New Data, New Knowledge, New Politics

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Race, Color, and Class Inequality in Latin America

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The political landscape and data infrastructure for social scientific research on race, color, and class inequality in Latin America changed dramatically in the first two decades of the twenty-first century. As recently as the 1980s, the majority of Latin American countries lacked any nationally representative survey data that included information about individual racial identification or color. The absence of this data in most of the region obstructed systematic and comparative research on racial inequality in the Americas. By 2015, in contrast, large-scale social surveys that included information about racial identification or color existed in almost every country in the region.

The "datascape" for research and analysis of racial and color and class stratification in Latin American countries has been transformed; this transformation has opened the gates to a flood of new research about racial, color, and class inequalities in Latin America. New data are generating new knowledge about the connections between socioeconomic and ethnoracial inequalities. New data are also fueling political conflicts, as debates about how to count and classify ethnic and racial populations in large-scale social surveys become inextricably tied to broader and long-standing political struggles over rights and redress for historically marginalized populations.

This chapter describes the rapid reconfiguration of the political and data landscape for social scientific research on racial, color, and class inequality in Latin American at the beginning of the twenty-first century. First, it provides an overview of the transformation of available data for research on racial and color inequality in Latin America in recent years. Considered in historical perspective, the very existence of these new data represents a significant political accomplishment. Next, some of the most striking findings about race, color, and class inequality, and the relationships between these axes of stratification, that have emerged from the initial wave of analyses of these data, are explored. The chapter concludes with a preliminary assessment of the implications of both the unprecedented data collection efforts and the flood of new empirical findings for the politics of ethnoracial and class inequality in contemporary Latin America.

NEW DATA

The first decades of the twenty-first century witnessed an unprecedented transformation of the data infrastructure for research on racial, ethnic, and color inequalities in Latin America. Most significantly, almost every state in the region modified its national census to collect new data about ethnoracial identification and/or color of citizens. Across Latin America, states that had long refrained from collecting racial statistics reversed course, embracing new questions that capture lines of ethnoracial distinction within their populations.

The rather sudden regional adoption of ethnic and racial data collection on censuses in the first decades of the twenty-first century is summarized in figure 1. The shaded cells in figure 1 indicate that a country took a national census in that decade. A white circle indicates that the census included a question that made indigenous populations statistically visible in some way. A black circle indicates that the census included a question that made black or Afro-descendent populations statistically visible in some way.

As figure 1 clearly shows, indigenous and Afro-descendent Latin Americans have become increasingly visible in official statistics produced by Latin American census agencies. In the 1980s, approximately half of Latin American countries counted indigenous populations on censuses. By 2010, almost all of these countries had done so or planned to do so in the next census. With respect to Afro-descendent populations, in the 1980s, only two countries—Brazil and Cuba—included census questions that differentiated these citizens from others in the population. By 2010, nearly every Latin American country included a census question to count black or Afro-descendent individuals, or planned to include such a question in its next census.

To put these recent changes in perspective, remember that Latin America is a region where states spent much of the twentieth century cultivating the idea that categorical racial distinctions either do not exist in their societies, or that such distinctions are socially irrelevant. Most Latin Americans today have lived their entire lives without ever being asked to fill in a "race" box on an official form. This is of course very different from the United States. Anyone who has grown up in the United States has had many opportunities to report their racial or ethnic group membership.

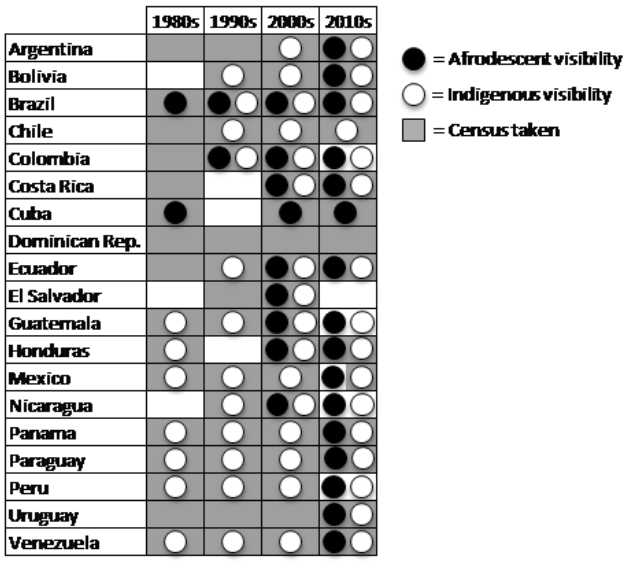
In contrast, Latin American states have long encouraged their citizens to see ethnoracial differences as a matter of *degree* rather than categorical difference. Throughout the region, generations of children have been taught that race mixture—and thus the blurriness of ethoracial boundaries—is what created and defines them as a distinctive people, as a nation among others. In Mexico, for example, children have been taught that the nation was created through the mixture of Spaniards and Indians; to be Mexican is to be *mestizo*. In Brazil, national myths championed the fusion of Africans, Indians, and Portuguese into a new human type; as Brazilians, children are told, they are racially mixed. In Cuba, the story goes, "a nation for all" was forged through the absorption of differences; Cuban race and nationality are declared to be one and the same. Even in Chile and Argentina, where national ideologies celebrate the supposed racial and cultural sameness of present-day populations, children learn origin myths that credit historic *mestizaje* for the creation of Chileans or Argentines as distinct national types.

Of course these stories of nation-making through mixture were not ideologically neutral; they usually smuggled in a preference for the white or European component of the mix. This whitening ideal is captured in a famous painting from Brazil, "The Redemption of Ham" or "Redenção de Cã" by Modesto Brocos (see http://mnba.gov.br/portal/component/k2/item/192-reden%C3%A7%C3%A3o-de-c%C3%A3.html), that depicts mixture as an intergenerational process through which the Brazilian nation formed, and also as a process through which the population is somehow—miraculously—whitened. The painting shows a black grandmother thanking God for her white grandson. The baby, who personifies Brazil's future, is the progeny of her *mulata* daughter and white partner, who looks on proudly.

Latin American national mythologies have long championed the idea that distinctive nations were formed through the mixture and thus *dissolution* of categorical differences. Against this history, the recent embrace of race, ethnicity, and color questions on national censuses appears as a major ideological shift. Instead of insisting on the blending and disappearance of ethnoracial distinctions in their populations, Latin American states are now officially recognizing and institutionalizing clear, categorical divides (Loveman 2014, ch. 6, 7).[1]

The region-wide embrace of ethnic and racial data collection is not limited to national censuses. A growing number of nationally representative annual household surveys as well as other smaller-scale surveys now include measures of color or ethnoracial identity. Together with data from national censuses, publicly and privately funded data collection initiatives are generating nationally representative surveys that measure ethnoracial distinctions in a variety of ways. These surveys include Brazil's Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílio (PNAD); Guatemala's Encuesta Nacional de Condiciones de Vida (2006); Mexico's Household Income and Expenditure Survey (ENIGH) for 2002–2010; Peru's Encuesta Nacional de Hogares (ENAHO 2004); Bolivia's Encuesta Continua de Hogares; Ecuador's Sistema Integrado de Encuestas de Hogares (SIEH 2006); as well as the Project on Race and Ethnicity in Latin America (PERLA) surveys for Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Peru, and AmericasBarometer surveys for most countries in the region. Taken together, new census data and the growing number of other household surveys that include questions

Figure 1: Questions about Race, Color, or Ethnicity in Latin American Censuses, 1980–2010s



The shaded cells indicate that a country took a national census in that decade. A white circle indicates that the census included a question that made indigenous population statistically visible. A black circle indicates that the census included a question that made black or Afro-descendent populations statistically visible. A white cell with circles indicates that the census agency announced plans to include questions that would make Afro-descendent and/or indigenous populations visible in the next census. Source: Loveman 2014, 253.

about race, color, and/or ethnicity have fundamentally altered the existing datascape for research on ethnoracial and class inequality in the Americas in comparative perspective.

What caused the embrace of racial and ethnic data collection by almost all Latin American states in recent years? Existing explanations point to the instrumental role of mobilization by Afro-descendent and indigenous movements and strategic collaboration with international organizations (de Popolo 2008; Htun 2004; Hooker 2005; Hooker 2009; Loveman 2014; Nobles 2000; Paschel 2010; Paschel 2016). Activists in Colombia and Brazil took the lead in making census questions and categories a pivotal stake in broader political struggles for recognition, rights, and redress for black citizens. In countries where national political elites resisted activists' calls to introduce racial or ethnic data collection, international activist networks and international organizations played critical roles in pressuring national statistics agencies to introduce reforms. The pressure on national statistics agencies to add new ethnic or racial questions to censuses took varied forms, ranging from encouragement to voluntarily adopt "best practices" introduced through international conferences and workshops, to more coercive mechanisms such as conditions attached to loans from multilateral lending institutions for funding ongoing census operations.

The politics of census reform differed in each Latin American country, reflecting distinct histories of black and indigenous mobilization, relationships of activists to the political regimes in power at the national level, and the relative status of national governments in the regional and international system of states. Yet by the 2010s, across Latin America—with few exceptions—blacks and indigenous peoples were enumerated as such in national censuses and other national social surveys. For the majority of Latin American countries, the statistical visibility of race, color, and ethnic identity in national surveys departs from decades of de facto and de jure insistence on the absence or inconsequence of ethnic or racial distinctions within national populations. In the first decades of the twenty-first century, a prolonged era of official color-blindness in Latin America ended.

NEW KNOWLEDGE

The availability of nationally representative survey data with information about the racial, color, and ethnic composition of populations across almost all of Latin America is transforming understanding of the significance of ethnoracial and color distinctions for stratification dynamics in the region. Social scientists who research inequality in Latin America are witnessing—and contributing to—a veritable "avalanche" of new statistics pertaining to race and ethnicity in the region.[2]

Three broad lines of inquiry have motivated the initial wave of research using newly available ethnic and racial population data. First, a number of studies aim to describe the size and characteristics of ethnically and racially identifiable subpopulations across the region. For some countries, such as Brazil and Mexico, scholars have had access to large-scale datasets that include either direct identity questions or questions about language use that have enabled estimates of African-descendent or indigenous populations for many years. In these countries, new data sources are allowing deeper and more nuanced analyses of the characteristics of black or indigenous populations, as measured in various ways. For several other countries in the region, however, it has been decades or longer since the state has collected ethnic or racial population data of any kind. The current wave of surveys can establish new empirical baselines for producing basic descriptive facts about the "composition" of Latin American populations.

In practice, producing simple descriptive statistics based on survey results is anything but straightforward. Describing what the data reveal about the composition of Latin American populations is both technically complicated and politically fraught. Indeed, perhaps the most significant discovery from descriptive accounts of survey results to date is how much our understanding of the size and characteristics of ethnically or racially defined populations in the Americas hinges on survey design.

The sensitivity of descriptive statistics on ethnoracial population composition in Latin America to different question formats and categories is a major focus of current research. A few examples of initial descriptive findings from new survey data reveal why research on how survey design affects survey responses is both scientifically important and politically contentious.

Figure 2 shows Sulmont and Callirgos's (2014,152) analysis of the size of the indigenous population of Peru according to a variety of different questions and response options included in the 2010 PERLA survey. The results show that the indigenous population ranges from less than 5% to more than 35% of Peru's population depending on how "indigenous" is defined.

A similar phenomenon is evident in descriptive analyses of recent survey results from Brazil. The size of Brazil's black population varies widely—from less than 10% to nearly 60% of the total population—depending on the criteria analysts used to define blackness. Figure 3 reproduces the findings of Silva and Paixão (2014, 191), based on analysis of the 2010 PERLA survey for Brazil, which shows how different survey questions and criteria

yield different descriptive pictures of the relative size of the black population of Brazil.

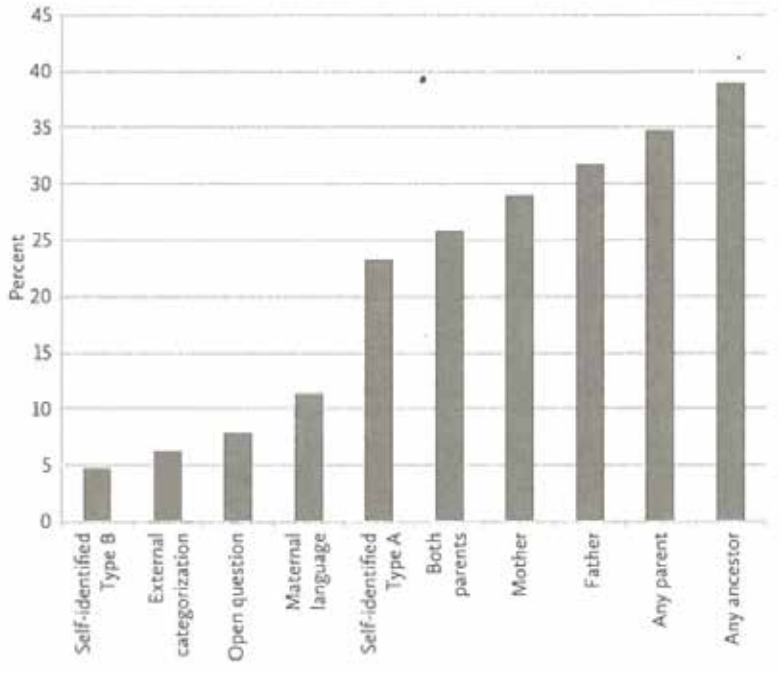
As a final example, figure 4 reproduces Villareal's (2014, 788) findings that show how the size of Mexico's indigenous population varies dramatically depending on whether it is measured using a self-identification question or a question about indigenous language use.

The tremendous sensitivity of basic descriptive information about the size of Latin America's indigenous and Afro-descendent populations to the way surveys measure these populations has important scientific and political implications. For social science, these descriptive results confirm theoretical understandings of race and ethnicity as social constructs that are multifaceted and contextually defined. For politics, these results expose how and why the politics of inequality in the region are not only struggles over who *gets* what, but also, and essentially, struggles over who *is* what, and crucially, over who gets to decide the criteria for defining who is what.

The choice of measures or indicators of ethnoracial identification, beyond its methodological implications, is an inherently political question. For social scientists, this means that rather than decide by definitional fiat that one measure is superior to others, it is important to investigate the range of variation in survey responses across different measures as a significant line of inquiry in its own right (Loveman, Muniz, and Bailey 2012). These studies illuminate how racial and ethnic boundaries and identities are delineated and defined in different ways in different parts of Latin America. Also, these studies promise to displace overly general, stylized facts about "race in Latin America" with more refined and contextual descriptive knowledge of how social divisions and individual and collective identities are constructed and reinforced along ethnoracial lines in particular parts of the region.

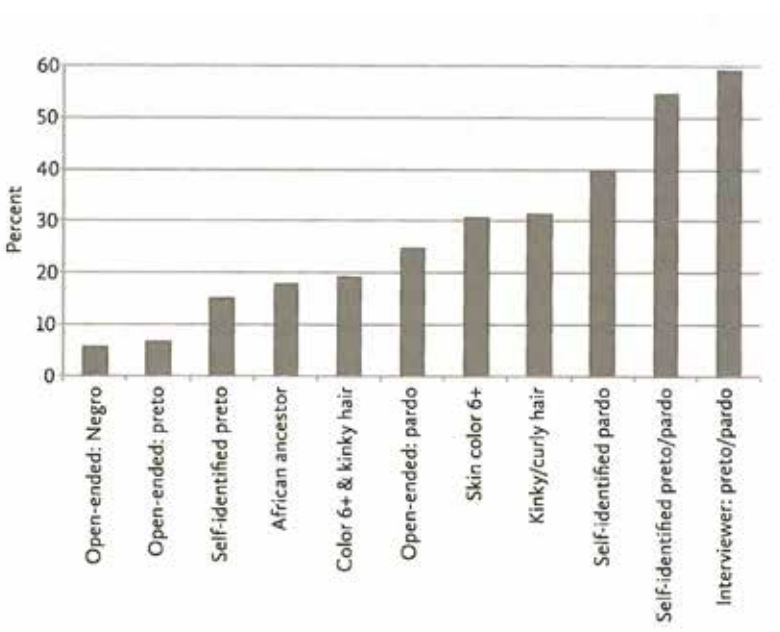
Basic descriptive research on the ethnoracial composition of Latin American populations—and specifically, research that is reflexively sensitive to "instrument effects" on population counts—is critical to advance social scientific understanding of contemporary Latin American societies. With the wave of newly available data, this research promises

Figure 2: Percent of Respondents Indigenous or with Indigenous Ancestry Using Various Criteria, Peru



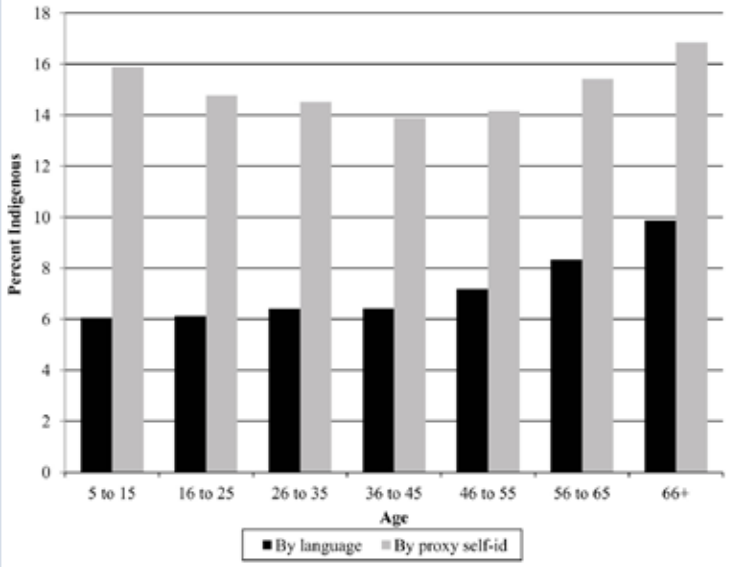
Source: Sulmont and Callirgos's (2014,152).

Figure 3: Percent Afro-descendant according to Various Criteria, Brazil



Source: Silva and Paixão (2014, 191), based on analysis of the 2010 PERLA survey for Brazil.

Figure 4: Percent Classified as Indigenous Based on Language Proficiency and Proxy Self-Identification by Age Group, Mexico



Source: From Villareal (2014, 788).

to improve our comparative knowledge of the empirical differences and similarities in the social understandings and consequences of ethnoracial distinctions across the region.

A second major line of research using newly available ethnic, racial, and color data for Latin American populations aims to estimate the magnitude of inequalities among subpopulations on a variety of social and economic well–being indicators. A fundamental finding emerging from this research is that inequalities by color are especially pervasive across the region; darker skin tone is a significant liability throughout almost all of Latin America. In several countries, skin color stratification is more severe than stratification across categorical ethnic or racial divides, even as categorical inequalities are themselves severe in much of the region. A growing number of quantitative analyses of nationally representative surveys confirm pervasive racial, ethnic, and color stratification in Latin America. In case there is any lingering doubt: Latin American societies are neither "racial democracies" nor are they color-blind.

Three examples drawn from important recent studies illustrate how newly available data provide analytic leverage for investigating ethnoracial, color, and class inequalities in the Americas in comparative perspective. Figure 5 reproduces the results from a pioneering article by Bailey, Saperstein, and Penner published in *Demographic Research* (2014).

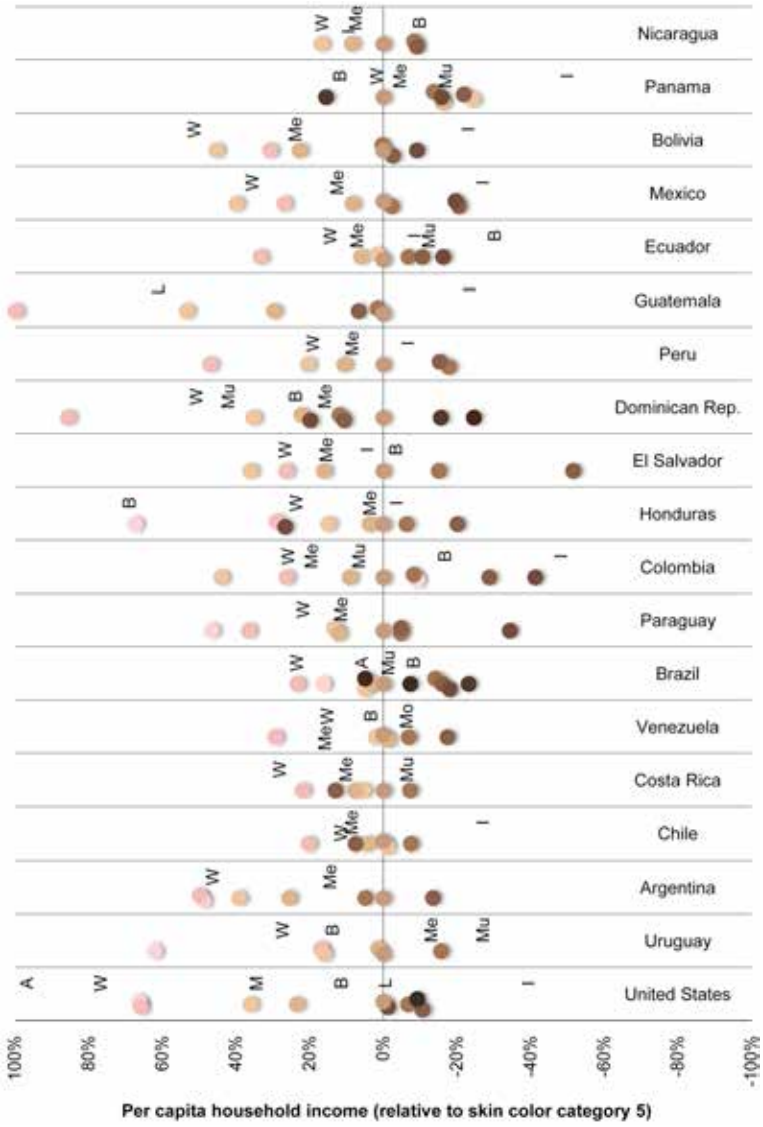
Figure 5 draws on a combination of data from the 2012 General Social Survey in the United States and the 2012 AmericasBarometer surveys in Latin America, to show income inequality by skin tone and categorical race (self-identification) across the Americas. This graph is the first ever to present comparative data on both categorical and skin-tone inequality simultaneously, for 19 countries in the region, including the United States. The graph shows that in most countries a clear hierarchy exists from lighter to darker skin tone, as well as for categorical race. The graph also reveals significant variation in the magnitude of disparities between individuals of different self-identified ethnoracial categories and between individuals with different skin tones. Importantly, the graph also indicates that the hierarchical order by skin tone or racial classification is not the same in every country. This finding opens new directions for more refined comparative research.

Comparative research on ethnic, racial, color, and class inequalities in Latin America has also advanced through analyses of survey data collected by the Project on Ethnicity and Race in Latin America (PERLA), directed by sociologist Edward Telles. Figure 6 (Telles and Flores, 2014, 228) and figure 7 (Telles and Flores 2014, 225) reproduce summary findings from the PERLA surveys of the Brazilian, Colombian, Mexican, and Peruvian populations with respect to the relationships between skin color, ethnoracial self-identification, and years of education.

The summary findings of disparities in years of education in the four countries surveyed in the PERLA project reveal a consistent pattern of color stratification. Lighter skin tone is associated with more years of education in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru. Regarding the association between years of education and categorical ethnoracial identification, however, the findings are less consistent. For example, in Brazil, people who self-identify as "white" are significantly more likely than those who self-identify with other racial labels to have more years of education; this is not the case for those who self-identify as "white" in Colombia, Mexico, or Peru. The inconsistency in stratification dynamics by categorical ethnoracial identification versus skin tone gradation makes clear that these are not socially synonymous markers of distinction. Categorical and gradational social distinctions clearly operate differently, in close but nonsymmetrical relation to each other, in the social production of educational inequalities.

Overall, analyses of new survey data are revealing an ever-clearer picture of Latin American societies that are

Figure 5: Inequality in Income by Skin Color and Categorical Race across the Americas



Source: Bailey, Saperstein, and Penner (2014, 739): "Source: United States – 2012 General Social Survey; all others – 2012 AmericasBarometer. Notes: The mean per capita household income of skin color category five serves as the reference (0%) for each country. Skin color points are shaded to match the category number on the color scales. Racial categories are denoted by letters – W = white/blanca, B = black/negra, A = Asian/amarela, M = multiracial (US only), L = Latina (US only) or Ladina (Guatemala only), Me = Mestiza, Mo = Morena, Mu = Mulata, I = Indígena/American Indian. Countries are arranged according to the percent of the sample that falls into the lightest 3 skin color categories (highest to lowest). Only race and color categories with 30 or more respondents are reported."

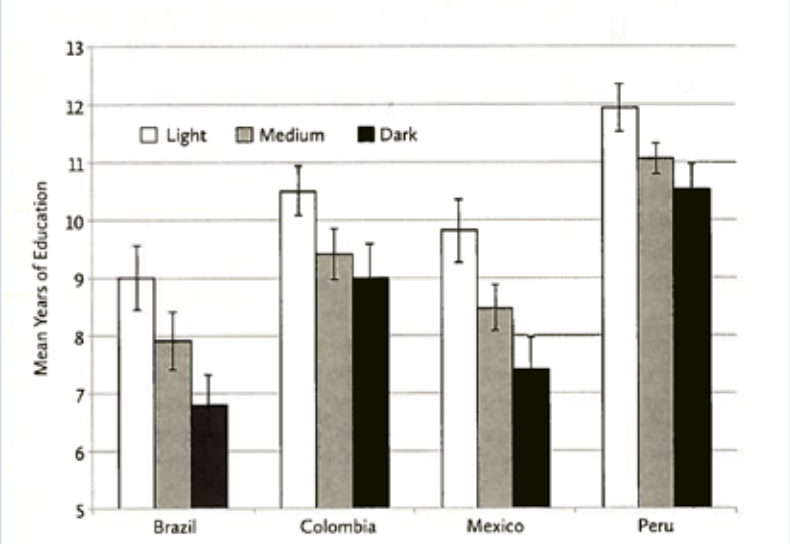
systematically stratified by skin color and unequal by self-identified or other-identified ethnoracial status. The key findings from the first wave of research using this recent ethnic and racial survey data in Latin America demonstrate that individuals who have darker skin, and/or who identify as indigenous or of African descent, tend to be worse off, on average, than lighter-skinned, self-identified whites or *mestizos* on a range of indicators of well-being. These findings hold across most of Latin America and across a growing number of indicators of individual well-being, including income, education, and health (Pereira and Telles 2014).

At the same time, as the three previous examples make clear, patterns gleaned from new survey data establish that advancing social scientific understanding of relationships between ethnoracial, color, and class inequality in the region requires that researchers move beyond treating "Latin America" as a singular case. Even as scholars have documented and quantified pervasive ethnoracial and color inequalities across Latin America, their analyses have raised a host of new questions about the connections between different bases and axes of social stratification within individual countries and in comparative perspective. The emerging research exposes marked variation across countries in the absolute magnitudes of ethnoracial and color inequalities in key indicators of well-being. The research to date also reveals substantial variation across countries in relationships between categorical ethnoracial inequality, color inequality, and class inequality. This variation can and should be leveraged in future comparative research to improve theoretical understanding of the patterned ways that ethnoracial, color, and class distinctions intersect and interact to produce stratification dynamics in the Americas.

A third line of inquiry made possible and necessary by the avalanche of new racial, ethnic, and color data on Latin American populations builds on the key findings from the first two lines of inquiry to investigate how statistical estimates of inequality are affected by the ways that racial, ethnic, and color data are collected, coded, and analyzed. This research seeks to improve the analytic reflexivity of quantitative analyses of ethnoracial inequalities to better understand the underlying social processes that fuel observed statistical disparities. Increased analytic reflexivity would also better inform evolving scientific and political debates about research and policy related to ethnoracial inequality in the region.

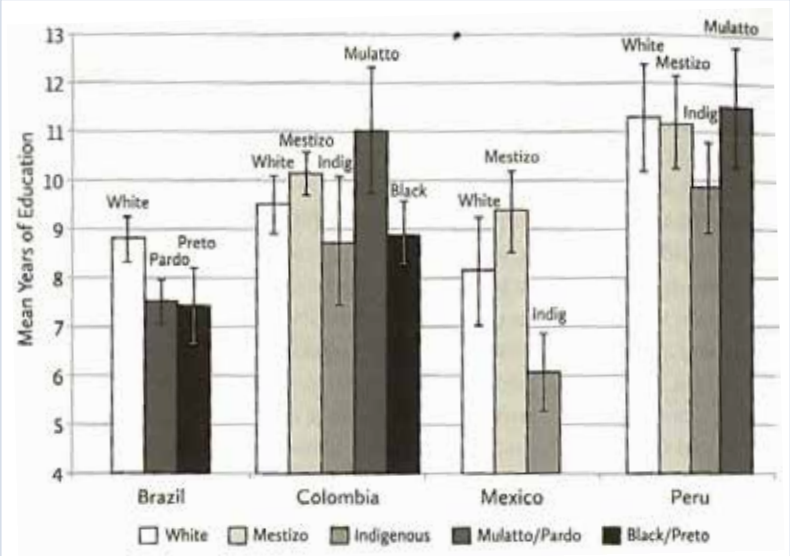
How much do statistical estimates of ethnoracial or color inequality depend on the way these concepts are defined and measured in social surveys? When and why do

Figure 6: Mean Years of Education by Skin Color in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru



Source: Telles and Flores, 2014, p.228

Figure 7: Mean Years of Education by Ethnoracial Self-Identification in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru



Source: Telles and Flores (2014, 225)

different measures produce radically different estimates of the severity of ethnoracial disparities? To what extent does the possible nonindependence of ethnoracial identification and social class (the "endogeneity problem") affect statistical estimates of racial or color inequality in Latin American countries? Can modeling strategies that compare and combine multiple measures of ethnoracial distinction help researchers determine whether (or when or for whom) social status may shape ethnoracial identification, rather than (or in addition to) the reverse? These and related questions confront a growing number of researchers who aim to make use of the wealth of new ethnoracial data on recent population surveys in Latin America to investigate racial, ethnic, color, and class inequalities in the region.

Several recent studies investigate how estimates of ethnoracial inequality vary depending on the measure of race or ethnicity used in the analysis. To cite just a few examples, Villareal (2014) found that statistical evidence of disparities in educational outcomes in Mexico looks much more severe when language is the criteria for defining who is counted as indigenous as opposed to self-identification as indigenous. Bailey, Loveman, and Muniz (2013) found that income inequality along racial lines in Brazil appears more severe when estimated using a skin-tone measure than when using the race categories used in the census. And the country-specific contributions to Telles' (2014) edited volume, *Pigmentocracies*, present similar results for outcomes including occupation, education, and perceptions of discrimination in Mexico, Colombia, and Peru.

The discovery of substantial differences in estimates of ethnoracial inequality across different measures is a promising source of analytic leverage to gain insight into underlying mechanisms that influence individuals' self-identification and statistically observable ethnoracial disparities (Bailey, Loveman, and Muniz 2013). Direct comparison of results across models that use different measures is one potential source of analytic leverage to deepen understanding of underlying social processes that generate aggregate inequality along different axes of distinction. Another source is the development of innovative modeling strategies that use different combinations of measures within a single model or in a "nested" series of models. These strategies may help researchers identify and quantify the extent to which ethnoracial identification and various social status indicators are independent of each other in different contexts or for different subpopulations. In turn, this may help researchers determine whether or when or for whom money—or

education or occupation or wealth or good health—"whitens," while also estimating how being perceived as "white" shapes the likelihood of individuals having good health, wealth, occupation, or education.

The possibility that mobility across ethnic or racial boundaries may be a more or less regular occurrence, and one that is tied in nonrandom ways to changes in social status or well-being, raises challenges for modeling strategies that are traditionally used to study racial inequality. Typically, these models require the assumption that racial categorization of individuals is both fixed over time and insensitive to changes in other status characteristics (i.e., the models assume that the independent variables are independent of the dependent variable). The wealth of new ethnic, racial, and color data for Latin American populations invites the development of innovative modeling strategies designed for contexts when the assumption of fixed, status-independent ethnoracial identification of individuals cannot be assumed to hold.

In sum: the wealth of new nationally representative survey data with information about ethnicity, race, and color is stimulating important new lines of research on the composition and stratification of Latin American populations. In addition to using new data to generate new knowledge about the region's populations, researchers are also investigating how the knowledge they produce is strongly shaped by the methods used to collect, code, and analyze individual-level data on ethnoracial distinctions. Recent research in this vein makes clear that to understand the sociological meaning of statistical significance when dealing with ethnic and racial population data, it is essential to understand the social and cultural processes that influence how the raw data are produced.

Looking forward, additional research needs to assess the implications of different approaches to collection and analysis of racial, ethnic, and color data for empirical description and theoretical understanding of stratification dynamics in the Americas. This will inform public policy debates about how best to track and counteract these dynamics.

NEW POLITICS

New ethnic and racial population data are not only fueling the creation of new knowledge about ethnoracial inequalities in Latin America; they are also helping to define new sites and stakes of political struggle about recognition, rights, and redress for historically marginalized individuals and communities. The history of ethnoracial domination in Latin America is long, deep, and multifaceted, and so is the history of struggles against it. In several countries in the region, recent initiatives to produce and analyze population data by race, ethnicity, and color have opened new fronts of political contestation within broader, ongoing efforts to right past wrongs and ameliorate contemporary inequalities.

In assessing the political implications of the new racial and ethnic datascape in Latin America, it is important to underscore that in much of the region the existence of these data represents a significant political accomplishment. In several countries, the inclusion of new questions and categories on national censuses has made indigenous and Afro-descendent individuals statistically "visible" for the first time in decades, or in some contexts, for the first time ever (Loveman 2014).[3] In part, the existence of new ethnoracial population data is politically significant in marking a victory for communities that have long struggled to gain official recognition of enduring ethnoracial distinctions within Latin American populations.

The increased availability of ethnoracial population data in most of Latin America is partly a product of hard-fought political battles to renegotiate relationships between states and citizens in the region. At the same time, new processes of ethnoracial data collection are constitutive of new sites and stakes of politics. For example, struggles about official recognition—which ethnoracial categories and boundaries will be officially sanctioned and which will remain officially invisible—cede easily into struggles about representation—who gets to speak on behalf of whom? These latter struggles have shaped the field of social movement organization and ties between nongovernmental organizations, activists, and political parties in some countries in the region.[4]

The availability of ethnoracial population data has also bolstered activists' demands for expanded benefits of social citizenship, including demands for ethnoracially targeted social benefits to redress historical marginalization and/or contemporary discrimination. Affirmative action policies for ethnoracially defined groups are already in place in several Latin American countries, and there is pressure on states from both domestic activists and international organizations to introduce more initiatives of this type in the future. These policies focus on targeted delivery of benefits ranging from health services to housing, poverty alleviation, and political representation. Among the most visible and contentious initiatives have been those focused on affirmative action in higher education.

Quantitative studies of ethnoracial inequalities help justify the introduction of affirmative action programs and also provide a means to monitor statistically observable effects of their implementation. At the same time, affirmative action programs tend to be politically controversial. The introduction of ethnoracially targeted

public policies inevitably raises difficult questions about who qualifies for these programs, who decides who qualifies, and on what basis such determinations are made. In Latin America, these questions are often especially fraught. Against the legacy of nationalist cultural projects that emphasized the blurriness and mixed-ness of Latin American peoples, policies that demand classification of individuals as "black" or "indigenous" raise a host of difficult questions concerning the legitimate criteria and authority to decide among potential beneficiaries.

It remains an open question whether or how the accumulation of quantitative studies documenting pervasive ethnoracial disparities in indicators of income, health, and education will translate into successful political claims for targeted public policies in many countries in the region. In Brazil, the proliferation of these studies in the late 1980s and 1990s supported claims made by the black movement for targeted policy interventions; Brazil became a leader in introducing affirmative action in government employment and university admissions. More recently, however, Brazil has also become a leading example of organized backlash. As ethnoracially targeted social programs spread, controversies about why and how states classify citizens by race or ethnicity will likely escalate. As in the United States, growing opposition to the idea that states might use ethnoracial criteria to differentiate among citizens at all will be seen.

Social policies that explicitly aim to address ethnoracial inequalities through interventions that target ethnoracially defined beneficiaries often draw attention to the political processes that inform the production of ethnoracial data in the first place. Thus, political battles fueled partly by the statistical documentation of ethnoracial inequalities tend to circle back to political battles about the production of ethnoracial statistics per se.

The early twenty-first-century boom in the production of ethnic, racial, and color data on Latin America populations is a major political and social scientific accomplishment, but it is also a politically contentious accomplishment that could well be short-lived. New data have generated new knowledge about ethnic, racial, and color inequalities in Latin American societies; this new knowledge, in turn, has stoked new political battles that have both advanced the claims of ethnoracially defined individuals and communities and given rise to organized opposition to these efforts. Thus, as social scientists continue to analyze the wealth of new population data to advance understanding of the nexus among ethnoracial, color, and class inequalities in Latin America, they must keep the politics of the production of this data within their analytic frame. ▪

NOTES

1. An extended analysis of the recent shift in state practices of ethnic and racial classification of citizens in Latin America can be found in Loveman 2014. This chapter draws in part from sections of Chapters 6 and 7.
2. With a nod to Ian Hacking's "Biopower and the Avalanche of Printed Numbers" Humanities in Society 5 (1982): 279–95.
3. Of course, even as some ethnoracially defined identities and communities have achieved official recognition, many others—such as those that would demarcate individuals of Asian, Lebanese, or Turkish descent—remain statistically invisible in much of the region.
4. For example, see Paschel (2016).

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