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Abstract: This study relies on Brazilian census data from 1960–2000 to analyze long-term trends in racial and gender wage disparities in the urban labor market of São Paulo, one of Latin America's most dynamic economies. Afro-Brazilians and women have made remarkable progress over the past four decades in securing hard-won legal rights and in gaining access to the highest levels of schooling, entrance into higher paying occupations, and narrowing the intraethnic gender wage gap. Despite such progress, Afro-Brazilians and women are paid less than similarly qualified white men, and wage discrimination is increasing. Placing the interplay of race and gender at the center of this analysis shows how the workplace barriers people confront on the basis of skin color and sex play a fundamental role in shaping social and economic inequality in contemporary Brazil.

In the 1970s, feminist scholarship in Latin America challenged the male bias and gender blindness inherent in early studies of the region's development. Influenced by Ester Boserup's path-breaking work on women in Africa and drawing on forceful critiques of modernization theory, feminist research on women in Latin America highlighted the gendered consequences of uneven economic growth and the centrality of women's productive and reproductive roles in the development process (Safiotti 1969; Nash and Safa 1976; Nash and Fernandez-Kelly 1983).¹ Landmark studies at the time provided vital evidence of the work that women do and contributed decisive insights to theoretical debates that continue today about the role of women in local, national, and international economies (Bose and Acosta-Belén 1995; Blumberg et al., 1995; Visvanathan 1997). The study of gender and development remains a dynamic and interdisciplinary field of inquiry which draws from academically grounded theories and empirical analyses of popular

1. See Visvanathan (1997), Tinker (1997), and Jaquette (1982) for a review of the origins of the women and development field.

movements. Imbued with an activist spirit, the study of women and development has reevaluated dominant paradigms and redefined social research in ways that continue to invite students and scholars into Latin American studies.

As women and development studies evolve, new critiques have emerged. Third world women, and women of color, have challenged the universality of feminism by underscoring the significance of race, class, and nation (Sen and Grown 1987; Mohanty et al. 1991). Akin to the male bias found in traditional studies of development is the relative absence of race and ethnicity from the literature on women and work in Latin America.² Indeed, race continues to be missing from the most recent analyses of women's work in the region (Hite and Viterna 2005). When racial or ethnic differences find explicit recognition, it is often noted in passing, accompanied by weak admonitions about the need for greater attention to the divisions among women.

The concept of "intersectionality" is at the heart of current postmodern and feminist perspectives. Minority women scholars and activists in particular have endeavored to develop new theoretical insights that stress the interconnected experiences of race and gender (as well as class). The intersectional approach has underscored the conclusion that the social position of women of color is distinct from that of either white women or men of color (Hooks 1984; Collins 1990). Most analyses in this vein rely primarily on historical, ethnographic, or textual treatments to illustrate differences between groups. Quantitative approaches to the intersection of race and gender are rare (but see Browne 1999). Studies of gender and race-based labor market inequalities in Latin America are rarer still.³

Race and gender assume particular relevance in the case of Brazil. Home to Latin America's largest African-descent population, Brazil is one of the few countries in the region where both race and gender are accorded a prominent place in political life and official discourse. In recent decades, black activists and feminists have made notable strides in increasing public awareness of race and gender inequalities and have successfully struggled to secure legal rights. Despite such progress, marked race and gender disparities continue to characterize Brazil's labor market. Blacks predominate in the lowest ranks of the labor force, and the wage gap between women and men ranks among the highest in Latin America and the Caribbean (Winter 1994). In 2000, women's

2. This is also true in the United States, where research has firmly established that workers' sex and race affect virtually every aspect of their labor market experiences. Yet, the majority of U.S. labor studies continue to neglect the simultaneous relationship between gender and race (Reskin and Charles 1999).

3. Exceptions include: Bruschini and Lombardi 2002; Guimarães 2002; Lovell 1994, 2000.

salaries lagged 36 percent behind men's, with Afro-Brazilian women being the most disadvantaged of all groups (IBGE 2003). Evidence of persistent income disparities are especially troubling given that, on average, both Afro-Brazilian and white women have completed more years of schooling than their male counterparts and are increasingly employed in traditional male occupations (Lovell 2000).

Using Brazilian census data from 1960–2000, I analyze long-term trends in wage disparities in the urban labor market of São Paulo, Brazil's most economically developed state. Although past studies provide ample evidence that Afro-Brazilians (Silva 1985, 1988) and women suffer wage discrimination (Ometto et al. 1999; Oliveira and Hachado 2000; Scorzafave and Menezes-Filho 2001; Soares and Izaki 2002), few examine the simultaneous race and gender dimensions of workplace inequality. Placing the interplay of race and gender at the center of this analysis shows how changes in the structure of the urban labor market differentially influence the status of subgroups of the Brazilian population. The workplace barriers people confront on the basis of skin color and sex play a fundamental role in shaping social and economic inequality in contemporary Brazil.

RACE AND GENDER IN BRAZIL

Brazil's lack of overt racial tensions and long history of widespread miscegenation, resulting in an elaborate system of multiracial classification, make Brazil unique in comparative studies of race. These distinctive characteristics contributed to the widely held—but now discredited—view that Brazil, unlike the United States, is a “racial democracy,” free of race-based violence, segregation and discrimination. So entrenched was the myth of racial democracy that for nearly 100 years after the abolition of slavery there was virtually no public discussion of racism. That changed with the centennial of the abolition of slavery in 1988, when a new wave of black militant groups and activist scholars refuted the ideology of racial equality and pointed to the existence of widespread racial inequality.

When Brazil's transition to democracy began in the late 1970s, the government introduced policies that would ultimately return the country to civilian rule; numerous black organizations emerged including the Movimento Negro Unificado, a national-level political movement. Black militants successfully campaigned for constitutional amendments to end racial discrimination and began an unprecedented public dialogue on the role of skin color in structuring contemporary opportunities and rewards in society.⁴ For all of the nuance and complexity of race

4. Although rarely enforced, Federal antidiscrimination laws were passed in Brazil as early as 1953.

and the social meaning of skin color, there is now a wealth of empirical evidence that racial inequality, prejudice, and discrimination are features of everyday life in Brazil (Hasenbalg and Silva 1992; Andrews 1992; Reichmann 1999; Lovell and Wood 1998; Telles 2004). Under the recent presidency of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Brazil began to acknowledge and combat these inequalities and established Latin America's only national affirmative action policies aimed at increasing Afro-descendants' access to education and employment (Telles 2004; Htun 2004). Indeed, no other country in Latin America has seen the same degree of black political mobilization as has taken place in Brazil (Andrews 2004).⁵

Issues of gender inequality also emerged as important rallying cries in the opposition politics of Brazil's "new social movements" (Tabak 1994; Alvarez 1990). Women's efforts focused, in general, on the demand for better conditions in daily life and a more egalitarian society. Many of women's petitions were also transformed into constitutional rights. For instance, provisions on equality between women and men, a chapter on the family, maternity and paternity leaves, new rights for domestic and rural workers, and antidiscrimination legislation were all included in the rewritten 1988 constitution. To protect women from domestic abuse, Brazil created the world's first women's police stations (*delegacias*). In 1996, the country approved a women's quota law requiring that political parties must reserve a minimum of 30 percent of candidate slots for women (Htun 2002). Councils that represent women's concerns currently exist in all state and local governments. From small groups of women in popular social movements to national and international networks, Brazilian feminists have pioneered some of the world's most advanced legislation and innovative mechanisms to promote gender equity.

Yet, despite common concerns and objectives, black and white women often engage in separate political struggles. Afro-Brazilian feminists initially shunned predominantly white women's groups because such groups seldom addressed the specificity of black women's situations. Likewise, some Afro-Brazilian women felt the male-dominated black movement has not adequately addressed their needs or concerns. The combined effects of racism in the feminist movement and sexism in the emerging black movement led Afro-Brazilian women to found autonomous groups (Alvarez 1994; Hanchard 1994). To address their specific

5. Race-based collective action in Brazil has never reached the scale of the U.S. civil rights movement or the South African liberation movement. Research suggests that obstacles to popular black mobility in Brazil include a weak "racial consciousness," (Mitchell 1985; Hanchard 1994), religious divisions (Burdick 1998), class divisions between the activists and those whom they seek to mobilize, the still powerful ideology of racial democracy and the popular alienation from activist discourse about "blackness" (Andrews 2004).

issues, Afro-Brazilian women have organized national conferences, seminars, and created black women's organizations and institutes. *Geledés Instituto da Mulher Negra* and *Fala Preta* are two of the best known black women's nongovernmental organizations in São Paulo that confront issues of reproductive rights, labor market discrimination, and health concerns. Afro-Brazilian women also participate in the national women's movement (Safa 2003). As a consequence, since the early 1990s there has been a growing awareness of and attention to race and gender concerns within both feminist and black discourses.⁶

RACIAL IDENTITY AND CENSUS DATA

As in many countries, racial terminology in Brazil is multifaceted and reflects changing cultural and political ideas and struggles. Today in Brazil, the terms *negro* and *afro-brasileiro* are frequently used to signify those of African descent. The black movement has promoted the use of *negro* as an affirmation of African origin and identity and as a rejection of the assimilationist and whitening ideal of *mestizaje* (Maggie 1989). Putting aside any pretense of measuring "race" in the genetic sense, the Brazilian Census Bureau has traditionally asked respondents to choose their own identity among four color categories: *branco* (white), *pardo* (literally translated as grey but interpreted as brown), *preto* (black) and *amarelo* (yellow).

There is considerable controversy regarding the census' method of data collection. Anthropological research on racial self-identification amply documents the numerous racial distinctions Brazilians apply to people who vary with respect to hair texture, skin tone, and various facial markers (Harris 1964). The Census Bureau conducted its own survey in 1976 and found that an open-ended question on racial self-classification elicited nearly two hundred different responses (Silva 1988). The wide variety of terms Brazilians use to identify race questions the validity of the simplified census scheme. Another concern is the interplay between a person's social class and color and the associated mutability of racial identity. Very dark-skinned persons who are also poor are likely to be thought of—and classify themselves—as black, but high-status persons of the same skin tone are more likely to be thought of—and to classify themselves—as closer to the white end of the color continuum. The fact that social class plays a role in racial classification suggests the possibility that upwardly mobile individuals may reclassify themselves from darker into lighter racial categories after rising in socioeconomic status.

6. Two Brazilian journals devoted to examining gender and racial dynamics are *Estudos Feministas* and *Estudos Afro-Asiáticos*.

To estimate the mobility of people from one color category to another, De Carvalho, Wood, and Andrade (2004) studied the consistency and stability of the Brazilian census' self-classification of racial categories from 1950 to 1980. They found evidence of considerable reclassification out of the preto and into the pardo category. They did not, however, find evidence of reclassification from preto or pardo into white. Their study concludes that the boundary between pretos and pardos is ambiguous and unstable, while the boundary between white and nonwhite (the combination of pretos and pardos) is relatively unambiguous and remarkably stable. Their findings provide compelling reasons to collapse pardos and pretos into a single Afro-Brazilian category when census data are used to analyze changes in racial disparities over time. Given the multidimensional basis of racial identity, it is not surprising that the strategy of converting the already simplified census typology to a white/Afro-Brazilian dichotomy has been criticized for imposing an inappropriate bipolar racial scheme on Brazil (Harris et al. 1993). Others contend that, despite the profusion of racial terms, the great socioeconomic divide is nonetheless between white and Afro-Brazilian (Andrews 1992; Lovell and Wood 1998).

When faced with the questionable reliability and accuracy of statistical data on race in Brazil, why use census data? As this and previous research has shown, race matters in determining access to education, jobs, and wages. Only with data on racial disparities can we begin to identify the deep inequalities that divide Brazilian society. The individual-level data I use in this study from the 1960, 1980, 1991, and 2000 public use samples of the Brazilian Censuses of Population make it possible to estimate how race and gender together affect the schooling, jobs, and wages of Afro-Brazilian and white women and men. My sample is limited to wage earning employees aged 18–64 in São Paulo's urban labor market.⁷ Following an approach used by England, Christopher, and Reid (1999), my focus is on whether, and how much, race-based gaps in labor market predictors and outcomes vary by sex and whether sex-based gaps vary by race.

LABOR MARKET INDICATORS IN SÃO PAULO: SCHOOLING, OCCUPATIONAL SORTING, AND WAGES

Schooling

Racial and gender labor market inequality have typically been analyzed in terms of differences in individual-level qualifications (Mincer and Polachek 1974). Human capital explanations of the gender gap focus

7. Because my sample omits workers who are self-employed or unemployed, my conclusions do not explain racial or gender inequality in access to jobs. My results instead pertain only to the factors that affect wages among current employees.

on how differences in men's and women's plans for work will lead them to different levels of investments in their own skills and education (i.e., human capital). Women are assumed to plan noncontiguous employment so that they can accommodate childbearing and homemaking. As such, human capital theorists argue that women will invest less in acquiring schooling and skills than men and choose occupations that can accommodate their entrance into and exit from the labor force. Thus the gender wage gap can be explained if women have lower levels of education than do men and are concentrated in lower paying occupations.

On the other hand, research in this area assumes that equally qualified workers will be paid at the same rate regardless of their sex or skin color because they are similarly productive and of equal value to an employer. This is a supply-side approach which explains wage differences between women and men—and blacks and whites—as a product of individual-level skills or choices. Important for my analysis is the notion that workers can increase their earnings by investing more in their human capital. For example, Afro-Brazilians and women can obtain more schooling to better compete with white men. The appeal of this perspective is that we can measure differences in worker characteristics by sex and race and also measure the impact of these differences on wages. Indeed, educational differences have been found to explain sizable shares of race and gender-based differences in pay (Corcoran and Duncan 1979; Kilbourne, England and Beron 1994; Farkas et al. 1997).

Table 1 presents the distribution of completed years of schooling for urban male and female workers by race. From 1960 to 2000, school completion rates increased for all workers in São Paulo. Gender differentials show that working women of both races have consistently achieved higher levels of education than men. The percentage of Afro-Brazilian women who had completed nine or more years of schooling was 2 percent in 1960 and rose to 37 percent in 2000. Similar increases for Afro-Brazilian men were from 1 to 29 percent. Likewise, the percentage of white women who had completed nine or more years of schooling increased from 18 to 61 percent over these four decades while a similar increase for white men ranged from 1 to 50 percent. Despite women's consistent overall educational advantages, racial inequality in schooling persisted for both sexes. By 2000, only 6 percent of employed Afro-Brazilian women and 4 percent of employed Afro-Brazilian men had completed 12 or more years of schooling, compared to 23 percent and 18 percent respectively for employed white women and men.

To summarize the racial differences in schooling, table 1 shows indices of dissimilarity by race for each decade.⁸ This index represents the

8. The racial index of dissimilarity, or "segregation index," developed by Duncan and Duncan (1955) is calculated as: $1/2 \sum_i |w_i - b_i|$, where w_i is the proportion of whites

Table 1 *Years of Completed Schooling for Employed Women and Men, Urban São Paulo, 1960–2000*

	1960		1980		1991		2000	
	White	Afro-Brazilian	White	Afro-Brazilian	White	Afro-Brazilian	White	Afro-Brazilian
<i>Women</i>								
0–4	71.6	96.2	40.2	66.7	23.7	47.7	18.8	32.5
5–8	10.4	1.9	19.2	21.0	21.6	28.5	20.5	30.1
9–11	16.5	1.6	22.5	9.4	28.4	19.5	37.9	31.4
12+	1.5	0.3	18.1	2.9	26.3	7.3	22.8	6.0
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Racial Index of Dissimilarity		24.6		28.3		27.9		23.3
Gender Index of Dissimilarity	17.4	1.9	10.6	6.4	14.9	7.8	10.9	8.0
<i>Men</i>								
0–4	89.0	95.2	49.2	73.1	32.2	50.4	23.1	36.3
5–8	10.0	3.8	20.8	19.6	28.0	32.1	27.1	34.3
9–12	0.7	0.9	17.5	5.1	22.3	13.7	32.1	25.2
13+	0.3	0.1	12.5	2.2	17.5	3.8	17.7	4.2
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Racial Index of Dissimilarity		6.4		23.9		15.2		20.4

Sources: Public Use Samples from the 1960, 1980, 1991 and 2000 demographic censuses.

percent of Afro-Brazilians or whites who would have to change categories in order for racial schooling distributions to be the same. Over time, the racial index of dissimilarity remains nearly unchanged for Afro-Brazilian women (25 percent in 1960 and 23 percent in 2000) while it increases substantially for Afro-Brazilian men (from 6 percent in 1960 to 20 percent in 2000). This suggests that the racial gap in education among women has changed little over forty years while such differences have increased among men. Nevertheless, men are more similar in their distribution among the schooling categories than are women.

Inequality in schooling between women and men is measured by the gender index of dissimilarity. This index represents the percent of women or men within each racial group who would have to change categories in order for gender schooling distributions to be the same. In contrast to

who are in category *i* (e.g., schooling or occupational category), and b_i is the proportion of Afro-Brazilians in that same category *i*. The gender index of dissimilarity is calculated in the same way using the proportion of men and women in category *i*.

Table 2 Occupational Distribution for Employed Women and Men, Urban São Paulo, 1960–2000

	1960		1980		1991		2000	
	White (1)	Afro- Brazilian (2)	White (3)	Afro- Brazilian (4)	White (5)	Afro- Brazilian (6)	White (7)	Afro- Brazilian (8)
<i>Women</i>								
Adminis- tration	0.7	0.2	3.8	1.3	6.1	2.6	5.9	2.5
Professional	20.8	3.6	20.0	6.3	23.1	9.8	24.3	11.2
Clerical	15.4	2.0	33.9	15.4	34.5	21.0	22.5	13.0
Manufac- turing	31.9	21.6	22.0	31.6	11.6	15.9	8.6	11.1
Service	7.6	6.8	4.8	7.4	6.5	11.9	21.8	27.9
Domestic	23.6	65.8	15.4	37.9	18.2	38.9	17.0	34.2
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Racial Index of Dissimilarity		42.2		34.7		30.4		25.9
Gender Index of Dissimilarity	30.9	65.2	37.1	46.0	40.4	46.4	34.6	42.6
<i>Men</i>								
Administ- ration	1.8	0.1	10.2	3.0	12.6	5.8	9.7	4.9
Professional	7.2	2.4	13.1	5.0	13.7	6.0	18.7	8.8
Clerical	16.5	5.3	21.1	12.6	22.0	16.5	10.0	7.6
Manufac- turing	63.3	81.7	52.7	75.9	43.0	59.0	39.3	51.3
Service	8.8	7.5	2.1	2.4	7.0	9.9	21.5	26.1
Domestic	0.3	0.8	0.8	1.0	1.8	2.8	0.8	1.2
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Racial Index of Dissimilarity		19.0		23.8		20.0		17.1

Sources: Public Use Samples from the 1960, 1980, 1991 and 2000 demographic censuses.

Note: The 6 broad occupational categories used here follow a classification scheme used by the Census Bureau. Specific census codes are available by request from the author.

racial inequality, gender inequality in schooling is much lower. For example, the gender index of dissimilarity for white women was 17 percent in 1960 and 11 percent in 2000. The same index for Afro-Brazilian women was 2 percent in 1960 and 8 percent in 2000. Thus the gender gap in schooling is narrowing somewhat for whites and widening for Afro-Brazilians. Unlike the racial index of dissimilarity, however, where Afro-Brazilians were underrepresented in the highest schooling categories,

the gender index of dissimilarity reflects both Afro-Brazilian and white women's higher levels of schooling relative to men.

These descriptive results begin to suggest the ways in which race and gender can simultaneously affect labor market outcomes. Most important for an intersectional analysis is the finding that there is not a generic account of either race or sex-based differences in education. Afro-Brazilian women workers had higher levels of completed schooling than Afro-Brazilian men, yet racial inequality was higher among women than men, largely due to Afro-Brazilian women's underrepresentation in the highest levels of the education system. Racial obstacles are thus likely to be more acute than gender barriers for Afro-Brazilian women's access to education. White women, in contrast, are the most advantaged of all groups. Thus white women benefit from their race and seem to confront no obstacle to schooling on the basis of their sex.

Occupational Segregation by Race and Sex

Rates of completed schooling are important indicators determining access to better paying jobs. We know from numerous studies (England et al. 1996; Kilbourne et al. 1994) that the process of confining women to some jobs (usually lower paying) and men to others (usually higher paying) is one of the most important mechanisms for maintaining gender inequality in wages. There is evidence that occupational segregation based on race plays a similar role in generating disparities in pay (Lieberson and Waters 1990). Some studies suggest that occupational segregation is a double disadvantage for minority women because they tend to be sorted into jobs that are segregated by both race and sex (Reskin 1999). Given that Afro-Brazilian workers in São Paulo have lower levels of education than whites and women workers have higher levels of schooling than men, we can expect two possible outcomes consistent with the human capital theory: occupations in São Paulo are likely to be stratified by race and, in the absence of gender bias, women should have equal or greater access than men to more prestigious jobs. Table 2 presents the occupational distribution of urban São Paulo workers for the years 1960–2000. The racial and gender dissimilarity indices for each year of the census measure the proportion of either women/men or Afro-Brazilians/whites that would have to change occupations for the groups to be distributed identically across occupations.

In 1960, Afro-Brazilian and white women's occupations were distinct. Afro-Brazilian women were almost exclusively employed (94.2 percent) in three blue collar occupations: manufacturing, service, and domestic work. Notably, 66 percent of Afro-Brazilian women worked as domestic servants compared to 24 percent of white women. Four decades ago, Afro-

Brazilian women were virtually absent in the higher paying administrative, professional, and clerical occupations that together represented 37 percent of white women's employment. Women's racial index of dissimilarity for 1960 tells us that 42 percent of Afro-Brazilian or white women would have had to change occupations to eliminate segregation by race.

Over the next two to three decades, as São Paulo developed a highly diversified industrial economy, Afro-Brazilian women began to make significant inroads into more skilled occupations. For instance, the proportion of Afro-Brazilian women employed in the better paying "pink"- and white-collar occupations (clerical, professional, and administrative jobs) increased by 28 percent between 1960 and 1991. White women experienced a similar 27 percent gain in the proportion employed in the higher-status occupations. Correspondingly, the racial index of dissimilarity among women declined from 35 percent in 1980 to 30 percent in 1991, indicating an overall narrowing of the racial gap among women in occupational distribution. Despite these gains, the percentage of Afro-Brazilian women employed as domestic servants remained at about 38 percent in both 1980 and 1991.

By 2000, we begin to see some reversals of the above trends as women of both racial groups exit clerical positions and enter lower-paying service jobs. For instance, the proportion of white and Afro-Brazilian women employed in clerical jobs declined by 12 and 8 percent respectively from 1991 to 2000. During this decade, the proportion of white women employed in the service sector grew from 7 to 22 percent with a similar increase from 12 to 28 percent for Afro-Brazilian women. Declines in educational attainment clearly do not explain this exodus from clerical jobs, as women's formal education increased during these years. Women's movement back into the traditional female service occupations may instead be indicative of broader shifts in São Paulo's industrial economy.⁹

Despite the steady decline in the racial index of dissimilarity among women over these forty years, one in three Afro-Brazilian women continued to work as a domestic servant in 2000. At the opposite end of the job hierarchy we find that in 2000 white women were twice as likely as Afro-Brazilian women to be employed in the highest paying administrative and professional occupations. Consistent with the human capital perspective and other studies of occupational segregation, these

9. Major shifts in the industrial structure of the U.S. economy since the 1970s had led to deindustrialization, increased demand for skills, and a decline in the availability of low-skill jobs in the central cities. Many scholars suggest these structural shifts are an explanation of the persistent race and ethnic inequality in the U.S. labor market. To my knowledge, no similar studies exist which examine the effects of recent structural changes in the economy on racial inequality in Brazil. This is an avenue for future investigation.

findings show that occupations are clearly segregated by race among women. What is unknown is whether this stratification is a consequence of Afro-Brazilian women's lower levels of education or whether, after controlling for educational differences, Afro-Brazilian women face race-based exclusion from the higher paying occupations.¹⁰ Nevertheless, it is clear that Afro-Brazilian women confront triple forces that push their wages downward: segregation into lower-paying female-dominated positions, segregation into occupations structured by human capital, and segregation in occupations structured by race.

Among men the index of racial dissimilarity shows that differences in occupational sorting have always been narrower for men than for women. In 1960 the index of dissimilarity between Afro-Brazilian and white men was 19 percent, less than half of the index for women (42.2 percent). Over time, however, the direction of the racial dissimilarity index for men moved in the opposite direction than that for women. While racial inequality in job sorting steadily declined for women, racial inequality rates for men increased from 1960 (19 percent) to 1980 (24 percent) and then declined to their lowest level in 2000 (17 percent). Despite the variability in racial inequality among men, men's occupational structure changed significantly over time with a decline in manufacturing employment and an increase in service sector and professional employment. These changes, however, disproportionately benefited white men, who exited manufacturing at a much more rapid pace and entered administrative and professional occupations in much greater numbers than Afro-Brazilian men. Nevertheless, throughout every decade, racial differences in the distribution of jobs remained much smaller among men than among women.

The gender index of dissimilarity in table 2 measures the extent to which intraethnic women and men hold different occupations. The gender segregation index is substantially higher than the racial index, with highs ranging from 65 percent in 1960 for Afro-Brazilian women to 40 percent in 1991 for white women. Over time, sex segregation in occupations has varied by race. Sex segregation among whites increased from 1960 to 1991 (from 31 to 40 percent) followed by a decline in 2000 (35 percent). In contrast, gender inequality between Afro-Brazilians, although higher than that for whites, has steadily declined from 65 percent in 1960 to 43 percent in 2000. Sex segregation for both Afro-Brazilian and white women is caused mainly by men's overrepresentation in manufacturing and administrative jobs. In 2000, white and Afro-Brazilian men were four to five times as

10. To better understand how and why race and gender simultaneously affect occupational segregation, we need to move beyond these descriptive techniques and instead use models such as logistic regression or multinomial logit analysis that allow us to separate the effects of race, sex, and human capital on occupational distributions.

likely to work in manufacturing and roughly twice as likely to hold administrative positions as intraethnic women. Contrary to the predictions of human capital theory, women's overall higher levels of education do not guarantee their access to these high-status jobs.

Although a more nuanced investigation of the causes of occupational segregation is beyond the scope of this paper, these findings show that occupational segregation in Brazil occurs along three interconnected axes: race, sex, and levels of human capital endowments. Overall, occupations are more segregated by sex than by race. This is counterintuitive to the human capital model which would predict that because of the significant lower levels of education among Afro-Brazilians, jobs should be more segregated by race. Findings instead suggest that jobs in Brazil are stereotyped more on the basis of sex than skin color.

Wages

Brazil's gender wage gap is among the highest in Latin America and the Caribbean (Winter 1994). In 2000, women workers throughout Brazil earned only 64 percent of men's wages (IBGE 2003). Gender and race wage ratios for all urban São Paulo workers are shown in table 3. Gender wage ratios are calculated by dividing women's mean monthly wages by men's mean monthly wages. Race wage ratios are calculated by dividing Afro-Brazilian mean monthly wages by white mean monthly wages within gender groups.

The gender wage gap has narrowed among urban workers in São Paulo over the past four decades, although it has varied by race. The largest change was for Afro-Brazilian women as their share of Afro-Brazilian men's earnings rose from 48 percent in 1960 to 71 percent in 2000. The decline in the gender wage gap was also significant for white women, although the pattern of change varied over time. In 1960, white women earned 63 percent of white men's wages, with their earnings falling to 54 percent in 1980 and then increasing for the remaining decades. By 2000, white women working in urban São Paulo earned 68 percent of men's wages (4 percentage points higher than the national average). For both Afro-Brazilian and white women, the greatest gains were concentrated in the post-1991 period. Yet, given that working women have higher levels of education, their persistent lower salaries vis-à-vis men suggests that women's returns to wage related characteristics are lower than that of their male counterparts.

The racial wage gap, on the other hand, has remained remarkably consistent over these forty years. Among women, the racial wage gap persisted at roughly 60 percent from 1980 to 2000. During this same time, Afro-Brazilian men earned roughly 59 percent of white men's wages. The consistency of the racial wage gap for both women and men is

explained, in part, by the persistent educational and occupational disparities between Afro-Brazilians and whites in the labor force in São Paulo. As previously shown, Afro-Brazilian women and men completed fewer years of schooling than whites and were disproportionately concentrated in the lowest paying occupations. In unreported results, I found that both the gender and racial wage gap persisted even when education and occupation are taken into account, and indeed increased with more years of schooling and higher status occupations.¹¹

Overall, these findings suggest that over the past forty years, the gender wage gap has narrowed among workers in São Paulo (more so for Afro-Brazilians than whites), yet the racial wage gap has remained fairly constant. The convergence in the wages of intraethnic women and men is most likely due to women's greater investments in education and movement into higher status occupations, both of which were translated into better average wages. What remains to be seen is what proportion of the gender and racial wage gap is due to unequal human capital versus unequal pay.

EXPLAINING RACE AND GENDER DIFFERENCES IN PAY

In the burgeoning literature on labor market inequality in the United States, analysts have presented numerous hypothesis concerning persistent racial and gender differentials in earnings among similarly qualified workers. Important to my analysis is the research on discrimination that shows that women and blacks earn less than white males, after statistical adjustments are made for years of schooling, occupation, work experience and other explanatory characteristics (Corcoran and Duncan 1979; Farley 1984; England 1992).¹² This observation is critical to the study of labor market inequality because returns to workers' characteristics

11. Tables that disaggregate wages by race, sex, occupation, and education are available by request from the author.

12. Discrimination may be the outcome of two additional and complementary processes: tastes and statistical discrimination. Many contemporary economists begin with Becker's (1957) neoclassical taste model which posits that employers, workers or customers may have a taste for discrimination which results in a preference in favor of or against hiring, working with, or buying from women. Thus discriminators are willing to pay more to hire members of the preferred group. In contrast, models of statistical discrimination assume that hiring decisions are made on the basis of group averages rather than individual attributes. Lester Thurow says that statistical discrimination "occurs whenever an individual is judged on the basis of the average characteristics of the group or groups to which he or she belongs rather than upon his or her own characteristics" (1975, 172). Hence, assumptions that men (or whites) have higher average levels of education or lower job turnover than women (or blacks), results in mistaken predictions about individual women or minorities and privileges males and whites in the labor market. Neither "tastes" nor judgments are easily tested with census data.

Table 3 Sex and Race Wage Ratios, Workers Aged 18–64, Urban São Paulo, 1960–2000

Census Year	Sex Wage Ratios		Race Wage Ratios	
	White (1)	Afro-Brazilian (2)	Women (3)	Men (4)
1960	62.95	47.81	51.89	68.33
1980	54.41	54.72	59.45	59.12
1991	57.45	59.68	60.98	58.71
2000	68.25	70.67	59.92	57.88

Sources: Public Use Samples from the 1960, 1980, 1991 and 2000 demographic censuses.

Note: Wage ratios are based on mean monthly wages for all workers between the ages of 18 and 64 except for students, members of the armed forces, unpaid workers, and workers who received self-employment income. Sex wage ratios are calculated by dividing women's mean monthly wages by men's mean monthly wages within racial groups. Wage ratios by race are calculated by dividing Afro-Brazilian mean monthly wages by white mean monthly wages within gender groups.

are controlled by employers not employees. Thus, unequal returns to workers' endowments allow us to quantify the amount of the wage gap due to either race- or sex-based discrimination.

Beginning with studies from the late 1970s, racial and gender wage discrimination in Brazil is well researched. Silva (1978) and Hasenbalg (1979) studied labor market inequality between Afro-Brazilian and white men and found that Afro-Brazilian men were concentrated in the lowest economic strata and those who attempted to climb the social ladder continued to experience discrimination. Silva and Hasenbalg's landmark studies clearly demonstrated that racial differences could not be reduced to class factors as researchers in the 1940s and 1950s contended, but that discrimination was also at work.¹³ In 1980, discrimination accounted for 24 percent of the wage gap between white and Afro-Brazilian men (Lovell 1994). Studies of the gender wage gap in Brazil also find that a substantial part of the sex differential in pay is attributed to discrimination. A World Bank sponsored research program on Brazilian women's pay found that, in 1989, discrimination accounted for 81–89 percent of the earnings differential between wives and husbands (Tiefenthaler 1992). In a recent study of São Paulo (Lovell 2000), I investigated wage differentials between white women and men and found that by 1991, the proportion of the gender wage gap attributable to discrimination had increased to 99 percent. Despite major structural transformations in Brazil's socioeconomic base, these studies show that discrimination in Brazilian workplaces is increasing.

13. See the work of Azevedo 1953; Pierson 1942; Wagley 1969; and Harris 1964.

In this study, I extend current research on discrimination in Brazil in two ways. First, I take advantage of four decades of data to determine whether the social transformations taking place in Brazil during this period narrowed or widened racial and gender pay disparities. Second, in contrast to the emphasis in the literature that separates race and gender, I focus on how race and gender *combine* to ameliorate or intensify labor market disadvantage. To test for discrimination by sex and race, I estimated separate wage regression equations for 18- to 64-year-old employed Afro-Brazilian and white women and men for the years 1960–2000. The dependent variable is the log of monthly wages. The independent variables included in the regressions are standard wage predictors: experience, experience squared, years of completed schooling, occupation, marital status, and hours worked.¹⁴ In light of my previous findings on schooling differences and occupational segregation, it is important to note that both educational and occupational differences are accounted for in this model.¹⁵ I use the results from the estimated wage regressions as input into an econometric model following Jones and Kelly (1984).¹⁶ This technique separates the wage gap into 3 parts: differences in individual-level characteristics (the “explained” or what is referred to as the “composition” portion of the wage gap); differences due to unequal pay (the “unexplained” or

14. Results of the regression are available from the author on request.

15. Other researchers have noted that inclusion of occupation in wage regression analysis may lead to results that underestimate the extent of wage discrimination. As Oaxaca (1973) argued, if jobs are assigned on the basis of sex and race, then including occupation in a wage equation will in effect control for a portion of labor market discrimination. We have every reason to believe that the determination of jobs is mediated by labor market discrimination in Brazil, thus my estimates of wage discrimination are most likely understated.

16. I use a modified version of the standard Oaxaca method proposed by Jones and Kelly (1984) which is:

$$(Y^h - Y^l) = [(\alpha^h - \alpha^l) + \Sigma X^l (\beta^h - \beta^l)] + \Sigma \beta^l (X^h - X^l) + \Sigma (\beta^h - \beta^l) (X^h - X^l).$$

(a)
(b)
(c)

Part (a), “discrimination” is the amount due to the difference between the intercept of the white’s (male’s) and Afro-Brazilian’s (female’s), plus the difference in coefficients. The substantive interpretation is how much of the income gap results from group membership and how much results from differential returns on human resources. In other words, how much of the wage differential is a result of being Afro-Brazilian and receiving less pay compared to an equally qualified white worker. This is a conservative measure of discrimination because it includes only intercepts and slopes unlike Blinder (1973) that adds part (c) to this term, thus inflating the proportion of the wage gap attributed to discrimination. Part (b), “composition,” represents the amount of the wage gap that is due to differences in human resources, such as different levels of education or job experience. It estimates the amount by which Afro-Brazilian’s average income is depressed because of human capital deficits (e.g., having lower levels of schooling). Part (c), “interaction,” represents the combination of both differential returns and differences in human resources.

discrimination portion of the wage gap); and the combined effect of composition and discrimination (the interaction portion of the wage gap).

An important caveat is that the decomposition analysis attributes that portion of the wage gap not explained by gender or racial differences in individual-level attributes (such as unequal levels of education) to “discrimination.” Discrimination is therefore the result of unmeasured differences. It is possible that there are other unidentified factors not included in the model that also contribute to this wage gap (e.g., quality of schooling). Thus, the measure of discrimination obtained using the econometric model is an estimated, not an actual, measure of discrimination and should be taken as broadly representative of the extent of wage discrimination. Despite the shortcomings of this measure, the discrimination component offers a robust measure of the relative wages workers are paid on the basis of their sex and race.

The results in table 4 decompose the wage gap between workers using white men as the comparison group. The analyses conducted in each of the four decades yield a remarkably consistent finding. After adjusting for education, occupation, hours worked, and other standard predictors of wages, the main explanation for the racial and gender gap in wages is discrimination. In every decade since 1960, similarly qualified Afro-Brazilians and women are paid less than white men in urban São Paulo workplaces.

Differences in individual level qualifications (composition) explain only a small part of the wage gap between the groups. The portion of the wage gap due to compositional disadvantages has remained fairly steady for Afro-Brazilian women and men over time. Since 1980, compositional differences explain about 28 percent of the gap for Afro-Brazilian men and about 12–13 percent of the gap for Afro-Brazilian women. As seen in the previous findings on education and occupation, despite Afro-Brazilians absolute gains in the labor market, the relative gap between blacks and whites has remained remarkably consistent over time. The stability of the racial wage gap due to compositional differences reflects this relative inequality. White women, in contrast, have outpaced all other groups in education and gained greater access to higher paying occupations. As a result, the percentage of the wage gap explained for white women in terms of a male compositional advantage has been negative since 1980.

For four decades, between 37 and 42 percent of the wage gap between Afro-Brazilian and white men is explained by unequal pay. Among women, wage discrimination has increased. In 1960, discrimination accounts for 53 percent of the wage gap between Afro-Brazilian women and white men and 80 percent of white women’s differential pay. By 2000 the proportion of the wage differential attributable to discrimination increased to 63 percent for Afro-Brazilian women and 115 percent

Table 4 *Decomposition of Average Wage Differentials for Urban Workers by Race and Sex, São Paulo, 1960–2000 (Base Group = White Men)*

Component	Afro-Brazilian Men				Afro-Brazilian Women				White Women			
	1960	1980	1991	2000	1960	1980	1991	2000	1960	1980	1991	2000
Composition	32.19	28.84	27.74	27.65	23.17	12.03	11.68	13.01	7.98	-3.45	-6.50	-8.16
Discrimination	42.22	37.32	39.85	41.37	52.76	45.09	51.61	63.02	79.67	90.71	99.80	114.77
Interaction	25.58	33.84	32.41	31.22	24.07	42.88	36.71	23.97	12.35	12.73	6.70	-6.58
Total Difference	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Sources: Public Use Samples from the 1960, 1980, 1991 and 2000 demographic censuses.

for white women.¹⁷ These estimates show that there is a persistent and perhaps even increasing cost to being black and female in Brazil. Despite absolute gains in education and jobs, Afro-Brazilians and women do not receive equal rewards to their human capital in the labor market.

CONCLUSION

Labor market research remains one of the most insightful approaches to understanding social inequality in contemporary Latin America. Just as the pioneering studies of women and work challenged our perceptions about the development process, studies of the ways in which race and sex intersect challenge our understanding of the collective roles these attributes play in stratifying societies. Women's and black's unequal treatment in the labor market influences many processes, including the distribution of jobs, earnings, social status, and economic security. These employment outcomes are central to creating and reducing social and economic inequality.

Afro-Brazilians and women have made remarkable progress over the past four decades in securing hard-won legal rights and in gaining access to the highest levels of schooling, entrance into higher paying occupations, and narrowing the intraethnic gender wage gap. Yet, women and Afro-Brazilians are still paid less than similarly qualified white men.

17. The percentage of the wage gap attributed to discrimination for white women exceeds 100 percent in 2000 because both the compositional and interaction terms totaled a negative 14.7 percent indicating that white women had higher levels of human capital relative to white men.

Discrimination by race and gender is not restricted to the poor. Even among those with the highest level of education, wage inequality exists. Wage discrimination has remained fairly steady for Afro-Brazilian men and actually increased for Afro-Brazilian and white women working in urban São Paulo, one of Latin America's most dynamic economies. This pattern of absolute improvement but relative inequality has long characterized Brazil's development.

Forty years of economic growth in São Paulo has neither erased the relative gap between whites and Afro-Brazilians nor has it favored women's equal pay. Racial and gender divides are not transitory as predicted by early development theories. There is every reason to believe that the development process in Brazil may actually increase racial and gender inequality especially among those at the top part of the social structure. As Darity and Mason (1998) have suggested, discrimination is even more likely to occur when minority workers' access to the higher paying jobs cannot be denied on the basis of their observed productive attributes. Studying the intersection of race and gender in the workplace shows how women and blacks are simultaneously integrated into the economy but excluded through processes of discrimination.

Despite women's and black's shared disadvantages, the relative differentials between groups vary. Generic discussion of gender often conflates white and minority women as sharing a status relative to men. This study finds that the predictors and outcomes of wage disadvantages facing Afro-Brazilian and white women are different. Likewise, generic discussion of race often conflates minority women and men as sharing a status relative to whites. I find that the barriers to racial equality are not the same for women and men. The two explanations of earnings inequality that I examined, changes in workers' human capital investments and changes in the returns to human capital, offer theoretically competing explanations for the persistence of racial and gender earnings inequality among workers and a window onto the race/gender nexus.

Consistent with the human capital perspective, I found substantial although declining differences in workers' wage-related characteristics over the past four decades. Unequal levels of education and occupational segregation are important in explaining racial wage gaps in urban São Paulo, but such racial differences explain a higher portion of inequality in pay for men than for women. Consistent with the discriminatory pay structure explanation, I found statistically significant differences in the wages paid to equally qualified black and white workers. Yet, racial discrimination by employers varies by sex. Thus, a generic account of race-based differences does not accurately describe the situation of either Afro-Brazilian women or men, in part as a result of the higher level of discrimination that Afro-Brazilian women confront.

As for the gender gap, human capital differences were irrelevant in explaining sex-based differences in pay for white women and have had a declining effect on Afro-Brazilian women's wages since 1960. Employers penalize women of both races, independent of their human capital characteristics, by paying lower rates of return for women's work-related characteristics relative to white men. Surprisingly, white women were the most discriminated against of all groups. Since 1980 discrimination has accounted for the entire wage gap between white women and men. Sex discrimination is therefore unequal in magnitude within each racial group. Thus, a generic account of gender differences in pay cannot accurately explain the situation of either Afro-Brazilian or white women. These findings make clear that analyses of labor market inequality and policies designed to address such inequality must consider how gender and race *jointly* determine labor market outcomes.

The scarcity of statistical data on race and ethnicity is one explanation for the limited information on race in the literature on women and work in Latin America. In 2000 only 12 Latin American nations gathered census data on race and ethnicity (Buvinic 2003). Early feminist research on Latin America that challenged traditional assumptions about the sexual division of labor was also concerned with the scarcity of data on women. These scholars and activists raised questions that directly resulted in the improved measurement and collection of data on women's work (Aguiar 1986). Just as feminists lobbied for additional and better data on women, so too are black activists, scholars and policy makers throughout Latin America and the Caribbean calling for additional national level data on race and ethnicity. The United Nations and the Inter-American Development Bank convened an international conference in 2000 to discuss the need for racial data in Latin American censuses (Andrews 2004). Improving the quality of information on race and ethnicity is a basic step governments can take to measure and counter social exclusion.

Census data, however, tell us nothing about the concrete practices by which Afro-Brazilians and women are excluded from jobs and higher wages. Neither do census data give priority to social agency. By emphasizing process (rather than outcomes) and human agency, participatory research and qualitative approaches are also needed to further our understanding of racial and gender intersections in the workplace. Still more can be learned from additional empirical studies that focus on shifts in the industrial structure of the Brazilian economy as a source of racial and gender inequality. Despite the need for additional studies, the findings from this research have important implications for policy makers and activists working to improve the lives of women and Afro-Brazilians.

Discrimination in the labor market is a shared experience that should unite feminists and black activists in their struggle for social justice.

The discrimination that white middle class women confront demonstrates that inequality is not solely a product of race and class in Brazil. Rather, labor market discrimination cuts across gender, race, and class boundaries. Hence, gender and racial activism need not be incompatible. For purposes of social equity, black activists, feminists, and the state together must address wage discrimination. The Brazilian government's endorsement of antidiscrimination laws in 1988 and affirmative action policies in 2001 suggests that arguments about the connections between race, gender, equality, and democracy are salient and persuasive.

There remains, however, a deep chasm between the federal antidiscrimination laws passed in 1988 and their effective enforcement. It is unlikely that wage discrimination will disappear without additional governmental and collective intervention. Activists must rally to ensure that employers adhere to labor discrimination laws by strengthening current enforcement mechanisms and identifying necessary judicial reforms to encourage workers to seek reparation if their labor rights are violated. A further priority is to examine the potential for existing laws to actually limit women's employment opportunities. For example, maternity protection laws and some child care provision laws may work to raise the costs of female labor relative to male labor. These factors suggest that activists and policy makers need to review policies and laws currently in place so that the benefits accorded to workers, are, as far as possible, gender and race neutral. Strong, carefully conceived, and well-implemented policies and laws can be effective in reducing racial and gender labor market discrimination. Such laws will have little effect, however, if their target population has limited knowledge of them. Women and Afro-Brazilians must be informed about labor rights. Together, black activists and feminist groups could assist in promoting worker education about labor laws.

Overall interventions that focus on raising educational attainment and access to better paying jobs of the entire work force, Afro-Brazilians in particular, should alleviate some racial and gender differences in labor market inequality. Nevertheless, this analysis shows that Brazil's exemplary affirmative action legislation designed to increase Afro-Brazilian's access to education and jobs will not alone eliminate racial wage differences. Women have surpassed men in educational levels, but this has not assured either white or Afro-Brazilian women access to better wages. The best intervention for the elimination of gender and racial labor market inequality is to end discrimination. Unequal pay on the basis of sex and skin color has far-reaching economic and social costs, which both impede the development of Brazil and ensure continued racial and gender stratification.

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