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LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN
INEQUALITY REVIEW

Racial and Ethnic Inequality in Latin America

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Abstract

This chapter examines socioeconomic inequality in Latin America through the lens of race and ethnicity. We primarily use national census data from the International Public Use Micro Data Sample (IPUMS). Since censuses use inconsistent measures of race and ethnicity, we also draw on two additional measures from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP). Unlike censuses, LAPOP data offer a more consistent ethnoracial scheme across countries and a unique interviewer-rated skin color measure. Our study shows that black and indigenous populations and those with darker skin color experience educational, income, and occupational disadvantages, even after controlling for their social origins. However, inequality and hierarchical ordering of Afro-descendants, indigenous peoples, mestizos, whites, and others vary across countries. We include an extended examination of educational inequality in Brazil, the region's largest country. The chapter concludes with an exploration of public policy approaches to address black and indigenous disadvantage across Latin America while also highlighting the case of Brazil, where targeted antiracism policy is most advanced.

Social inequality in Latin America is among the world's highest, but its relationship to the region's extensive racial and ethnic diversity is underexamined or often ignored. Afro-descendant, Indigenous, White, and admixed populations of Latin America and the Caribbean stem from European conquest and colonialism in large swaths of North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean (i.e., the "Americas") beginning in the late 15th century. Colonial projects centered on extractivist wealth production that included the genocide and forced labor of millions of Indigenous peoples and the forced transportation and enslavement of additional millions of Africans. The colonial period was later followed by extensive European immigration and the arrival of Asian-origin and other non-European immigrants. As a result, the region's vast colonial legacy is deeply implicated in its contemporary ethnoracial diversity, ethnoracial inequality, and ethnoracial classification schemes.

Of Latin America's roughly 550 million people, Indigenous peoples officially account for approximately 40 million, and Afro-descendants are 114-137 million. These estimates are

based chiefly on national censuses or surveys (when census data are nonexistent or unavailable) (Telles and PERLA, 2014). Thus, Indigenous and Black peoples represent roughly 30% of the overall population of Latin America, ranging from half in Brazil to small minorities in other countries. Moreover, black and indigenous populations are disproportionately among the poorest in contemporary Latin America, almost without exception, and are largely absent among the middle and upper classes.

This chapter employs a comparative lens to examine multiple dimensions of race and ethnicity in twenty Latin American and Caribbean countries in four sections.[1] (1) We describe three principal ethnoracial formation projects behind the historical production of official census statistics in the region: whitening, mestizaje, and multiculturalism. (2) Our core empirical section begins with exploring the region's ethnoracial demography and then examining its ethnoracial inequality in education, income, and occupation. These analyses draw on three racial and ethnic measures: census categories, national survey categories, and skin color.[2] We then highlight the outlier Panamanian case, explore the association of urban residence with inequality across the region, and examine the case of shifting educational inequality in Brazil. (4) In the fourth section, we engage the role of ethnoracial discrimination in generating social stratification across the region. (5) Lastly, we address policy efforts to mitigate racial inequality, especially in Brazil, where antiracism policy may be most advanced and well-documented.

Ethnoracial Formation Projects: A Brief History

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[1] We focus on Spanish and Portuguese Latin America. Other countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region are in and around the Caribbean. Afro-descendants comprise at least 90% these countries' populations with three exceptions (Guyana, Surinam, Trinidad and Tobago).

[2] For the first, we use census data samples for IPUMS, and for the latter two measures, we draw on data from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP). A skin color measure has been included in the LAPOP surveys since 2010 and is increasingly used to understand ethnoracial identification dynamics and social stratification across the Americas (Telles and PERLA 2014; Bailey, Saperstein, and Penner 2014).

Whitening

Social distinctions based on perceived phenotype, ancestry, and culture—markers associated with "race" and ethnicity—have been prominent features of the "New World" throughout its five-hundred-year history. These ethnoracial markers are important because they have come to signify and reflect power dynamics and determine innumerable social outcomes throughout the Americas. [3] The dominance of Europeans and their descendants over non-European ethnoracial populations was absolute, sometimes *de jure* but always *de facto*, and continues today. The region's early colonial history of various iterations of subjugation and enslavement of Indigenous and Afro-descendant populations speaks for itself on that account.

However, ethnoracial markers as social constructions shift in meaning and salience over time and across contexts. For example, during much of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, until independence in the early nineteenth century, Spanish colonial authorities established a *castas* (literally, castes) system defining individuals' proportion of Spanish ancestry for taxation and the assignment of trades and offices. Authorities often used phenotype, especially skin color, as a proxy for ancestry. Over time, through various stages and forms of oppression, the association of European ancestry and "whiteness" became deeply embedded across the region (Acuña Leon and Chavarria Lopez 1991; Shumway 2001; Martínez-Alier 1974; Martinez 2008; Graham 1990). Whiteness, or proximity to it, has conveyed material and symbolic privileges in Latin American society.

Local elites began to suspend *casta* laws with Spain's liberal 1812 constitution, and these laws would fall across the entire region with the independence movements of the 1820s. Moreover, the abolition of slavery in the 19th century shifted and challenged the meaning of ethnoracial markers. But from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century, Latin

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[3] Henceforward, we generally use the descriptive label "ethnoracial" for "race and ethnicity."

American elites became increasingly concerned about their place among modern nation-states in Europe and the United States. Those countries' race science stipulated the biological superiority of a "white race," the inferiority of the "black race," and the degeneracy of "race-mixing." Hence, elites were concerned that the region's large non-white populations and extensive miscegenation would relegate the region's countries to a perpetual second-class status among modern nation-states (Skidmore 1976; Helg 1990, Stepan 1991).

In response, Latin American elites banked on an alternative "race science" in their attempts to portray themselves as largely white or near white. The alternative view stressed neo-Lamarckian ideas about the mutability of "race." Racial formation projects thus promoted "constructive miscegenation" to project population change in the direction of whiteness. It was believed that "white genes" could predominate in the progeny of population admixtures, thereby encouraging gradual cross-generational whitening. Additionally, elites enacted discriminatory immigration policies—recruiting Europeans while constricting non-Europeans—toward constructing a whiter national population. Essentially, countries could whiten their populations, and through whitening, elites could push their burgeoning nations into the ranks of the modern nation-states of the US and Europe (Skidmore 1976; Stepan 1991, FitzGerald and Cook-Martin 2014, Loveman 2014). An ideology of racial whitening became a defining feature of the Latin American landscape and policy. It is also recognizable even today across diverse spheres, such as the marriage market and personal aesthetics (Wade 1997; Telles and PERLA 2014; Osuji 2019).

Mestizaje

By the 1930s, leading thinkers in many Latin American countries would turn the previous racialist thinking about whitening on its head through an overt embrace of ethnoracial population admixture or mestizaje. Earlier race science's undoing was primarily

based on ideas by anthropologist Franz Boas. He argued that so-called racial differences were not rooted in biology but in culture. Boas had a tremendous influence in Latin America as he trained two of the region's influential thinkers in Brazil and Mexico: Gilberto Freyre and Manuel Gamio. Their writings supported novel progressive ideologies that viewed ethnoracial admixture as positive and an essential feature of these new nations. Elites sought to create visions of the nation as homogeneous; in these visions, national or mestizo identities would replace the previous ethnoracial originating populations (cf: Wade 1993, Telles 2004, Knight 1990). For example, mestizaje narratives presented Brazilians, Mexicans, and other national subjects as meta races that fused White, Indigenous, and (sometimes) Black lineages and cultures. Mestizos or "mixed-race" persons came to be considered the ideal or prototypical citizens (cf: Whitten 2004; Knight 1990; Mallon 1992; Skidmore 1976). Mestizo identities (and others alluding to "mixed-race") were widely embraced among large swaths of Latin Americans, even by those who might identify, or be classified by others, as Indigenous, Black, or White (de la Cadena 2004; Telles and PERLA 2014).

Nevertheless, mestizaje ideologies varied within the region (Wade 2009; Telles and Garcia 2013). Mestizaje had particularly low resonance in the perceived White-majority countries of the Southern Cone (Argentina, Uruguay, and, to some extent, Chile) and Costa Rica (Andrews 1980, 2010; Telles and Flores 2013). In contrast, elites in Mexico and Brazil were politically willing and able to promote powerful versions of mestizaje ideologies, partly because their states had strong capacities to disseminate these ideas through educational and cultural campaigns (Mallon 1992; Wade 2009; Telles and Garcia 2013). Moreover, mestizaje thinkers like Manuel Gamio were well positioned in the Mexican state apparatus. Freyre's ideas gained wide popularity in Brazilian literary circles as his project fit well with nation-making and modernizing efforts. Andean countries tended to stress the binary racialized distinctions between the Spanish and the Indigenous; to the extent that mestizaje ideologies

existed, they were weaker and shorter-lasting than in Mexico, the country to which they are sometimes compared (Mallon 1992; de la Cadena 2000; Larson 2004, Sulmont and Callirgos 2014). In Mexico, Colombia, and Peru, the mestizaje narratives stressed Indigenous and Spanish lineage while downplaying or ignoring African contributions, even though these countries had forcibly brought hundreds of thousands of enslaved Africans. This exclusion is arguably more severe in the Dominican Republic, where African features are apparent among much of the population. Its capital, Santo Domingo, was a major slave port, yet Africans are conspicuously absent from the national mestizaje narratives (Candelario 2007; Howard 2001; Roth 2012). On the other hand, mestizaje ideologies in Brazil and Cuba stressed the inclusion of African elements, as well as those of Europeans and Amerindians (Telles 2004; Bailey 2009; de la Fuente 2001; de la Fuente and Bailey 2021).

Mestizaje became a widely shared Latin American experience (Wade 1997, Telles and PERLA 2014). Even though the ideas of mestizaje were considered progressive for much of the 20th century, they also had critics. These alternative voices and scholars argued that these ideologies erased the ethnoracial consciousness of the general population or even implied a cultural or statistical genocide of Black and Indigenous peoples (Nascimento 1979; Bonfil Batalla 1990).

The Multicultural Turn

The context for understanding the character and place of ethnoracial diversity in Latin America is rapidly changing. In challenges to ideologies of whitening and mestizaje, many movement, state, academic, and international actors embrace and promote what is often referred to as the multicultural turn in Latin America (e.g., Hooker 2005; Fontaine 2012; Rahier 2020). This has occurred in the context of an economic transition and growing democratization. The domestically focused economic model of industrial growth of the

1980s, based on import substitution, had been in decline, replaced mainly by neoliberal and globalized economic models. Neoliberalism and globalization have exposed these countries to more significant external pressure and scrutiny on all sides. This included monitoring human rights norms by private international organizations and UN human rights committees, legislation, and forums (Van Cott 2005; Telles 2004), as well as internal pressure from Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and other human rights movements.

In a rapid transition taking less than three decades, nearly all Latin American countries are now considered representative democracies, in contrast to only four of the nineteen in the mid-1970s (Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñan 2014). As part of their democratization process, more countries officially recognize the identities, dignity, and rights of Afro-descendants and Indigenous people; many have declared themselves multicultural in their constitutions (e.g., "multi-ethnic and pluricultural" in Bolivia), providing communal and other rights for the Indigenous and sometimes for Afro-descendants (Hooker 2005; Paschel 2016;). Democratization and greater transparency are increasingly promoted by domestic civil society, including Black and Indigenous movements. These shifting ideological winds have challenged and weakened the hold of ideologies of mestizaje that tended to homogenize the nation and obfuscate ethnoracial stratification.

Since the 1980s, Black and Indigenous movements have emerged as important new global and domestic actors, pointing out and challenging the region's inequalities. Often backed by an international network of human rights supporters and institutions, including UN forums to promote human rights, Indigenous and Black movement activists are increasingly effective at pressing their governments to address persistent social exclusion (Yashar 1998, Paschel and Sawyer 2008). In some cases, new constitutions, laws, and social policies have sought to respond to claims for greater racial, ethnic, and gender justice. In sum, multiculturalism refers to a new stage of ethnoracial thinking or ethnoracial formation in

Latin America. It seeks to recognize, respect, and endorse the region's ethnoracial diversity and hence benefit national belonging and well-being for all. This includes efforts to promote racial justice and diminish racial inequality in Brazil.

Censuses and other official efforts at data collection parallel these stages of ethnoracial formation projects. Early censuses often collected racial data to gauge national progress in whitening (Skidmore 1976, Loveman 2014). The inclusion of ethnoracial queries in some national censuses peaked in the 1920s. These queries were then dropped in many countries for ideological and political reasons tied to mestizaje and because the scientific consensus began to invalidate "race" as a scientific concept and eschew its use as a population category (Loveman 2014).

By the 1990s, though, the collection of ethnoracial data intensified with the shift to multiculturalism and the demand for ethnoracial recognition (Nobles, 2000; Loveman, 2014). Moreover, there was growing social scientific documentation and elite recognition that ethnoracial classifications, though social constructs, were nonetheless associated with or proxied social stratification dynamics. Mainly because of pressure from international human rights groups, international funding organizations such as the World Bank, and international conventions, particularly the International Labor Organization's Convention 169 (Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention), adopted in 1989 and ratified by most Latin American countries by 2000, many Latin American countries began collecting ethnoracial data for the first time in decades (Loveman 2014). In addition, Latin American activists at the 2001 UN Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Xenophobia in Durban, South Africa, demanded that their governments collect data on ethnicity and race (Htun 2004). Having data to document ethnoracial inequities, governments would find it increasingly challenging to sustain national narratives of mestizaje, non-discrimination, racial harmony, and racial equality. Collecting data on race and ethnicity was also considered an essential first step –

arguably, the initial policy shift - in the transition to multiculturalism. Since 2010, almost all countries now have census data for ethnic minorities. Nonetheless, as shown below, variation in census coverage continues to create barriers to a fuller enumeration of the region's ethnoracial diversity and the comparative study of the region's ethnoracial stratification. We now proceed to describe our data before presenting our findings.

Data

Measurement Challenges with Data on Race and Ethnicity

The comparative examination of ethnoracial inequality or stratification in Latin America is especially complex for conceptual, measurement, and data availability reasons. Most notably, there is substantial variation in national census classification schemes, question formats, and response categories. This variation stems partly from the fact that ethnic and racial boundary distinctions are context-bound social constructions that shift over time and across places (Muniz and Bailey, 2022). For example, states' approaches to enumerating ethnic and racial populations in national censuses are ultimately political decisions, and classification schemes reflect state ethnoracial formation projects (Nobles 2000; Loveman 2014). Government statistical agencies also vary on whether they enumerate particular racial and ethnic groups (Telles and PERLA 2014). By doing so, they can make visible or promote specific ethnoracial populations while they may not enumerate others, making them invisible and marginal. States' enumeration decisions thus affect the general engagement of ethnoracial groups. Moreover, as producers of official statistics, these decisions condition scholars' ability to examine patterns of ethnoracial stratification using census data (Loveman, Muniz, and Bailey 2012; Bailey, Loveman, and Muniz 2013). (See Appendix for a detailed discussion about how Latin American Censuses differ in their racial and response categories.)

An additional issue in any empirical analysis of race and ethnicity in Latin America is a relatively high degree of fluidity in determining how best to capture ethnoracial boundaries (compared to more static and defined racial classification in the United States). In Latin America, the boundaries between ethnoracial categories tend to be relatively porous (Muniz and Bailey 2022) as well as heterogeneous across country contexts. Although census categories and classification methods generally provide a solid lens on racial identification at the national level, we also recognize that race and racial classification can be measured in distinct ways. That is, the social boundaries of "race" and "ethnicity" are multidimensional (see Roth 2016), and researchers increasingly leverage multiple dimensions for insights into ethnoracial identification and stratification (Telles and Lim 1998; Telles and PERLA 2014; Bailey, Loveman, and Muniz 2013; Bailey, Saperstein, and Penner 2014). Thus, we employ a triangulation strategy in drawing on various measures or dimensions of race and ethnicity across multiple data sources, most centrally from national censuses and other national surveys. Official national data could be argued better to represent the local specificities of race and ethnicity; nonetheless, we note their shortfalls for broad comparative analysis. Our analytic strategy and comparative approach, then, use both the official national data and two additional measures of ethnoracial composition across several measures of socio-economic inequality. In the following sections, we further describe these and other data we utilize in our analyses.

National Censuses

Our primary data sources are national censuses, which are increasingly frequent and have become the gold standard for measuring race and ethnicity. We analyzed the latest available census data in the International Public Use Micro Sample (IPUMS). Note that some countries still do not ask about indigenous people (Cuba and the Dominican Republic), and

some do not ask about Afro-descendants (Chile). Many began asking about ethnoracial categories only in the 2010 round, with Mexico (regarding afro-descendants) only in 2020. For our analysis of census data, we thus include only those countries with recent data in IPUMS and with ethnoracial variables, with a couple of exceptions we note below. Peru and Venezuela are usually not included because their latest censuses in the IPUMS file do not include data for race and ethnicity.

Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP)

For our analyses of inequality based on skin color and an alternative racial schema, we also use data from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP). LAPOP refers to national surveys taken in all Latin American countries, except Cuba, every two years. These are random sample surveys at the national level of all persons 15 years old and above. All LAPOP surveys are face-to-face except in Canada and the United States, where the LAPOP conducts phone surveys. The survey samples for each country comprise about 1500 respondents, but some countries like Brazil and Colombia have larger samples.

Project on Ethnicity and Race in Latin America (PERLA) Surveys

Some of the data we use and many of the studies we rely on are based on surveys from the Project on Ethnicity and Race in Latin America (PERLA). The PERLA surveys were conducted in 2010 in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru and were nationally representative. These surveys were also of about 1500 respondents in each country. PERLA surveys were specifically dedicated to issues of race and racism. The surveys examined various census-type and other questions on race/ethnic classification and its implications. These questions included the introduction of the color palette (i.e., skin color measure), which has become a core item in the biannual LAPOP surveys since 2010.

Brazilian National Household Sample Survey (PNAD)

We also examine changes in ethnoracial composition and university enrollment in Brazil between 1992 and 2021 using data from the National Household Sample Survey (PNAD). Facilitated by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), the survey is designed to capture household-level data on general characteristics of the population (i.e., age, race, sex) as well as education, employment, and income. Data is collected through at-home interviews with participants 14 and older.

Brazilian National Basic Education Assessment System (SAEB)

In a further exploration of social stratification dynamics in Brazil, we use data from the National Basic Education Assessment System (SAEB) to explore differences in Portuguese and mathematics proficiency test scores by race, sex, and maternal education among primary school students in Brazil for the years 2001 and 2021. SAEB is primarily designed to measure academic achievement among primary and secondary school students through Portuguese and mathematics exams. In addition to educational achievement data, SAEB also collects family- and school-level data. To examine race, sex, and maternal education differences in test scores, we used two interval variables for Portuguese and mathematics exam scores.

Findings

In the following pages, we present our findings on ethnoracial composition, educational inequality by race/ethnicity, income inequality by race/ethnicity, and occupational inequality by race/ethnicity. We further structure the findings section according to the data source and ethnoracial measure (census ethnoracial category, LAPOP ethnoracial

category, and LAPOP skin color). We conclude our Findings section examining "race versus class" effects, the anomalous Panamanian case, and the role of urban residence in ethnoracial stratification.

Ethnoracial Composition

Censuses and Ethnoracial Composition

The official censuses are designed by each nation-state's statistical or census agency through their choice of ethnoracial categories. The census ethnoracial compositions thus become the official representation of the country's race/ethnic population. These may vary widely, soliciting different portrayals and affecting the size of the categories. In the recent censuses that we examine, almost all censuses (except Cuba) collect data on the indigenous; most ask about Afro-descendants, and a minority query about the Indigenous or white categories. (See Appendix for more detail about how censuses differ in their ethnoracial questions, formats, and response categories.)

Figure 1 provides a comparative overview of ethnoracial composition based on national censuses across the region. It includes sixteen Latin American countries plus the US territory of Puerto Rico. Although Figure 1 represents mainly those country cases with ethnoracial census data found in IPUMS, we also included ethnoracial statistics for Argentina, Peru, and Venezuela. These countries have ethnoracial data in their most recent censuses but are not yet available via IPUMS. For these cases, we used information on ethnoracial composition from the official websites of these countries.[4]

Figure 1 is divided into two panels for ease of interpretation. From left to right, the first six countries (Uruguay to Ecuador) include ethnoracial composition questions using "full coverage" classification schemes, i.e., they had white and/or mestizo/mixed categories

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[4] We exclude Argentina, Peru, and Venezuela from all other analyses based on census data. Nonetheless, we include these cases in analyses using LAPOP and PERLA data.

alongside Indigenous and Afro-descendant categories. These full-coverage countries are ordered by the size (percentage) of their white populations, from highest to lowest. The remaining nine countries (Argentina to Guatemala) exclusively targeted Indigenous and Black populations. Thus, we created a residual category (R), to represent the non-Indigenous and non-afrodescendant population, which is largely white and mestizo. These countries are ordered by percent residual, from highest to lowest.

[Figure 1 about here]

Among the first set of country cases, the country with the largest white population is Uruguay. Close to 90 percent of the population is recorded as white in the Uruguayan Census. Ecuador is at the opposite end of this set: the Ecuadorian Census estimates the white population at less than 10 percent of the national population. That variation is striking and certainly illustrates the substantial variation in ethnoracial landscapes across Latin America. In the first set, Ecuador and El Salvador stand out as predominately mestizo countries with small white populations, in contrast to majority white countries like Uruguay. Other countries fall at various midway points between those two poles. One case, the US territory of Puerto Rico, is particularly interesting. A large majority of Puerto Ricans on the island identify as White (70%), and just over 10% as multiracial (i.e., those individuals choosing to self-classify in more than one ethnoracial category). Interestingly, for Puerto Ricans on the U.S. mainland, less than 50% identified as white and many more as multiracial, which may suggest different conceptions of who is considered white or multiracial (Duany 2005, see Loveman and Muniz 2013 for a history).

Brazil and Cuba are notable cases regarding the longstanding enumeration and size of their black populations. Unlike other countries in the region, Brazil and Cuba have regularly collected data on the Afro-descendant population since the 19th century. Brazil's 2010 census documents a substantial *pardo* population of almost equal size to the white population.

However, although *pardo* is largely a proxy category for ethnoracial population admixture, the Brazilian state and many Brazilians understand the *pardo* category as belonging to a "collective black" or Afro-descendant population (Bailey and Telles 2006). The Afro-descendant component of *pardo* is thus prioritized, and it is standard practice for the Brazilian state to consider the *pardo* and *preto* categories as proxies for afro-descendancy that can be collapsed into a *negro* category. When *pardo* and *preto* are counted together in Brazil's 2010 census, the "collective black" or *negro* population segment was a numerical majority population for the first time in the Republic's history, the only majority "black" country among all of those examined here.

Cuba uses a three-option question to enumerate four categories of "skin color" in its Census: 1) *negro* (black), 2) *blanco* (white), and 3) "*mestizo o mulato*" (mestizo or mulatto). The size of the Mestizo (i.e., individuals self-classifying as either "*mestizo o mulato*") category in Cuba also stands out in its relative size, at 27% of the population according to the 2012 census, as does its black population at just under 10%. In contrast to the Brazilian state in recent decades, however, the Cuban state's ethnoracial formation project does not generally reflect a collective blackness perspective of its ethnoracial diversity.

Cuba and Puerto Rico (via U.S.) Censuses do not include indigenous categories. In essence, from an official census lens, these regions' populations do not possess the markers of indigeneity often found in other Latin American countries, such as language and recognized communities/territories. In other countries that includes white category in their census, the indigenous populations generally represent less than 3% of national ethnoracial compositions. The exception is Ecuador, where it is 7%.

The second set of countries do not include White and Mestizo categories in their censuses' enumeration of ethnoracial populations. Instead, these countries only target Indigenous and Afro-descendants for census enumeration, with few exceptions. The result of

the decision not to enumerate Whites and Mestizos is that most countries' populations of this set are thereby represented as undifferentiated masses, devoid of salient or impactful ethnoracial markers. Among these countries, Guatemala, Bolivia, Mexico, and Peru stand out regarding the relatively large size of their Indigenous populations when using the census lens. The set's largest black populations are in Colombia (11%) and Panama (9%).

Figure 1 presents those countries' official ethnoracial composition. The ethnoracial categories used by each Census represent the official portrait of their ethnoracial composition and are artifacts of their ethnoracial formation projects. The first set of countries include white and mestizo categories, which provides fuller information for the study of ethnoracial inequality. The second set of countries, though, is arguably incomplete since the majority white and mestizo categories are erased. Both sets of countries, however, arguably represent national ethnoracial projects of *mestizaje*, albeit differently. Those national schemes in the first set of countries contain *mestizo* categories and reflect mestizaje formation projects more directly. El Salvador and Ecuador are illustrative cases. Research on the first set of countries often emphasizes the fluidity dynamics between the mestizo/mulato/pardo categories, on one hand, and the indigenous and black categories, on the other. They may also represent a gradual de-ethnicization process and its intersection with whitening ideologies. Brazilian social movement actors, for example, have long seen the pardo category in Brazil as a reflection of state whitening projects but also tied to the country's version of the ideology of mestizaje, which is known as the ideology of "racial democracy."

Nonetheless, the second set suggests that *mestizaje* as a state ethnoracial project does not require a separate mestizo category in its Census to officially portray its ethnoracial composition via census classification. Here, ethnoracial boundaries are represented as those among black and indigenous populations compared to all (undifferentiated) others. Moreover, public and informal discourse regarding population admixture as defining national identity in

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these countries is common, which is not the case in most Southern Cone countries. That is, to be non-indigenous or non-black in Chile and Argentina, for example, is to be simply Chilean and Argentinian: sometimes "mixed," but unremarkably so from the census perspective.

LAPOP Categories and Ethnoracial Composition

We turn now to an alternative lens on these countries' ethnoracial compositions. The classification scheme and data from LAPOP are distinct from the census data in fundamental ways. Rather, LAPOP does not replicate classification schemes in any of the countries. LAPOP surveys generally standardize the region's ethnoracial questions using, in most cases, six ethnoracial categories: white, mestizo, mulatto, black, indigenous, and Asian. There are a few exceptions regarding those six standard categories, most notably in Guatemala, Brazil, and the Dominican Republic. LAPOP uses Ladino and Indigena in Guatemala; branco, pardo and negro/preto for Brazil and blanco, Indio, mulato and negro in the Dominican Republic. LAPOP data provide more detailed information for the analysis of ethnoracial stratification, though their sample sizes and coverage are far less than those of national censuses.

The alternative LAPOP source allows us to deconstruct and disaggregate most countries' large "R" or residual categories, which we showed in Figure 1. For example, the LAPOP data reveal that white populations dominate the ethnoracial demography in Argentina, Chile, and Costa Rica, which Figure 1 somewhat obscures. In Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Mexico, and Colombia, LAPOP reveals that *mestizo* populations dominate, which was also obscured by the R category. In addition, LAPOP's inclusion of the *mestizo* category in Uruguay considerably changes the portrait of that country: its white segment shrinks from 90 to 65%, and fully 20% of Uruguayans opt for *mestizo* self-identification. In Brazil, the nuanced differences in LAPOP's question, which uses white, pardo (mixed), *negro* or Afro-Brazilian (black), Asian and indigenous, result in *pardos*

overtaking whites as the largest population segment compared to Brazil's 2010 census, as

well as a near doubling of the overall percentage of individuals self-classifying as black.[5]

In addition, LAPOP provides information on country cases for which we could not

obtain ethnoracial data via IPUMS, for example, on the Dominican Republic, Peru, and

Paraguay. In contrast, the only country case for which we have census data but no LAPOP is

Cuba.

[Figure 2 about here]

Nonetheless, as shown below, LAPOP presents a different portrait of Latin America's

ethnoracial demography and provides a contrasting lens on its ethnoracial inequality. The

differences in racial composition between Figures 1 and 2 also reflect how the questions and

categories are created differently in LAPOP and the Censuses (See Appendix for a further

explanation). For example, an indigenous category is collected in various ways in the

Censuses, with some referring to particular indigenous groups while others refer to the

general or panethnic indigenous category. However, LAPOP uses a uniform version of the

panethnic "indigenous" format, which has implications for which persons are considered in

the indigenous category (Telles and Torche 2018).

Which of these visions on Latin America's ethnoracial landscape, from census or

LAPOP surveys, best reveals social stratification dynamics by race and ethnicity? There is no

easy answer to that question (see discussion in Bailey and Fialho 2016). IPUMS's large

census sample sizes (and sampling methods) are preferable for cases with a fuller range of

ethnoracial categories. National census classification is probably also closer to how persons

of that country understand these categories (Telles 2014). However, for those countries that

only target certain minority ethnoracial populations, i.e., those from Argentina rightward in

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[5] This may be due to a general increase in the black and mixed-race populations in the years following the census and the doubling of the black population may also be due to the inclusion of "Afro-Brazilian" in LAPOP.

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Figure 1, the LAPOP data provide needed missing information on ethnoracial boundary dynamics. In what follows, we look at ethnoracial stratification using data from national censuses and LAPOP by educational achievement, income, and occupational prestige.

Educational Inequality by Race/Ethnicity

Censuses and Educational Inequality

Figure 3 presents countries from Figure 1 according to the percentage of the population that completed a university education by ethnoracial category. A first glance reveals significant variation. In the first set of countries (i.e., those including white and mestizo categories in their census), Puerto Rico has a higher percentage of university completion overall, while the lowest overall levels of university completion are in Honduras, Nicaragua, and Guatemala. In this set, Cuba shows the lowest level of ethnoracial inequality in university completion, as revealed by the close clustering of white, black, and mestizo categories.

[Figure 3 about here]

Of further note, the Asian population in Costa Rica is clearly an extreme outlier. Asian populations occupy the top of the educational achievement hierarchy in Uruguay and Brazil as well. The top position of the black population in Panama is particularly striking, although again, the R category disallows a complete accounting of ethnoracial effects. Among those countries that include *mestizo* categories in their Census, the case of Ecuador stands out. It is the only country case where the mestizo population tops the ethnoracial hierarchy regarding university completion. In all the others in that set, whites stand in privileged positions in relation to mestizo, black, and indigenous populations.

In contrast to parsing the highest level of educational attainment, in Figure 4, we present a view of ethnoracial stratification among the lowest educational level segment of the

population: those with "no schooling" or only "some primary" education among 25- to 60-year-olds. The figure is striking in showing the variation in the universalization of education among countries in the region. On one end of the spectrum, four countries stand as having relatively low overall percentages of their populations of any ethnoracial group with the lowest levels of education: Uruguay, PR, Cuba, CR, and Chile. Figure 4 also suggests that ethnoracial stratification is substantially mitigated at this lowest level among these five countries. Interestingly, though, ethnoracial stratification at the highest level of educational attainment was stark except for Cuba. In contrast, Guatemala stands out for particularly low levels of educational achievement for the majority of its population. Moreover, ethnoracial stratification at this lowest level is extreme regarding the distance between indigenous (close to 90%) and Ladinos, at approximately 50%. In fact, Figure 5 suggests that the disadvantaged position of indigenous populations relative to the non-indigenous populations at the lowest level of educational attainment is universal. Regarding Black populations, their disadvantage relative to whites is most apparent in Brazil, El Salvador, and Ecuador.

[Figure 4 about here]

LAPOP Ethnoracial Categories and Educational Inequality

A comparative analysis of ethnoracial stratification in educational achievement using data from the region's national censuses is hobbled by variation in the ethnoracial categories, as addressed above. We turn now to the alternative LAPOP data source for educational inequality. Figure 5 presents mean years of schooling by LAPOP's ethnoracial categories, across the region for 18 Latin American countries. (Cuba and Puerto Rico was not included in LAPOP.) We use mean years of schooling instead of percent attending university, as in the census analysis, due to LAPOP's much smaller sample size.

[Figure 5 about here]

The LAPOP perspective on ethnoracial inequality in educational achievement varies broadly. We highlight a few patterns. The results in Figure 5 suggest that white populations are at the top of the ethnoracial hierarchy in mean years of schooling in only four of the 18 country cases, Uruguay, Brazil, Argentina, and Panama. In the lion's share of countries, the mestizo category ranks highest.[6] This overall view on ethnoracial stratification revealing the high ranking of *Mestizo* populations is counterintuitive. However, as we discuss below, mestizo self-identification is often selective of more educated persons, and it may not necessarily align well with skin-color cleavages. Research suggests, for example, that the symbolic value of the mestizo category as derived from national mixing ideologies make it attractive to higher-status individuals; at the same time, self-identifying as white may be more attractive to low-status persons (Telles and Flores 2013). Hence, as we discuss further below, the mestizo category may be especially poor for capturing the type of ethnoracial dynamics and markers that scholars commonly associate with social stratification.

Despite the counterintuitive ordering of white and mestizo categories in years of schooling, the results in Figure 5 generally suggest substantial indigenous and black disadvantage in educational achievement. Fifteen of the 18 countries have large enough black populations for our analysis in LAPOP samples. In 11 of these 15, the black category sits at the very bottom of the hierarchy. The mean years of schooling for the black category in Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Paraguay is less than seven years. In contrast, our results in Figure 5 show that those self-classifying in the black category in Panama have the highest mean years of education than any other country's black category in our analysis, at 11 years.

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[6] The LAPOP data on the Dominican Republic uses the Mulatto category. Similar to mestizo in other countries, it tops the educational hierarchy. See Telles, Flores, and Urrea (2015) on how selectivity in self-identification produces this anomaly.

Latin America's Indigenous populations occupy the bottom of the ethnoracial hierarchy in mean school years in five of the fourteen countries: Colombia, Brazil, Honduras (alongside black), Panama, and Guatemala. Nonetheless, the overall situation of this population category across the region shows relative disadvantage in all countries vis-à-vis white and mestizo categories. Indigenous disadvantage in educational attainment may be most apparent in Colombia and Guatemala, where these two populations appear as extreme outliers relative to other categories.

Overall, our analysis of categorical ethnoracial inequality in educational achievement using multiple measures and census and LAPOP data are mixed. The privileged position of the white category is clearest through the lens of percent university-completion in those countries with full classification schemes in their national censuses (Figure 3, left side). The countries without full classification schemes in their national censuses (Figure 3, right side) substantially obscure this measure. Nonetheless, Indigenous disadvantage at this elite level of educational attainment is most apparent there. In contrast, our analysis of LAPOP data and mean years of schooling is most telling in terms of the relative location of mestizos in the region's ethnoracial hierarchy: they hold top positions in 14 of 18 countries. Again, previous results using LAPOP data to study the ethnoracial category stratification in educational achievement support the robustness of these results (Telles and Steele 2012; Telles, Flores and Urrea-Giraldo 2015).

LAPOP Skin Color and Educational Inequality

We now turn to a third measure of ethnoracial boundary dynamics—skin color—to examine its impact on educational inequality. As noted, racial and ethnic formations are multidimensional social constructs that vary across time and context (e.g., Roth 2016). LAPOP provides a unique opportunity to explore skin color and its impact on social

inequality, a dimension that Roth (2016, p. 1313) labels "phenotype" in her typology of racial dimensions. Importantly, there is a significant scholarly discussion around which measure or measures of ethnoracial boundaries (or dimensions) best capture inequality dynamics in Latin America (Telles and Lim 1998; Telles and PERLA 2014; Telles, Flores and Urrea-Giraldo 2015; Bailey, Loveman, and Muniz 2013; Bailey, Saperstein and Penner 2014; Bailey, Fialho, and Penner 2016). As a marker of ethnoraciality or ethnoracial boundary cleavages, does skin color provide leverage for examining ethnoracial stratification in mean years of schooling in Latin America?

Figures 6 and 7 present country comparisons of mean years of schooling by interviewer-evaluation skin color. The results are striking. Whereas the results in Figure 5, which used ethnoracial categories as its measure, place mestizos at the top of the educational achievement hierarchy in mean years of schooling, Figures 6 and 7 reveal that light skin color persons are the most advantaged, almost without exception. That is, although there is variation in the mean years of schooling for the lightest categories across the region, its relative hierarchical position in each country is generally on the top. While Figure 6 shows this for the light, medium and dark color categories, Figure 7 provides a complementary perspective using a more detailed color continuum. Generally, in line with Figure 6, results in Figure 7, though, complicate its findings in a minority of cases regarding the expected positive association of lighter skin color with higher mean years of schooling, such as Panama and Honduras.[7]

[Figure 6 about here]

[Figure 7 about here]

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[7] The overall results presented in Figures 6 and 7, though bivariate, are supported by multivariable statistical analysis using LAPOP data and skin color on mean years of schooling (Telles, Flores and Urrea 2015, Telles and Steele 2012).

Race vs. Class in Educational Inequality

The research literature suggests that the effect on skin color on educational achievement is sustained even with controls for social origin and other variables (Telles, Flores and Urrea, 2015; Telles and Steele 2012). Figure 8, adapted from Telles, Flores and Urrea (2015), shows differences in predicted years of education by parental occupation, ethnoracial classification, and skin color. The predicted probabilities are based on a multivariate regression model using data from LAPOP and the Project on Ethnicity and Race in Latin America (PERLA) for eight countries, which represent nearly 80% of the region's population.[8] Figure 8 shows that even with controls for age, gender and the size of residence, both parental occupation and skin color independently predict years of schooling. The first two bars in each country panel show that respondents having parents in high occupational categories (professionals, administrators) have 2-3 more years of education than those in low categories (unskilled and semiskilled occupations). The rightmost bars in each country panel represent skin color differences. These bars show that the lighter skin persons have 1-2 more years of schooling than the darkest respondents, net of controls for parental occupation and the other controls. On the other hand, the results using ethnoracial categories produce mixed results, both with and without controls. Considering that parental occupation may be the best proxy measure for class, as it is commonly conceived, the results in Figure 9 suggest that both class and race, especially when measured by skin color, independently shape the educational attainment in these eight Latin American countries.

[Figure 8 about here]

Income Inequality by Race/Ethnicity

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[8] The regression model controls for each of the other variables that are not being predicted (parental occupation, ethnoracial classification, and skin color) and various sociodemographic variables (sex, age, community size and region).

LAPOP Ethnoracial Categories, Skin Color, and Income Inequality

We turn to a second SES measure—household income—to further explore ethnoracial stratification in Latin America. The analysis uses LAPOP surveys from 2012, and we explore the effects of ethnoracial categories and skin color on per capita household income (see Bailey, Saperstein, and Penner 2014). The presentation of our analysis in Figure 9 combines the results of the effects of both skin color and ethnoracial categories. The construction of the values along the y-axis use the mean income value of category five (i.e. the "mid-range" skin color between 1 and 10 or 11) as the reference category in each country. Hence, mean income values for all other color points and all racial categories are graphed in relation to that middle-range color as a percent difference from it. Furthermore, the mean income of the skin color category "five" is set at 0% or "ground zero"; hence, mean income values located above that benchmark are expressed as a positive percent difference in relation to category 5; the opposite is the case for the values of skin color points or racial categories located below that mid-range color reference point.

[Figure 9 about here]

As an example of how to read the results in Figure 10, see the example of Colombia. In Colombia, individuals that interviewers rated as of the lightest skin tone have a per capita household income 45% higher than those rated in the intermediate color category 5. In comparison, those rated in the darkest skin color have an income about 42% below that of the intermediate category. On the other hand, regarding ethnoracial category, we see that in Colombia, individuals self-classifying as white or branco (W) had an income about 25% higher than individuals rated 5 on the skin color scale. In contrast, those self-classifying as indigenous (I) had an income about 50% lower than that same mid-range color.

Overall, Figure 9 uniquely illustrates skin color and racial category inequality characterizing the social landscape across the Americas. In many countries, there is a clear

linear relationship between skin color and income: the lighter an individual's skin color, the higher an individual's income. This linear pattern is evident in Mexico, Paraguay, Uruguay, Ecuador, and Nicaragua, though income gaps among color position vary. Case in point, the level of income associated with the lightest skin tones in Guatemala is the most extreme compared, for example, to that of the lightest skin tone in Nicaragua and Chile, where there is relatively little income dispersion. In some cases, the linear relationship between skin color and income is weak, and in a couple, inverted to some extent, as in Panama and Honduras. Overall, though, these results suggest the importance of skin color to income inequality across Latin America.

Regarding ethnoracial category hierarchies, individuals self-classifying in LAPOP as white are generally on top. The top position of whites in racial hierarchies holds for 14 of the 17 countries of Latin America. In contrast, Figure 9 reveals the stark disadvantage associated with self-classification as indigenous in most countries, with notable cases in Panama, Chile, and Colombia. In only ten countries were there large enough numbers of individuals self-classifying as Afro-descendant to make possible their inclusion in this analysis. That categorization is associated with the lowest position in national racial hierarchies in four countries: Nicaragua, Brazil, El Salvador, and Ecuador. The position of Afro-descendants varies in the other cases, but this population category is almost always disadvantaged in reference to whites. Still, self-classified Afro-descendants sometimes do better than other non-white categories, such as mestizos in Uruguay and *morenos* in Venezuela. In two countries, Panama and Honduras, the analysis reveals black advantage. Finally, in 17 of the 18 countries of Latin America that include mestizo or mixed-race categories, Figure 9 findings show that individuals self-classifying in these categories generally hold a mid-range position in national racial hierarchies.

Race vs. Class in Income Inequality

While our analyses focus on observed income inequality by ethnoracial category and skin color, seminal research often viewed observed ethnoracial inequality as an epiphenomenon of class stratification in Latin America (e.g., Wagley 1952, Gonzalez Casanova 1965). Scholars of the region have since repeatedly demonstrated the "independent effects" of ethnoracial categories on social inequality across various SES domains while often giving due weight to Latin America's extreme class inequalities (e.g., Silva 1985). In dialogue with this ongoing "race versus class" debate, we extend the analysis presented in Figure 9 to examine the mediating role of class or social origin in the relationship between skin color and income using 2014 LAPOP data (see Bailey, Fialho, and Penner 2016). Our outcome variable mean per capita household income, is predicted in two models, with and without controls for social origin proxied by maternal education. Our core analytic strategy leverages relative shifts in skin-color coefficients between these two models. The greater the change in skin color coefficients before and after controlling for social origin, the larger the role of social origin in mediating skin-color effects on income inequality.

To present the results of this analysis, Figure 10 lists each of our country cases in columns, and each country's column contains two sets of results. The left column for each country shows the predicted value of color categories/points (relative to color point 5) from models using skin color alone, and the right column presents results from models controlling for maternal education. Examining the effect of skin color categories on income for Argentina (situated farthest left in Figure 10), for example, shows the lightest color point is at the highest position on the income scale and that Argentines with this skin tone have average incomes that are nearly 75% greater than Argentines rated 5 on the color scale (the reference color point). In contrast, Argentines represented by the darkest color point have average incomes that are roughly 25% less than color category 5. Regarding the mediating effect of

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social origin vis-à-vis skin color, results in the right column for Argentina show that results from the model controlling for social origin are almost identical to the previous model's results, which did not control for social origin. The stability of the predicted effect of skin color across models suggests, then, that the role of color in structuring income inequality is largely independent of social origin.

[Figure 10 about here]

Looking broadly at the results in the first column for each of the countries in Figure 10, a presentation that replicates our previous analysis of skin color (Figure 9) but uses data from LAPOP 2014, reveals many striking similarities and differences in these overall patterns. All but three countries (Costa Rica, Honduras, and Panama) provide evidence of the association of lighter color with higher per capita household income. Argentina and Mexico exhibit a strikingly linear relationship between color and household income. In other countries, some color points are clustered, suggesting that there are parts of the color scale where variation matters less than others. The case of Brazil illustrates clustering around similar levels of household income for individuals of the darkest skin colors.

Moreover, an overall comparison of skin color categories across the two models for each country case reveals that they are generally closely paired. This pattern suggests that maternal education's impact on the independent effect of skin color on income inequality across the region is negligible. Results presented in Figure 11 more succinctly summarize how controlling for social origins affects color inequality in household income by graphing only the relative change in the coefficients for color points when maternal education is introduced as a control. Those cases with the smallest difference in coefficients between models are those where skin color and social origin variables operate most independently of one another. That is, regardless of the amount of skin color inequality a country has, if

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adding a control for social class does not impact predicted income, the relationship between

class and skin color in relationship to income is necessarily weak.

[Figure 11 about here]

The country that shows the most negligible impact of social origin on the relationship

of color to income inequality is Argentina. Specifically, we find an average of roughly 2%

difference between the gross effect of each color point and the effect of each color point

controlling for maternal education. Brazil, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, and Nicaragua all

see some reduction in the magnitude of their color gradient when controlling for maternal

education. At the other end of the spectrum, Figure 11 shows that social origin has a greater

impact on color inequality in El Salvador, Peru, and Panama. However, these findings

suggest that for countries with relatively little color-based inequality, such as Chile and Costa

Rica, the observed changes when maternal education is introduced should be interpreted

cautiously. Overall, results suggest the clear independent effect of skin color on income

inequality in Latin America vis-à-vis social class.[9]

Occupational Inequality by Race/Ethnicity

Censuses and Occupational Inequality

Our final SES measure of ethnoracial inequality in Latin America is occupational prestige.

We rely on data from national censuses for those cases with the requisite variables we could

access through IPUMS. In particular, our dependent variable is the percent representation in

administrative and professional occupations by ethnoracial category. Figure 12 summarizes

our results. Several aspects of ethnoracial occupation prestige inequality stand out. Like our

analysis of percent university-completed (Figure 3), the Asian category is an upper-range

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[9] Given that our analysis used only one measure of social origin, mothers' education, due to data limitations, their results should be considered conservative estimates of social origin effects.

outlier in Costa Rica, but this time also in Puerto Rico. It intuitively follows in that those

with highest educational levels might also translate that into occupational prestige. Judged

through clustering in percent in administrative and professional occupations, our results on

Cuba suggest a relatively minimal level of ethnoracial stratification, which is atypical in Latin

America. Cuba's state-administered labor market and very low level of stratification across

all levels of educational attainment help explain this outlier case (de la Fuente and Bailey,

2021).

In contrast, Ecuador and Panama demonstrate some of the region's highest levels of

ethnoracial inequality from the perspective of occupational prestige, but with a very different

hierarchical ordering. Ecuador's comparatively small white population is privileged, and its

distance from that country's indigenous populations is substantial, as is also the case in El

Salvador. In contrast, in Panama, results in Figure 12 suggest that the black population is on

top of the ethnoracial hierarchy and, like Whites in Ecuador, far from the disadvantage of

indigenous populations in occupation prestige. However, the Panamanian Census does not

include a white category, suggesting interpretation caution.

[Figure 12 about here]

The Panama Anomaly

Although the counterintuitive ordering of the ethnoracial hierarchy of occupational

prestige in Panama using census data suggests caution, the uniquely higher positioning of

Panama's Afro-descendant is consistent with our abovementioned analysis of educational

attainment using ethnoracial category and skin color data from LAPOP (Figures 5-7). Those

self-classifying as black had higher mean years of education and higher percentages of

university completion than other black populations across the region. It follows that higher

educational attainment for Blacks in Panama would translate to higher occupational prestige.

In addition, results for mean per capita household income also demonstrated that the Panamanians who self-classified as black and those with the darkest skin color (Figure 9) were at the top of the income hierarchy.

To go deeper into the possible mechanisms behind the peculiar ordering of Panama's ethnoracial hierarchy in occupational prestige, we present in Table 1 additional statistics on Panama. Two factors stand out in helping to understand Black Panamanians' relatively higher occupational prestige: percent urban and percent in the capital city. Blacks in Panama are more likely to live in urban areas than are those of the residual category (88.1 vs. 60.7 percent, respectively) and more likely to live in the country's capital city, Panama City, than those of the residual category (36.8 vs. 29.2%, respectively). Research demonstrates the educational and occupational advantages associated with urban life in Latin America compared to rural regions (cites) and the additional positive association with living in one of Latin America's capital cities (cites).

[Table 1 about here]

Another factor that may help explain the uniquely high positioning of black Panamanians in that country's ethnoracial hierarchy is that Panama's black population includes many persons with origins from the West Indies. The descendants of earlier migration waves from the English-speaking West Indies are known as Antillean blacks or *negros antillanos* in Panama. As is often the case regarding immigrant selection, West Indian black immigrants may have been particularly motivated (and targeted) regarding labor market opportunities and other mobility structures. In addition, English-language skills from the West Indies may have translated particularly well in the Panamanian context; there, the social impact of an unusually high number of multinational corporations and substantial US interventionism, most prominently the Panama Canal project and more recent mega development of Panama City, is hard to overestimate.

Hence, we take advantage of the fact that the Panamanian Census breaks down the black category into Antillean blacks, colonial blacks (*negros coloniales* - presumably descendants of slaves), and others, including many that report not knowing their Afro-descendant origin. Results in Table 1 show that Antillean blacks are the most urban at 92.7%, compared to only 70.2% for the majority/residual population. An additional locational advantage is that 41.6% of Antillean blacks reside in Panama City, Panama's administrative and economic center, compared to less than 30% (29.1%) of the majority population. Panama City is located at the mouth of the Panama Canal; in addition, its level of development is considered high even by international standards (Sigler 2013). Table 1 also shows that Antillean blacks have the highest educational attainment, income, and occupational prestige relative to the majority population. Nonetheless, the other subcategories of black Panamanians also excel in these areas relative to the majority population. Hence, these results suggest that the fact that a portion of the black population in Panama originates in the West Indies does explain the overall high socio-economic positioning of blacks in Panama.

Ethnoracial Inequality in Urban Residence

The Censuses we use tend to have valuable data on urban residence, an essential indicator of SES from a systemic infrastructure perspective. As noted, urban living affords broader chances for upward social mobility than Latin America's rural landscape. From a wider lens and highlighting the importance of a higher percent urban among black Panamanians, Figure 13 shows the percent urban of ethnoracial populations across various Latin American countries. The high percentage of black Panamanians (around 90 percent) is almost unsurpassed. Only the Asian population in Costa Rica and the overall urban-structured population dispersion in Chile are comparable.

[Figure 13 about here]

As expected, indigenous people across Latin America are the least likely to reside in urban areas, including Panama. For example, in Ecuador, while more than 70% of whites, mestizos, and afro-descendants live in urban areas, only about 20% of indigenous do.[10] Differences are less stark in other countries, but our findings regarding indigenous location are consistent. Regarding the entire region, the black populations' urbanization levels are more similar to the white and mestizo (including "residual") populations. The exception, again, is Panama: the black population is much more likely than the residual (white and mestizo) population to reside in urban areas.

Focus on Educational Inequality by Race and Ethnicity in Brazil

Changing Ethnoracial Inequality in Higher Education

We now turn our attention to Brazil because it has the most advanced ethnoracial policies, especially in higher education, and because it has the best data on race and, by far, the largest afro-descendant population in Latin America. Figure 14 shows trends in university attendance and completion from 1992 to 2021 to examine the effects of Brazil's well-known racial quotas. Specifically, Figure 18 examines the percentage of 18–25-year-olds who graduated from college during those 30 years. Data come from *Pesquisa Annual de Amostra de Domicilios* (PNAD). Roughly 99% of Brazilians identify in either the white (branco), pardo (brown), or preto (black) categories[11], while Asians and indigenous together comprise only about 1%. We refer to the pardo and preto categories as collective black, a designation recognized in Brazil.

[Figure 14 about here}]

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[10] Although indigenous self-identification may be related to rural residence.
[11] The Census racial question in Brazil is "what is your color or race?" The reference to color is unique in Latin American Censuses. The census question had been based on only "color," as "race" was added in 1991. (Cuba also uses color)

In 1992, our baseline year, Figure 14, reveals that less than 10% of pretos and pardos (collectively black) were college-educated. This compared to 30% of whites and 45% of Asians. (The numbers for Asians and Indigenous may be too small for analysis, given the erratic dips and peaks over time). The percentage of whites, pretos, and pardos in the university (99% of the Brazilian population) remained relatively flat throughout the 1990s. Then, it began to increase in the early 2000s, which marked the beginning of racial quotas in Brazilian universities (the first were in Rio de Janeiro universities in 2002). Still, interestingly the most significant gain was for whites. In 2003, 47% of young white Brazilians were college-educated, compared to 16% of pardos and 14% of pretos. Thus, in absolute terms, college attendance had increased by 17 percentage points for whites compared to about 6-7 percentage points for blacks. Even though racial quotas got most of the attention (and controversy), class-based quotas that favored white students and the overall expansion of universities and university slots seemed to have better explained such significant gains in Brazilian higher education in the early 2000s.

From 2004 to 2015, Figure 14 shows that all groups' college education continued to rise. The white-nonwhite gap appeared to close slightly. In 2015, 48-49 percent of blacks were college-educated compared to 70 percent of whites. Thus, the 20% white-nonwhite gap was restored, but blacks had made relative gains (from college attendance at a rate of less than 30% of whites to roughly 70%). Note that in 2012, the Brazilian government mandated racial quotas for all federal universities on an annually growing scale to maximize the allotments in 2015. Overall, Figure 18 suggests that university expansion and affirmative action (by race and class) policies produced tremendous gains for Brazilians of all races/colors during the first two decades of the twentieth century.

Our findings show that half of black and brown college-age Brazilians now attend college, a considerable gain from 10% two decades ago. In the 30-40% range, the percentage

is lower for Brazil's small indigenous population. So, at least half of young black and indigenous Brazilians still do not go to college, and a more significant majority will not complete college. Thus, what to do in the general labor market becomes very important. Aside from improving college attendance rates, especially in public universities, Brazil must expand formal employment in sectors that do not require higher education. If the country is to experience significant reductions in racial inequality, it must improve Afro-Brazilians' access to jobs at all employment levels.

Proficiency Test Scores in Basic Education

So far, we have focused on ethnoracial differences in educational quantity (years of schooling or percent graduating from college) for Brazil and the rest of Latin America. Educational quantity, though, must address whether learned cognitive skills are similar across those with the same amount of education. This is an issue in Brazil and other parts of Latin America, where increased years of schooling have been associated with moving students forward in the educational system but with no necessary or relatively little improvement in academic proficiency or educational quality. Moreover, Brazilian educators have been concerned that a policy emphasis on affirmative action of advancing minoritized students into college could simultaneously distract from making much-needed improvements to elementary education (Schwartzman 2009).

Educational quality and quantity are both related to economic development but independently to some extent. "There is strong evidence that the cognitive skills of the population – rather than mere school attainment – are powerfully related to individual earnings, income distribution, and economic growth. New empirical results show the importance of both minimal and high-level skills, the complementarity of skills and the quality of economic institutions, and the robustness of the relationship between skills and

growth. International comparisons incorporating expanded data on cognitive skills reveal much larger skill deficits in developing countries than generally derived from just school enrollment and attainment" (cf. Hanushek and Wößmann 2007). However, Breton 2011 disagrees based on his re-analysis. In any case, we find it helpful to supplement our extensive data on educational quantity with educational quality data, where we can find it.

Thus, assessing educational quality is also important to understand racial disparities. However, data on educational quality is more complicated to find than that for educational quantity. Perhaps the leading data for international differences in proficiency/educational quality is from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), but unfortunately, it does not include data by race/ethnicity. However, Brazil collects ethnoracial data from its survey on educational quality: the Brazilian National Evaluation System of Basic Education (SAEB). The SAEB is a biannual survey conducted by the National Institute for Educational Studies and Research (INEP) that evaluates the cognitive ability of elementary students in fifth and ninth/eighth grades and students in the last year of high school (11th grade). The objective is to diagnose Brazilian Basic Education and some factors that may interfere with student performance, providing an indicator of the quality of the education being offered. The students' cognitive ability is measured by Portuguese and math exams computed using the Item Response Theory (ITR), a method to construct standardized test scores (van der Linden & Hambleton, 2013).

The SAEB permits us to examine longitudinal changes in scores. To complement the changes in educational quantity in Brazil from the 1990s to the present, we examine two time points: 2001 and 2021 for educational quality. We have chosen to focus on SAEB scores in the ninth grade in 2021 and the eighth grade in 2001. (The grade at which proficiency scores were taken was changed at some point between 2001 and 2021.)

Figure 15 shows mean Portuguese and math scores by race in 2001 and 2001, separately for boys and girls. The top two panels show Portuguese proficiency test scores, and the bottom two show mathematics scores. The two left panels are for girls, and the right two are for boys. The blue bars show these scores for 2001, and the red bars for 2021.

[Figure 15 about here]

In 2001 and 2021, white students had the highest Portuguese and math scores of all ethnoracial groups (including Asians). The top panels show that Portuguese proficiency scores have increased for all racial categories in most cases, but the findings are mixed for math. Some of the overall increase is due to the change in testing for 9th grade (in 2021) rather than 8th grade (in 2001), but it seems relatively small. Most notably, black and brown boys and girls improved in Portuguese and math over the twenty years. Indeed, improvements were rather large in most cases (except math for boys). Even though the educational quality gap with white students persists, it declined in the first two decades of the 21st century.

On the other hand, for indigenous boys and girls, mathematics proficiency declined and Portuguese remained relatively stable. Surprisingly, Portuguese and math proficiency scores also declined for Asian boys and girls. The white-Asian educational quality gap increased since Portuguese proficiency scores for white boys and girls increased substantially while math scores declined slightly for the same group. Overall, the four panels of Figure 19 show that the white-"negro" educational quality gap decreased substantially while white disparities with indigenous and Asian peoples increased.

Tables 2 and 3 control for maternal education to control for class origins. Table 2 shows scores for 2001 and Table 3 for 2021. Tables 2 and 3 show the unsurprising pattern that test scores almost always increase with greater maternal education in 2001 and 2021. (Exceptions occur only in the Asian and indigenous categories, where the N may be small).

Controls for maternal education also tend to lessen the educational quality differences across race. (The figure we plan will help to describe the most notable differences and how these patterns account for changes/persistence of racial disparities in educational quality.)

[Tables 2 about here

[Table 3 about here]

Discriminatory Mechanisms of Ethnoracial Inequality

Latin America's national mestizaje narratives commonly claim that ethnoracial discrimination is relatively mild, especially compared to the United States. The latter is an oft-used sounding board case in the Americas regarding ethnoracial formation projects (e.g., Telles 2004, Bailey 2008). These narratives suggest that ethnoracial disparities, when acknowledged, are due to other factors besides discrimination, such as class origins or differences in regional development. We have shown that ethnoracial disparities persist despite controls for class origins and differences in regional or urban residence. Thus, we contend that racism and discrimination are important factors that account for the disparities. This is similar reasoning based on earlier decomposition models of labor market outcomes that sought to separate human capital and other structural variables from the remaining disparities attributed to discrimination (Silva 1985, Binder 1973). A criticism of these models by some economists was that the unobservable differences may be attributable to characteristics besides discrimination. In particular, they pointed to educational quality as an unobserved characteristic, which we have addressed in the previous section with data for Brazil.

More evidence since then has plainly shown ethnoracial discriminatory practices across the region and the contemporary and historical footprints of that discrimination in

patterns of social stratification along ethnoracial lines. For example, audit studies in Colombia, Mexico, and Brazil show that employers are more likely to hire persons classified as white or of light skin color compared to similarly qualified persons of color (Dias 2020, Rodriguez Garavito, Cardenas, Oviedo and Villamizar 2013, Arceo-Gomez and Campos-Vasquez 2014). Numerous ethnographies have also shown the persistence of interpersonal skin color discrimination in Mexico (Sue 2013), Brazil (Horge Freeman 2015), and Peru (Golash Boza 2011).

We provide even more evidence based on social survey data capturing reports of discrimination. In Table 4, we present data from the 2010 PERLA surveys, showing that many Latin Americans report experiencing racial discrimination or witnessing it against others. Our findings for Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru indicate the frequency of experiences of ethnoracial (categorical) or skin color discrimination (Table 4) or having witnessed discrimination against others (Table 5). Although these reports are based on perceptions of discrimination, they tell us much about the widespread recognition of discrimination as experienced personally or seen by others. Many persons in all four countries, especially minorities or individuals of darker skin color, report being discriminated against or witnessing discrimination. In Mexico, for example, where academics and others often denied racial or skin color discrimination, at least in 2010 or before, our results show that many ordinary Mexicans reported discrimination based on color. Furthermore, many reported that they have seen others discriminated by skin color or because they speak an indigenous language or have an indigenous accent.

[Table 4 about here]

[Table 5 about here]

In addition to interpersonal discrimination, black and indigenous disadvantage occurs in the present because of structural or systemic racism, both historical and current. Slava and

Valencia Caicedo (2023-chapter in this volume) show how slavery, land reform, and colonial institutions that established the organization of indigenous labor, continue to influence current Latin American ethnoracial income and inequality. Also, regional development, primarily directed by modernizing elites through locational subsidies and industrial planning, has had disparate ethnoracial impacts in countries like Brazil (Telles 2004). Historically, labor market discrimination and repression of blacks through vagrancy laws and the promotion of whites through immigration policies and subsidies also produced ethnoracial stratification (Andrews 2016, FitzGerald and Martin 2014). These inequalities, which include human capital accumulation, tend to be reproduced intergenerationally. Hence, the historical structural disadvantage that people of color suffered continues to hobble them today, and it overlaps with the contemporary ethnoracial disadvantage in the labor market, educational systems, media, and other institutions (Andrews 1991, 2016; Telles 2004).

Policies to Combat Ethno-Racial Inequality

Having shown the racial inequalities throughout the region, we now turn to policies that seek to mitigate them, particularly in schooling. Overall, enrollment in higher education institutions in Latin America has increased in the past two decades (Mainero, 2020; Rivas, 2015), though significant ethnoracial gaps remain. The cultural pertinence of these institutions—and students' unequal access to them along racial and socioeconomic lines— have become vital issues that governments and social movements have tried to remedy. To increase the disproportionately low enrollment and retention rates of Indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants in higher educational institutions, Latin American countries have created various programs to reduce these disparities. These programs include quota systems, scholarships, and agreements between local communities and universities (Muñoz, 2006).

Arguably, the largest and boldest programs to reduce ethnoracial disparities are the racial quotas created in Brazil, both in higher education and public service jobs. These policies seek to break the historical and intergenerational cycle of feedback loops between racial inequality and racial mobility in Brazil. In the United States, affirmative action, particularly in universities, significantly increased the size of the Black middle class since its inception more than 50 years ago. Racial quotas were ruled unconstitutional in the U.S. in the later 20th century (Bailey 2009), though other strategies have persisted and continue to build on past gains.[12] Yet, affirmative action is new in Latin America, and the only significant program on a national scale is in Brazil. Indeed, whereas U.S.-style affirmative action does not use numerical goals in higher education, Brazilian public policy in university admissions seeks explicitly reserves a set number of seats for black, indigenous, and lower-class students. The policy was first promulgated in the state of Rio de Janeiro in 2002 and soon after spread to several other Brazilian states and eventually the entire country (Peria and Bailey 2014).

Implementing affirmative action was seen and criticized by some sectors as a top-down policy. However, the fight for present-day policy gains began decades before in social movement organizing and activism (Bowen 2021). Later, a pivotal moment brought local movement activists and international actors together, lending special clarity and urgency to grievances redress, namely, the United Nations World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance in South Africa in 2001 (Telles, 2004). The first decade of the century many novel initiatives and policy to address ethnoracial discrimination and inequality (cite). Then in 2012, Congress passed the Quotas Law, requiring all federal universities' class- and race-based university quotas. The same year, in a

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[12] The U.S. Supreme Court, with a new conservative majority, recently ruled against explicitly targeting "race" in university admissions (cite).

historic decision, the Brazilian Supreme Court unanimously ruled that quotas for black and indigenous students were constitutional (Telles and Paixão 2013; Peria and Bailey 2014).

Brazil's most competitive universities tend to be public, and most affirmative action programs are in public universities, all of this also in stark contrast to the case of higher education in the United States. Moreover, expanding federal universities and university slots in existing universities has prevented affirmative action from being a zero-sum policy. Paradoxically, public universities, which are entirely free of charge, tend to be superior to private universities. So, the students enrolled in public universities disproportionately come from the private secondary schools attended by Brazil's privileged classes. On the other hand, most Brazilians attend poorly resourced public secondary schools, and those who graduate and go on to college predominately participate in private universities—these account for 70% of higher education students in Brazil (Paixão and Carvano 2008). Thus, attendance at public secondary schools proxies low socioeconomic status in Brazil and become a critical class-based criterion for Brazil's new affirmative action policies for public universities (Peria and Bailey 2014).

The unexpected surge and expansiveness of progressive measures to redress historical and contemporary discrimination and marginalization of Brazil's afro-descendant and indigenous populations engendered much public discussion about race and racism (Telles 2004; Bailey and Peria 2010). Although there has been some opposition to quotas or affirmative action, and perhaps increasingly so during the presidential administration of Jair Bolsonaro, public opinion research has revealed consistent and surprisingly strong levels of support for these policies across time and ethnoracial backgrounds (Bailey 2004; Bailey, Fialho, and Peria 2018). Though somewhat difficult to explain from a sociological lens, the novel Brazilian approach that combined socioeconomic and ethnoracial criteria while also substantially expanding access to higher education across the board, then, seems to have

become well-integrated into that country's social fabric. And, as noted, affirmative action policy extends into other domains beyond higher education. In 2014, Brazil's National Congress mandated a 20% minimum quota for people of African ancestry (both black and brown) to be hired for civil service positions filled through federal examinations. Earlier this year (2023), President Lula decreed that at least 30% of all public trust positions in the federal government are to be occupied by afro-descendants by the end of 2025 (Brasil 2023). While these developments in Brazil are indeed encouraging, and at the same time precarious, as all political gains can be, it will nonetheless continue to be a mammoth challenge and take several decades to substantial modify the contour of ethnoracial inequality in Brazil.

Programs for Indigenous inclusion

Even though afrodescendants (pretos and pardos) are the main targets of affirmative action policies, the small indigenous Brazilians are also beneficiaries of racial quotas. In other countries, Indigenous people also receive programs that aim to redress social inequality and other forms of exclusion. Indigenous peoples face particular obstacles, including linguistic and geographic isolation. In particular, they are geographically isolated from universities, which are generally located in cities, and confront economic barriers to access, as well as curricula that do not reflect their values, culture, and language when they manage to enroll (Muñoz, 2006).

Higher Education and Indigenous

As countries such as Ecuador and Bolivia have declared themselves plurinational states in recent years and have granted greater protections to Indigenous peoples per ILO (International Labor Organization Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989) guidelines and other international organisms and treaties, the need for educational institutions

to address the intercultural nature of these countries has been placed at the forefront. Articles 26 and 27 of the ILO 169 guidelines declare that Indigenous peoples have the right to access all levels of education and to participate in the creation of education programs that respond to their particular needs and teach their history, knowledge, and values; they also state that governments must recognize the right of Indigenous peoples to create their educational institutions and take steps to allow them to have control over the execution of these educational programs.

Despite the advancement of these rights in the ILO and the increased recognition of Indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants in Latin American constitutions, these populations have been unable to access higher educational institutions on an equal footing. Academic requirements, entrance exams, privatized universities where students and their families are expected to pay for educational expenses, and geographic isolation are all difficulties faced by Indigenous students (Villalobos et al., 2017).

Indigenous movements in the 1990s were able to position Indigenous peoples as critical social actors with demands of their own that required government interventions and changes in the educational system (Muñoz, 2006). The marginalization of Indigenous peoples in higher education became more evident as this group gained greater visibility in political and social institutions, and the demand for Indigenous peoples to access higher educational institutions increased (López, Moya, and Hamel 2009). In response to a monocultural Western education model, Indigenous universities were created to teach Indigenous students in their language and prepare them to be active members of their community. These institutions were developed so Indigenous peoples would not have to assimilate into Western culture, leave the community after completing their education, and face discrimination in educational settings because of their ethnic background and culture (Del Popolo, 2017). Many of the universities were created by Indigenous movements and organizations or

Indigenous intellectuals and community leaders: for example, in Ecuador, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities (CONAIE) created the Universidad Intercultural de las Nacionalidades y Pueblos Indígenas Amawtay Wasi in Colombia, the Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca created the Universidad Autónoma Indígena Intercultural; in Brazil, the Coordenação das Organizações Indígenas da Amazônia Brasileira (COIAB) created the Centro Amazônico de Formação Indígena, de Brasil; and in Nicaragua, Indigenous leaders from the two autonomous zones of the Caribbean coast established the Universidad de las Regiones Autónomas de la Costa Caribe Nicaragüense (Mato, 2011).

Indigenous universities foster intercultural spaces that benefit Indigenous peoples marginalized from other educational settings. These spaces are not only meant for Indigenous people, however, and also help enrolled Afro-descendant and mestizo students. The universities combat colonial modes of thinking, are community-centered, and value cultural diversity (Muñoz, 2006). They have been able to improve the educational opportunities of Indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants, create educational curriculums that are culturally pertinent, promote participatory learning practices, and develop intercultural teaching and research practices (Mato, 2014). Some, such as the Universidad Amawtay Wasi in Ecuador, explicitly challenge Western development models and promote Indigenous concepts. For example, *sumak kawsay* (Mato, 2011), or "good living," is centered on the idea of harmony between humans and nature (Bretón, 2013) and has radical implications for the redistribution of resources in society (Acosta, 2014). These universities thus seek to increase Indigenous peoples' and Afro-descendants' access to higher educational institutions and to change the very logic of educational institutions.

Indigenous universities face numerous challenges despite their progress, forcing some to close. The Universidad Amawtay Wasi, for example, was shut down in 2013 for not following the evaluation process set forth by the country's educational accreditation

institution (Mato, 2011); it had been operating as a private university because it was told it lacked the design of a public institution and thus could not receive public funding. In addition to facing challenges from bureaucratic educational institutions for accreditation and recognition, Indigenous universities are also underfunded: Their members must confront racist attitudes from government agents and meet evaluation criteria for their universities that do not take into consideration Indigenous knowledge (Mato, 2008). Some universities—like those in Bolivia that did receive government funding and were part of former president Evo Morales' decolonial project—have confronted still other problems, such as low student enrollment, poor infrastructure, unprepared faculty members, and limited social mobility for students due to the segregation and location of these universities (Villalobos et al., 2017).

Bilingual Intercultural Education

In the 1970s and 1980s, various forms of bilingual intercultural education were adopted in several Latin American countries. This change occurred in the context of enacting international laws protecting Indigenous peoples and implementing educational policies benefiting those approved in Ecuador, Guatemala, and Bolivia (Fajardo, 2011). Other Latin American countries later followed this example. Implementing bilingual intercultural education was perceived as a victory for Indigenous movements, especially in countries like Ecuador, where Indigenous peoples had more control over this education. According to Fajardo (2011), bilingual education existed in the region before the 1970s, but it was mainly assimilationist, not created to promote or preserve Indigenous culture and values. In contrast, the bilingual intercultural education that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s—and even the adoption of this term over others—was based on incorporating Indigenous values, traditions, and language. Today, this education is a crucial aspect of *sumac kawsay* and plurinationality,

which are Indigenous concepts with cultural, legal, and economic implications found in the constitutions of Ecuador and Bolivia (Acosta, 2014).

Bilingual intercultural education, however, was not adopted in the same way or at the same time across the region because of the differences in the composition of Indigenous populations and the rights granted to them in various countries. Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela were at the vanguard of constitutional protections for Indigenous people. At the same time, Belize, Chile, Guyana, and Suriname did not grant these same protections (Barié, 2003).

In some countries, such as Ecuador, Indigenous communities had complete autonomy over implementing this education. In contrast, governmental entities in other countries, such as Mexico, had control over its development and implementation. While granting Indigenous people autonomy in some countries gave Indigenous movements and communities greater control over this education, it also meant that the success of bilingual intercultural schools depended on each community's organizational capacity and autonomy—thus creating obstacles for its implementation. Funding and consistency also varied. Some intercultural bilingual schools received funding from the government, while others depended on funding from international NGOs.

The success of bilingual intercultural education across the region continues to be debated. While its importance for preserving and protecting Indigenous cultures and rights cannot be denied, there are essential critiques that should not be ignored. Some of these schools, for example, have very few teachers and professors who are Indigenous and do not teach classes in Indigenous languages, which means that language preservation is not taking place (Rodríguez, 2017).

Conditional Cash Transfers

Although not explicitly targeted by race/ethnicity, conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs seek poverty alleviation by conditioning their use mainly on children's education. Operating in more than 50 countries worldwide, CCTs are specifically intended to alleviate poverty by providing money to low-income families conditional on their investment in their children's human capital as well as their regular medical visits and vaccinations. Schooling conditions usually require enrollment, continued attendance, and sometimes performance evaluations. A meta-analysis of 94 studies of 47 CCT programs shows mixed results among these widely heterogeneous programs regarding school enrollment, attendance, completion, and program cost-effectiveness (Garcia & Saavedra, 2017). With CCT programs, ethnoracial disparities also seem to have declined based on evidence from the region's two largest countries. Brazil's *Bolsa Familia*, the most extensive CCT program in the world, increased enrollment and grade promotion and decreased dropout rates overall. By race, it equalized enrollment among Afro-descendants and Whites, where there were previously racial disparities (Glewwe & Kassouf, 2012). With Mexico's CCT program, *Oportunidades*, school attainment among Indigenous children increased, reducing the ethnic gap, and Indigenous child labor declined (Lopez-Calva & Patrinos, 2015)

Summary

The goal of this chapter was to detail the prevalence of social stratification in Latin America by race and ethnicity. To do so, we used multiple measures and data sources for about 20 of the region's countries. We began by showing how racial composition varies widely, from predominantly white Argentina to mestizo and indigenous Guatemala and Bolivia, to primarily Afro-descendant Brazil. We then proceeded to the bulk of our analysis on ethnoracial inequality along educational, earnings, and occupational lines. Despite national

differences, our analysis using census data (available via IPUMS) generally reveal robust racial hierarchies with whites or the non-Indigenous, non-Black populations at the top and Black and Indigenous peoples at the bottom. Since the format and content of censuses depend on each country's local political context, we also used a fairly uniform categorization system with LAPOP data to mitigate across-country variation in ethnoracial census data. Our analysis of LAPOP data's fuller ethnoracial schemes that included white and mestizo, as well as indigenous and black categories, nonetheless showed a similar racial ordering as comparable census data.

Nonetheless, as we discussed, the region's considerable racial fluidity, especially in survey contexts using self-identification (Muniz and Bailey 2022), creates measurement issues that necessarily go beyond the scope of this chapter (see Villarreal and Bailey 2021). To mitigate measurement hindrances, our analytic strategy used multiple measures to capture ethnoracial identification and stratification dynamics from distinct angles. Of central note, our analysis of skin color returned the most consistent evidence of a racial hierarchy in nearly all Latin American countries. More to the point, skin color, from lightest to darkest, positively correlates with socioeconomic status throughout Latin America - almost without exception. Thus, Latin America can be characterized as a "pigmentocracy" with light-skinned persons at the top and dark persons at the bottom. We also find that a bevy of controls, including one's social origins, do not wash out that effect.

Although changing, the dominant paradigm for understanding inequality in Latin America has arguably been based on social class origins. Race was considered unimportant or merely an epiphenomenon of class. Our findings, which are consistent with many recent studies, show that social class does not explain away racial/color inequality. Racial inequality is an independent source of racial inequality throughout Latin America. This is true whether it be educational attainment, educational quality, income, occupation, or location. Our

analysis reveal yet further evidence, then, that social stratification by race and ethnicity is a defining characteristic of life in Latin America. To make that even more clear, we reported on the voices of Latin Americans themselves from social surveys: they testify to the enduring weight of discrimination.

We ended our analysis by examining policies that seek to mitigate inequality, most prominently racial quotas in Brazil. Fortunately, some governments in the region, particularly Brazil, have now begun to address such disparities. Brazil's robust policies, including racial quotas, to improve access to higher education for the past twenty years, have made considerable progress. However, it has a long way to go before becoming a "racial democracy."

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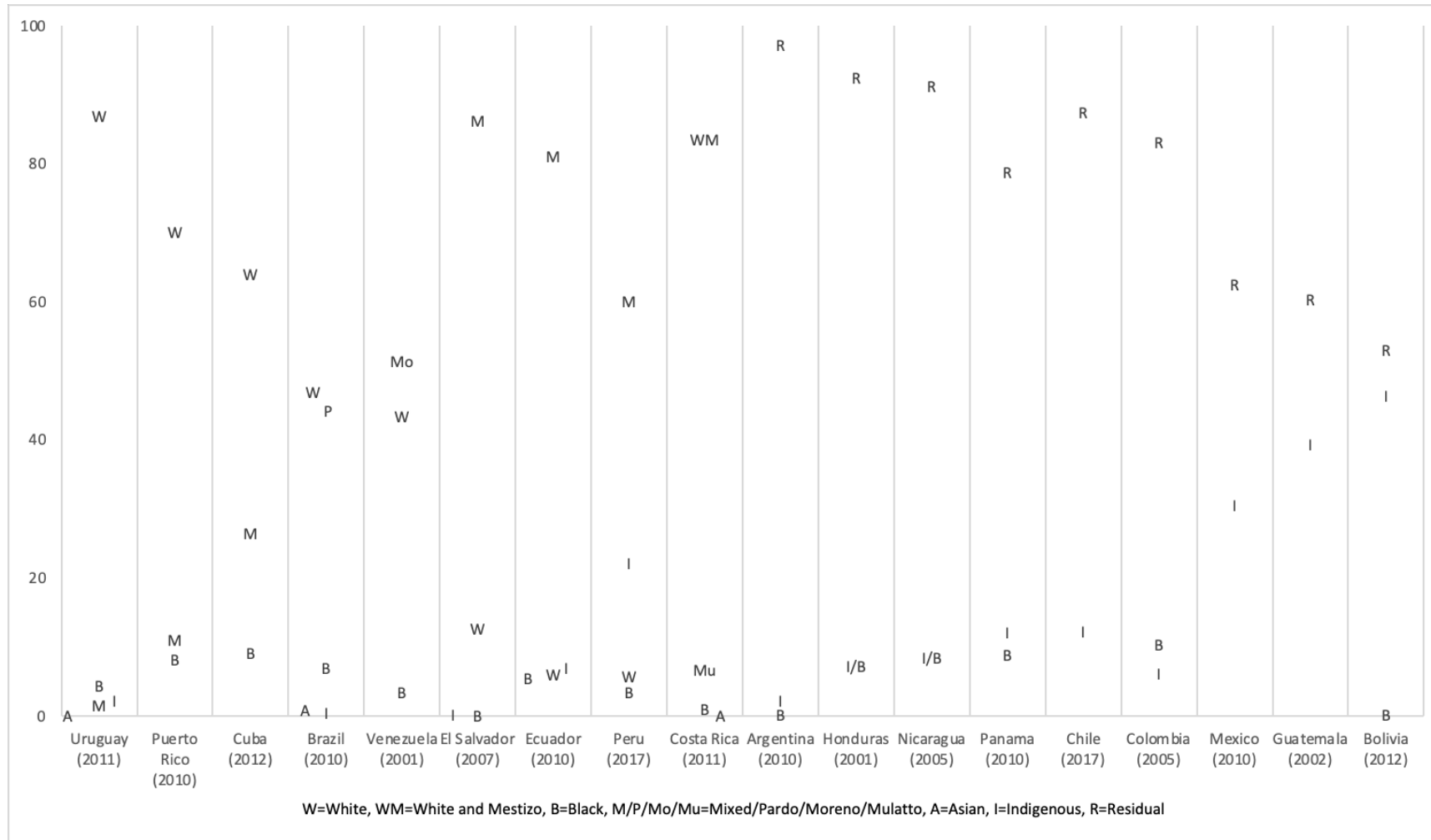
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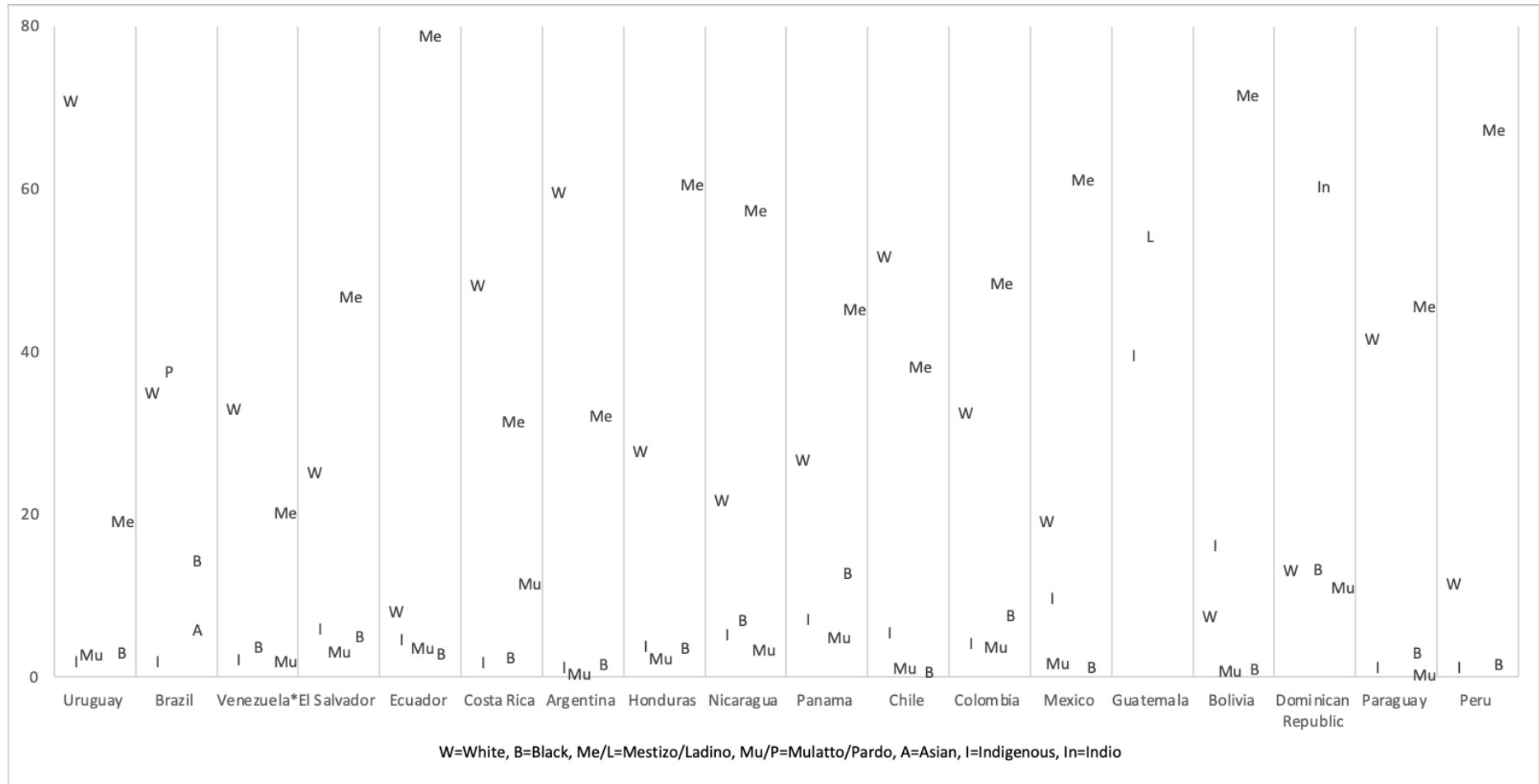
Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Ethnoracial composition by country census classification scheme

W=White, WM=White and Mestizo, B=Black, M/P/Mo/Mu=Mixed/Pardo/Moreno/Mulatto, A=Asian, I=Indigenous, R=Residual
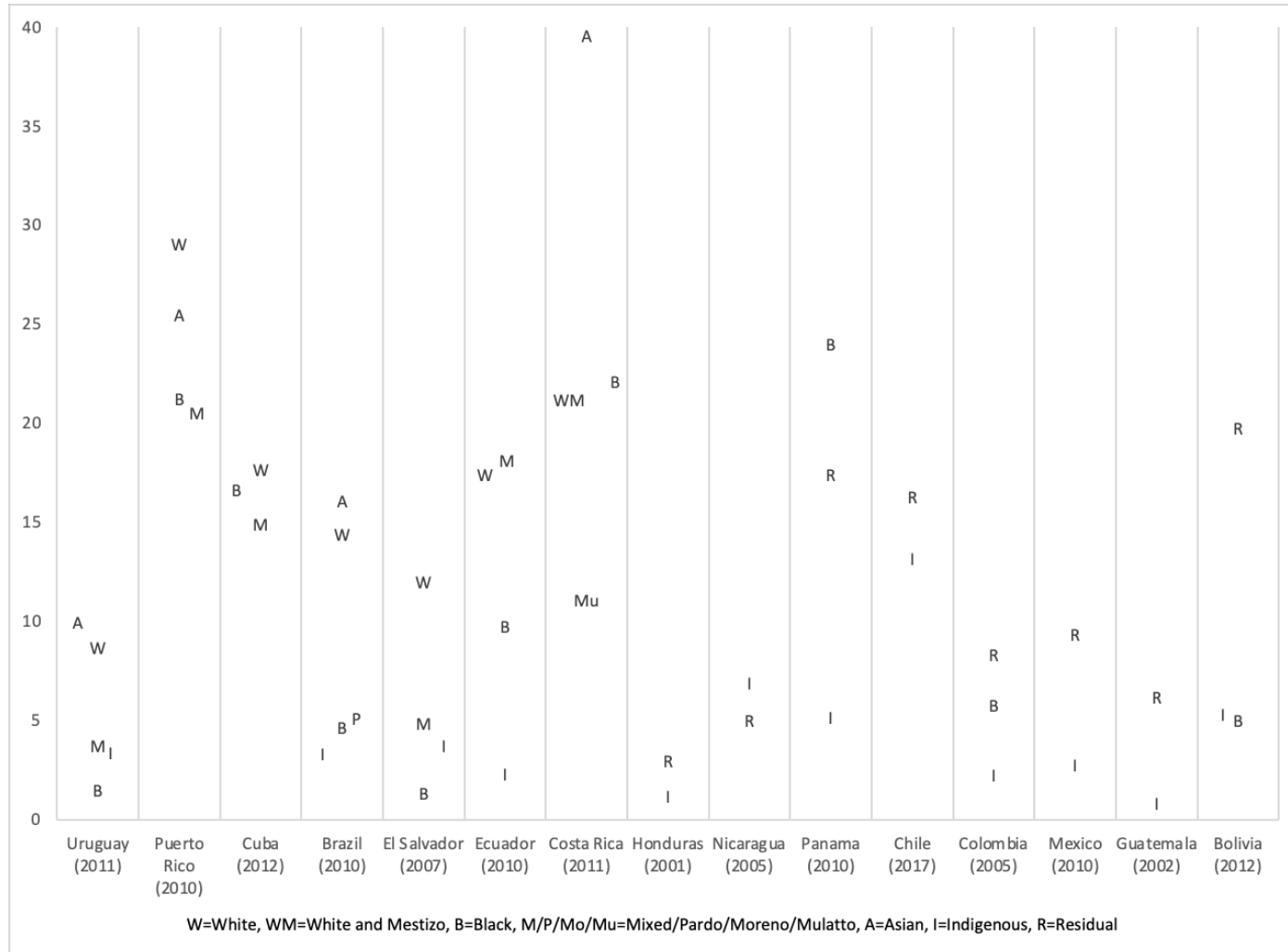
Source: Census

Figure 2: Percent ethnoracial category composition

Source: LAPOP Surveys 2010-2019.
* Does not include data from the 2018/2019 survey

Figure 3: Percent university completed, ages 25-50

40 ⎯
35 ⎯
30 ⎯
25 ⎯
20 ⎯
15 ⎯
10 ⎯
5 ⎯
0 ⎯

Uruguay (2011): A, W, M, I, B
Puerto Rico (2010): W, A, B, M, B
Cuba (2012): W, B, M
Brazil (2010): A, W, W, B, P, I, B
El Salvador (2007): W, M, I
Ecuador (2010): W, M, B, I
Costa Rica (2011): A, WM, Mu
Honduras (2001): B, R, I
Nicaragua (2005): I, R
Panama (2010): B, R, I
Chile (2017): R, I
Colombia (2005): R, B, I
Mexico (2010): R, I
Guatemala (2002): R, I
Bolivia (2012): R, I, B

W=White, WM=White and Mestizo, B=Black, M/P/Mo/Mu=Mixed/Pardo/Moreno/Mulatto, A=Asian, I=Indigenous, R=Residual
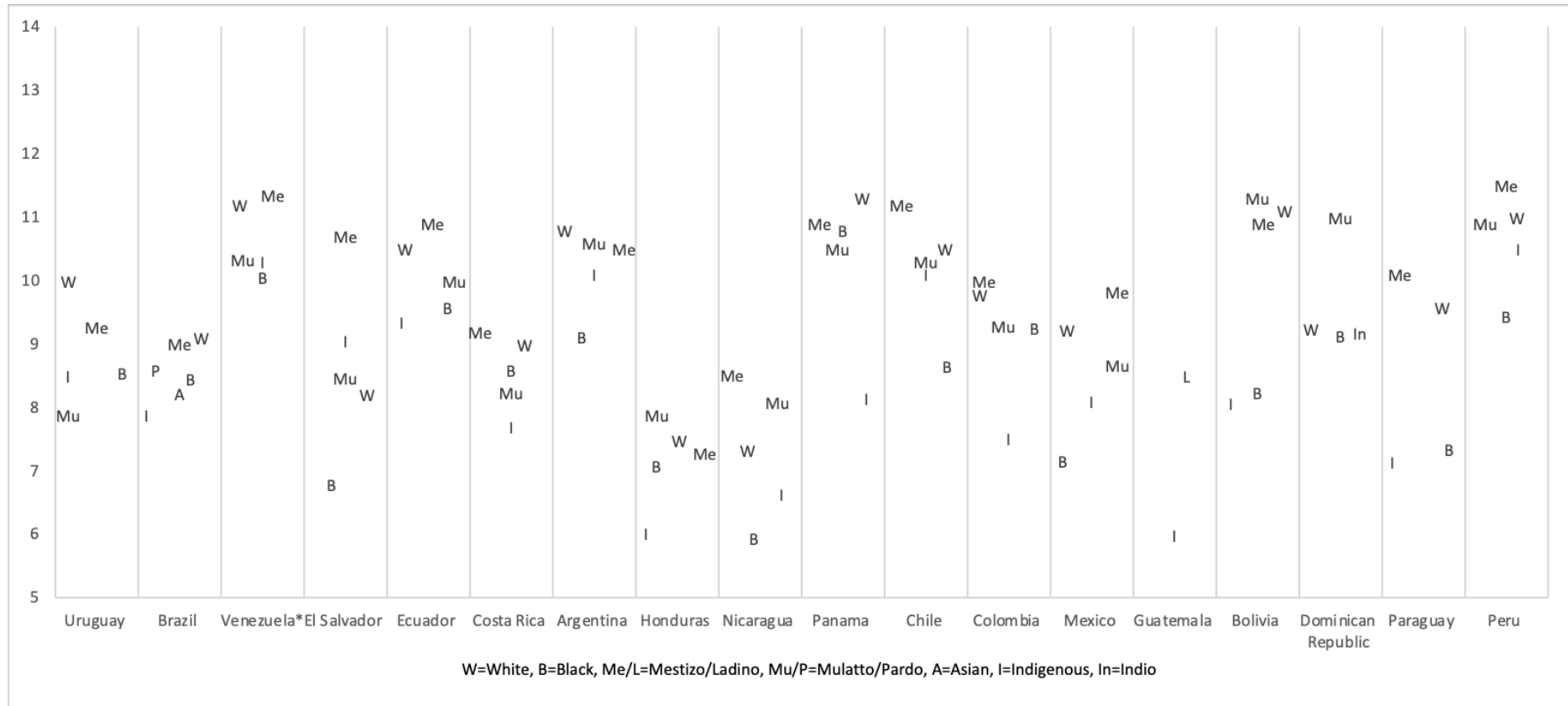
Source: Census

Figure 4: Percent lowest educational achievement, ages 25-60
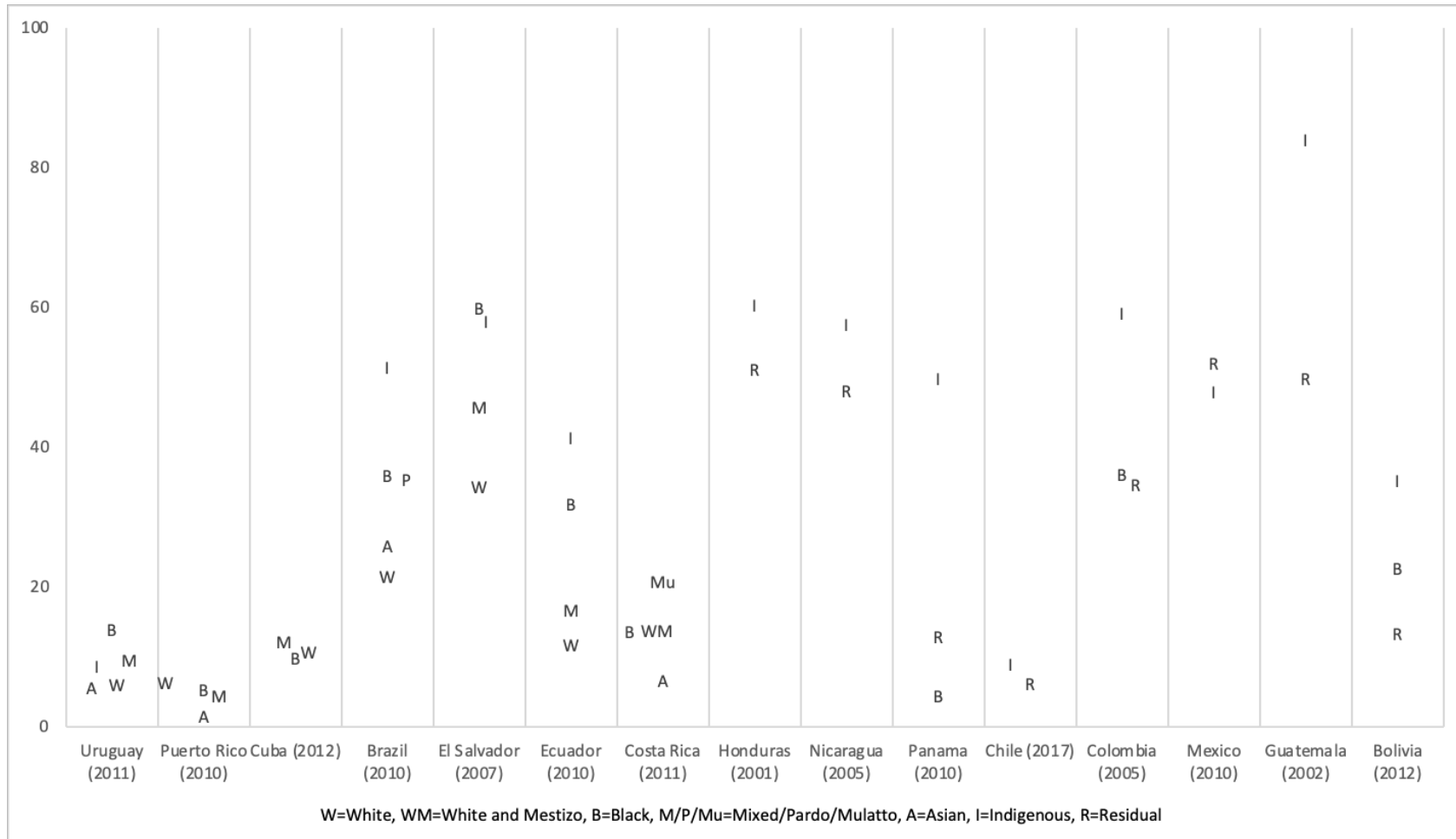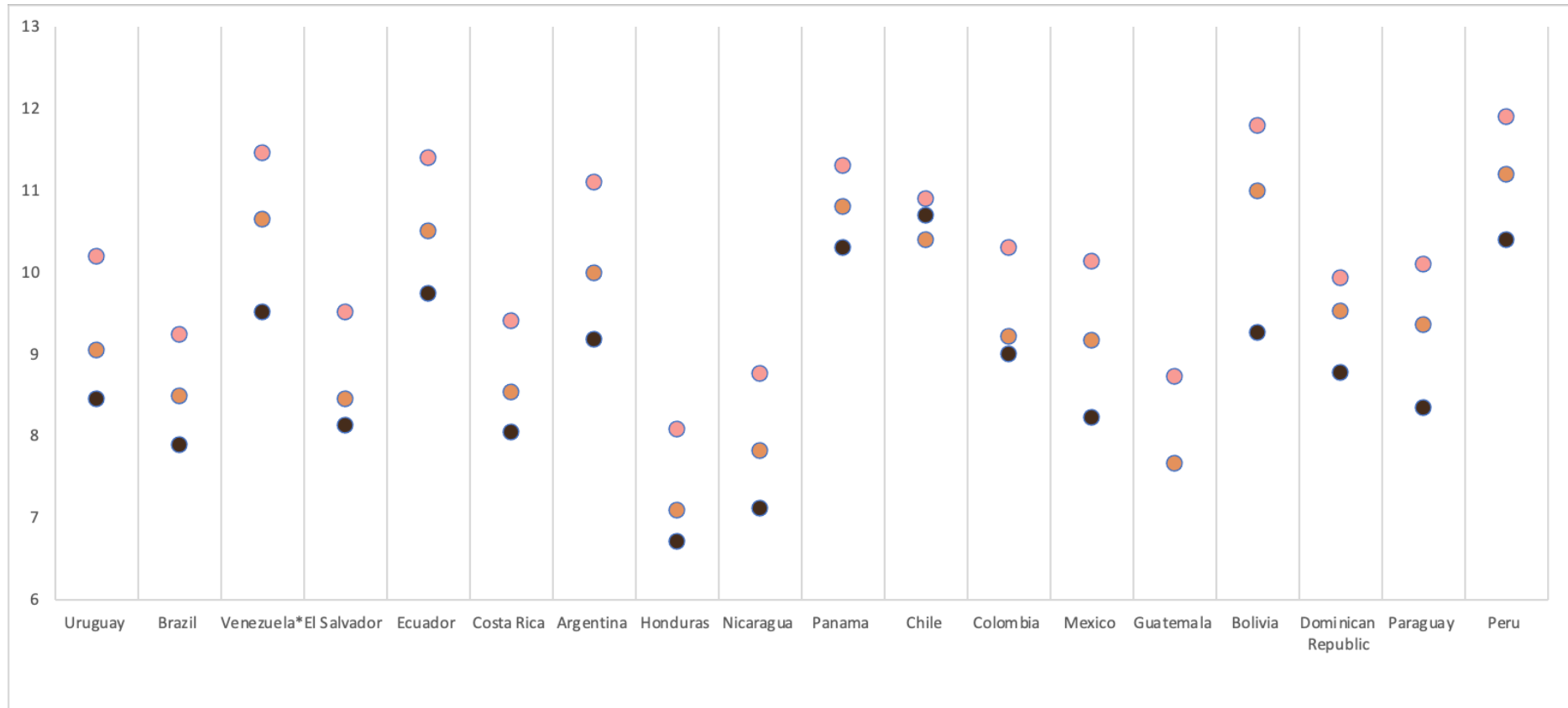

Source: Census

Figure 5: Mean years of schooling by ethnoracial categories

Source: LAPOP Surveys 2010-2019
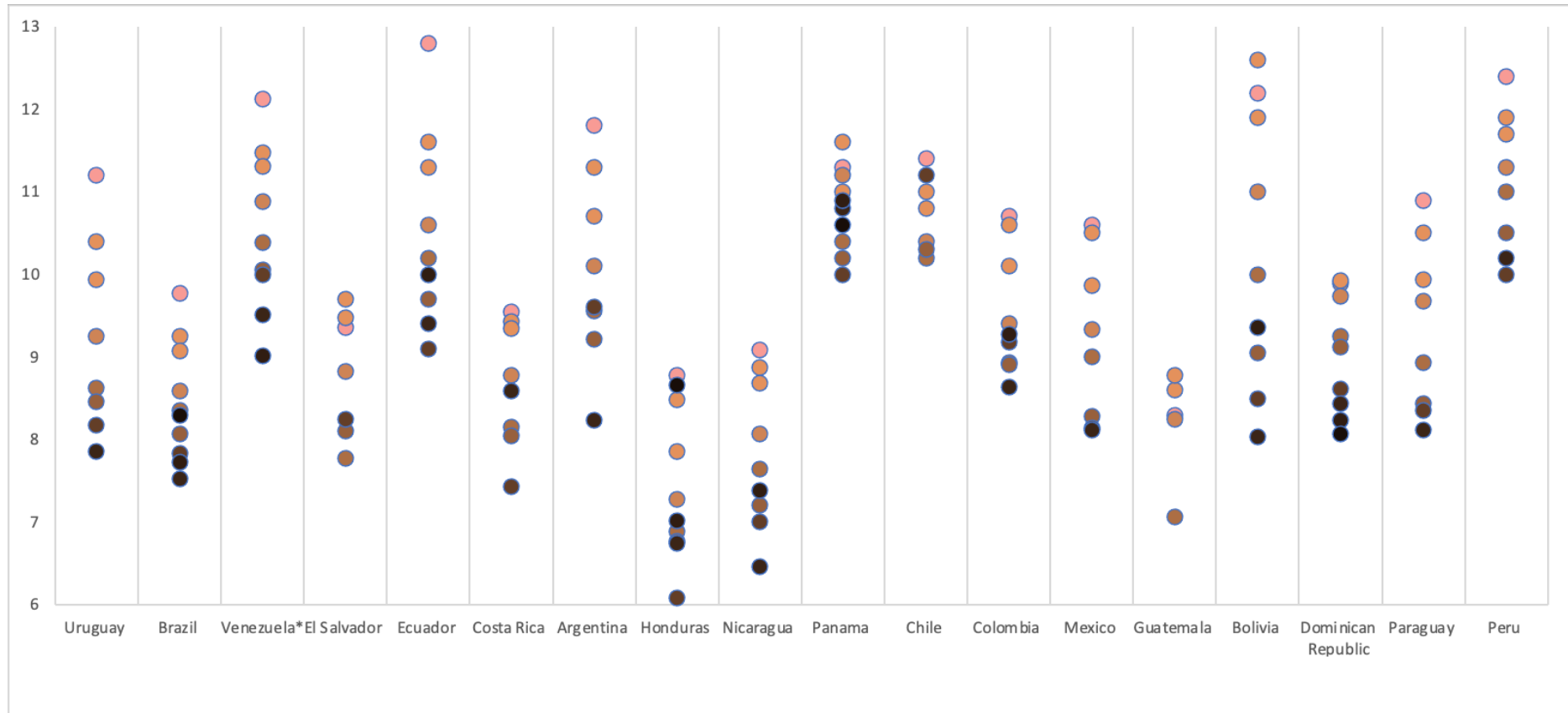* Does not include data from the 2018/2019 survey

Figure 6: Mean years of schooling by major skin color categories

* Does not include data from the 2018/2019 survey
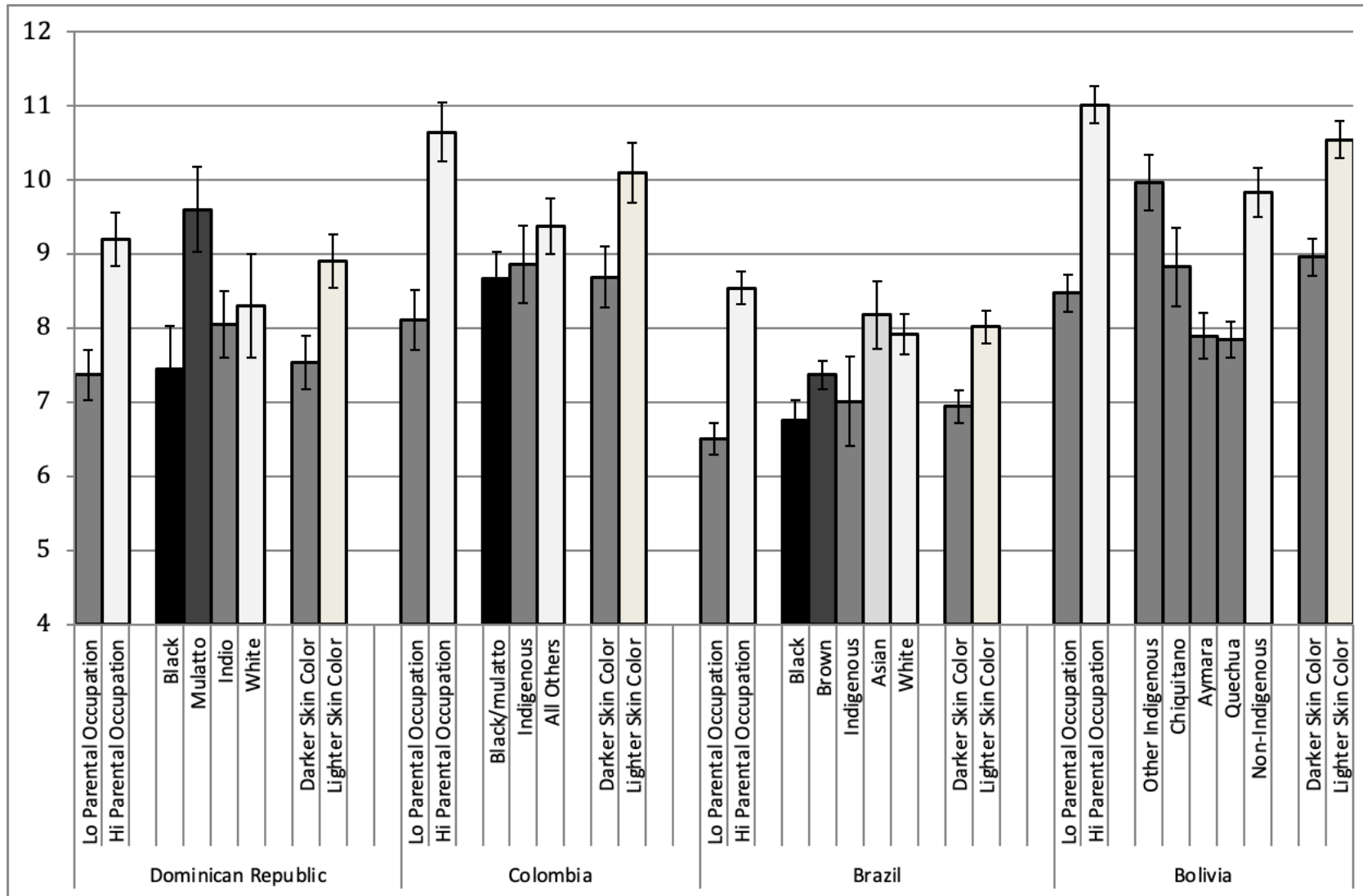Source: LAPOP Surveys 2010-2019

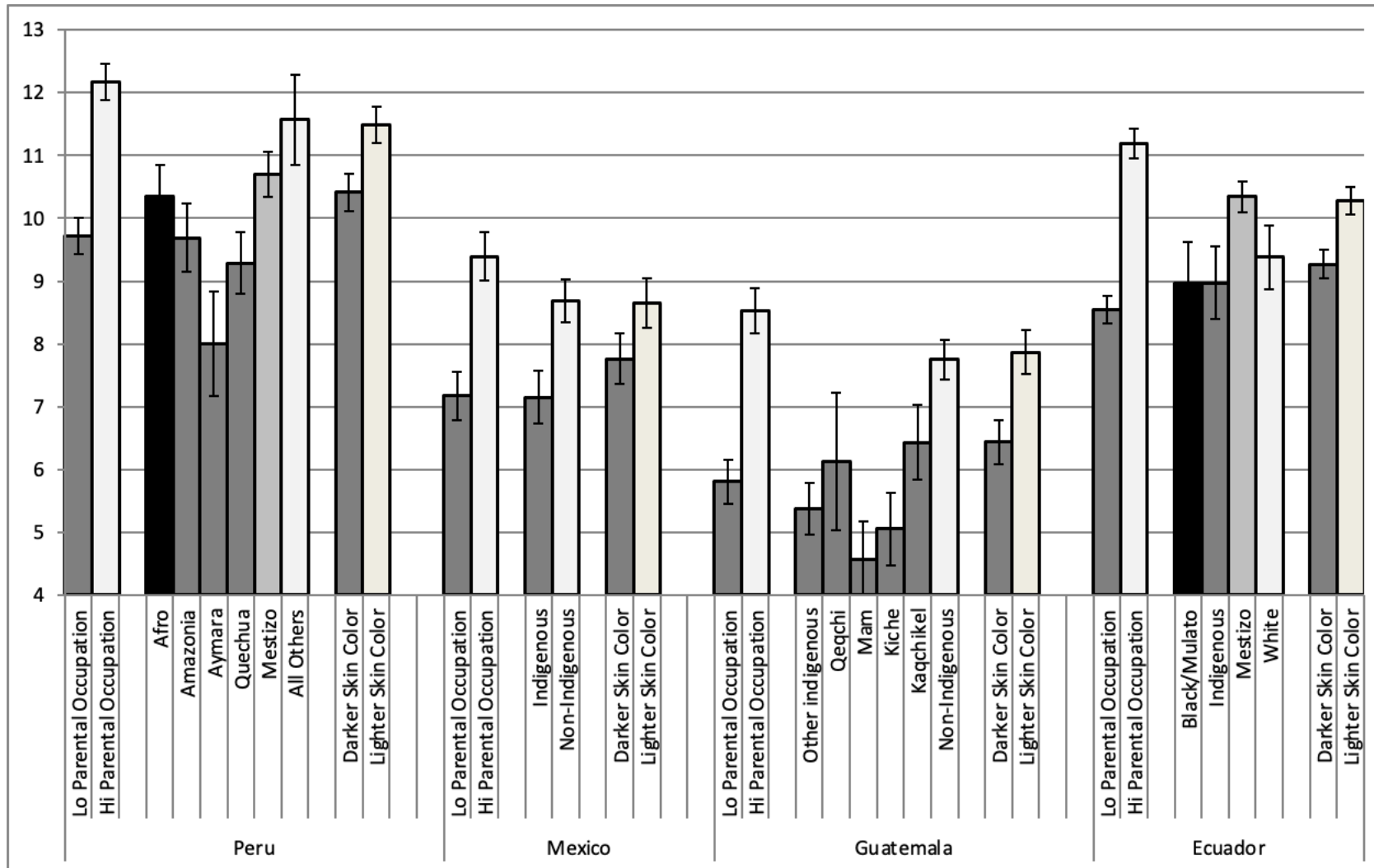Figure 7: Mean years of schooling by detailed skin color categories

Source: LAPOP Surveys 2010-2019
* Does not include data from the 2018/2019 survey

Figure 8: Predicted years of schooling by parental occupation, ethnoracial and skin color

Note: The "lighter" and "darker" skin color bars indicate the predicted years of education of respondents with skin tones one standard deviation below or above the mean, respectively, for each country. The parental occupation bars also represent the estimated years of education for respondents one standard deviation below or above their country average occupational status, respectively.

67

Figure 9: Mean per capita household income by ethnoracial category and skin Color, LAPOP 2012
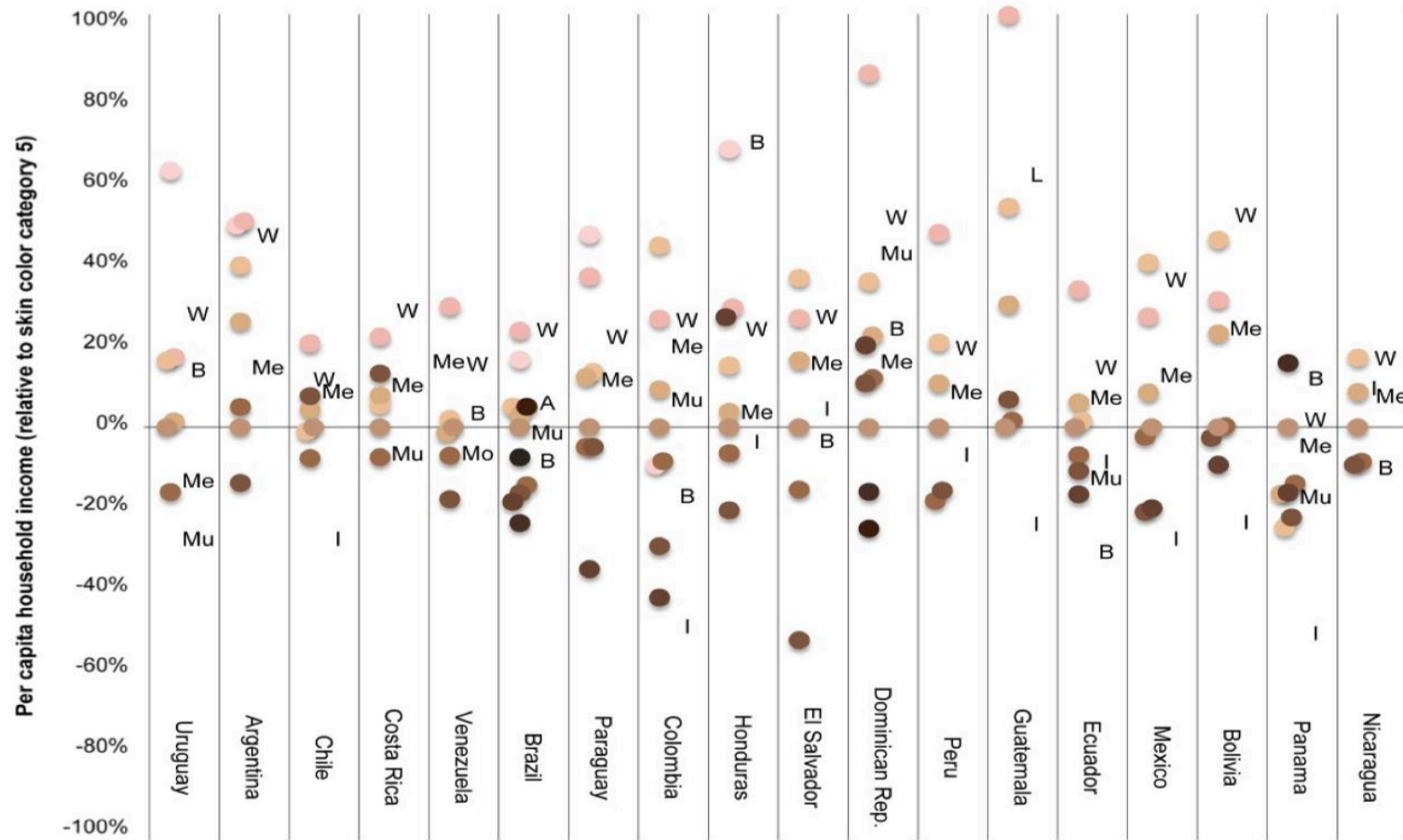
Source: LAPOP 2012, Adapted from Bailey, Saperstein, and Penner (2014).
Notes: The mean per capita household income of skin color category five is the reference (0%) for each country. Skin color points are shaded to match the category number on the color scales. Racial categories are denoted by letters – W = white/blanca, B = black/negra, A = Asian/amarela, L = Ladina, Me = Mestiza, Mo = Morena, Mu = Mulata, I = Indígena.

Figure 10: Predicted mean per capita household income by skin color and maternal education, LAPOP 2014
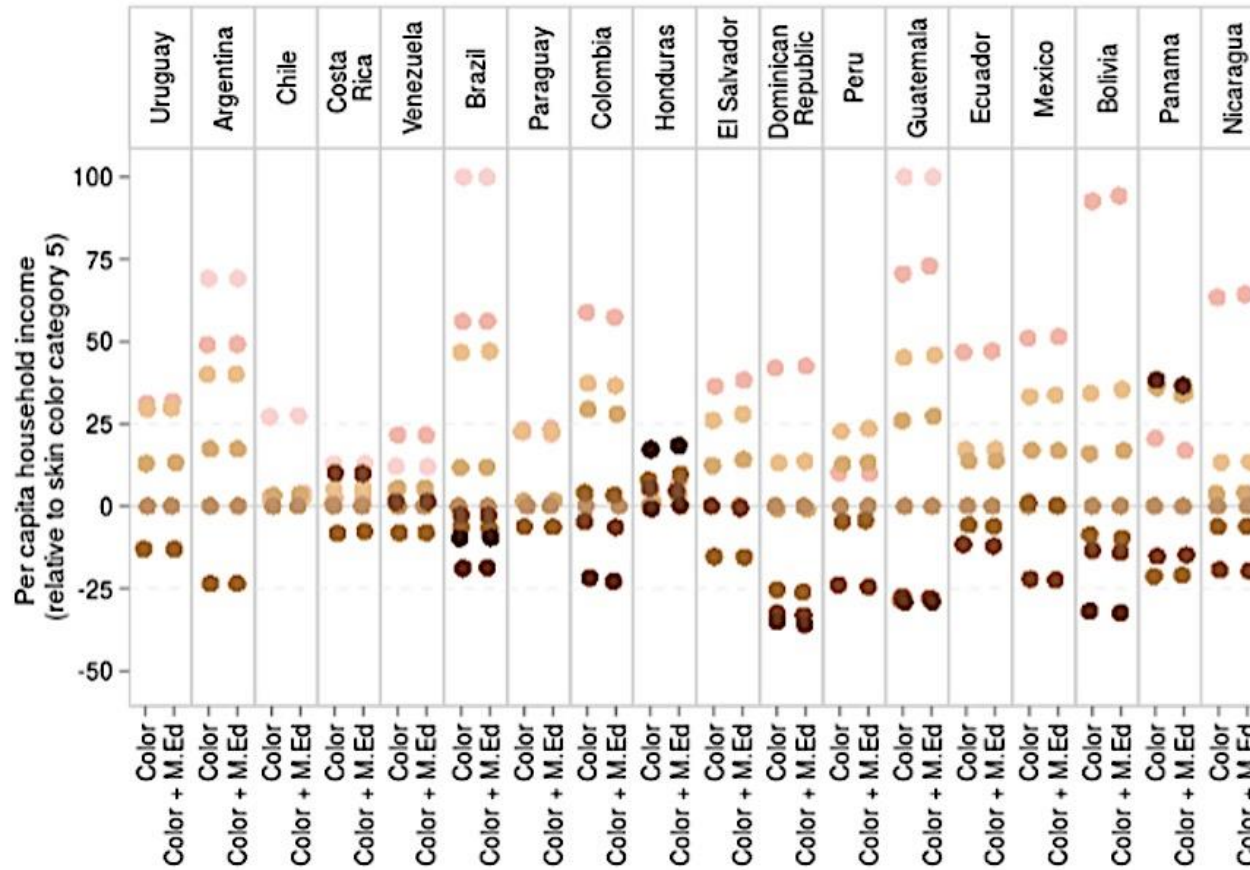
Notes: Values are mean per capita household income for skin color categories. The mean per capita household income of skin color category five is the reference (0%) for each country. "M.Ed" is "Mother's Education."

Figure 11: Coefficient Change for Skin Color after Controlling for Mother's Education, LAPOP 2014

Figure 12: Percent in administrative and professional occupations, ages 25-60

W=White, WM=White and Mestizo, B=Black, M/Mu=Mixed/Mulatto, A=Asian, I=Indigenous, R=Residual
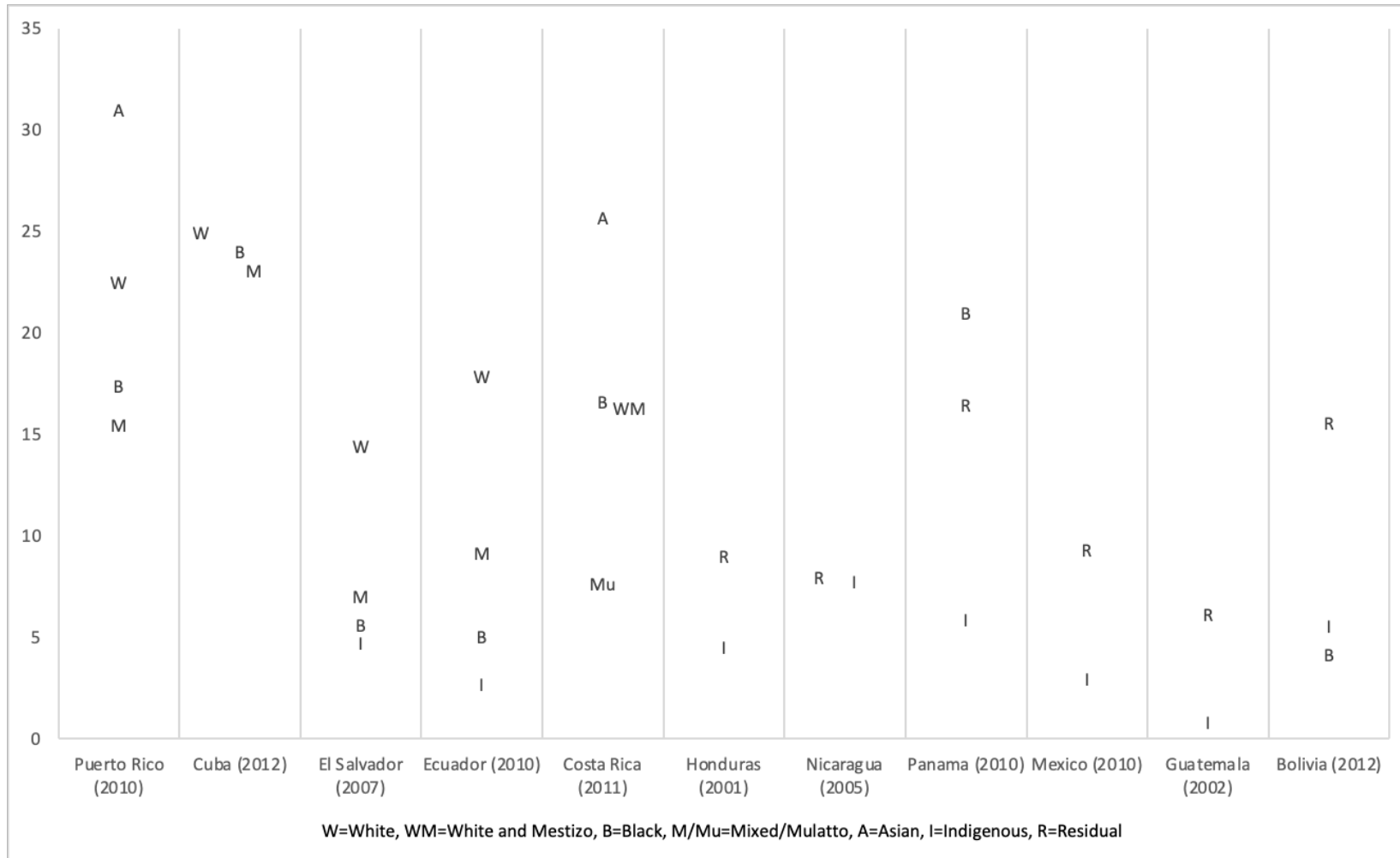
Source: Censu

Figure 13: Percent urban

W=White, WM=White and Mestizo, B=Black, M/Mu=Mixed/Mulatto, A=Asian, I=Indigenous, R=Residual
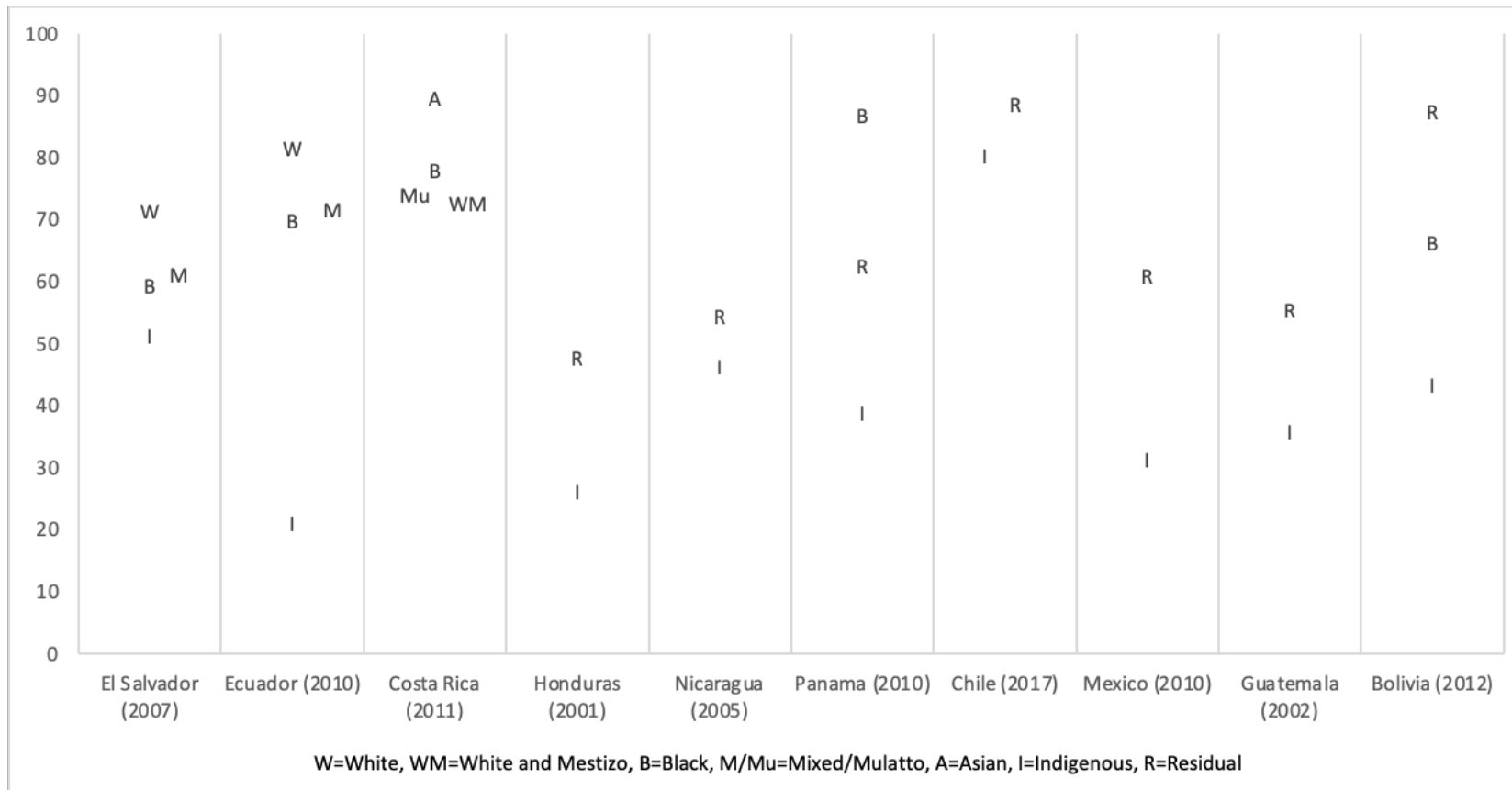
Source: Census

Figure 14: Percent in university by race in brazil from 1992-2021, ages 18-25
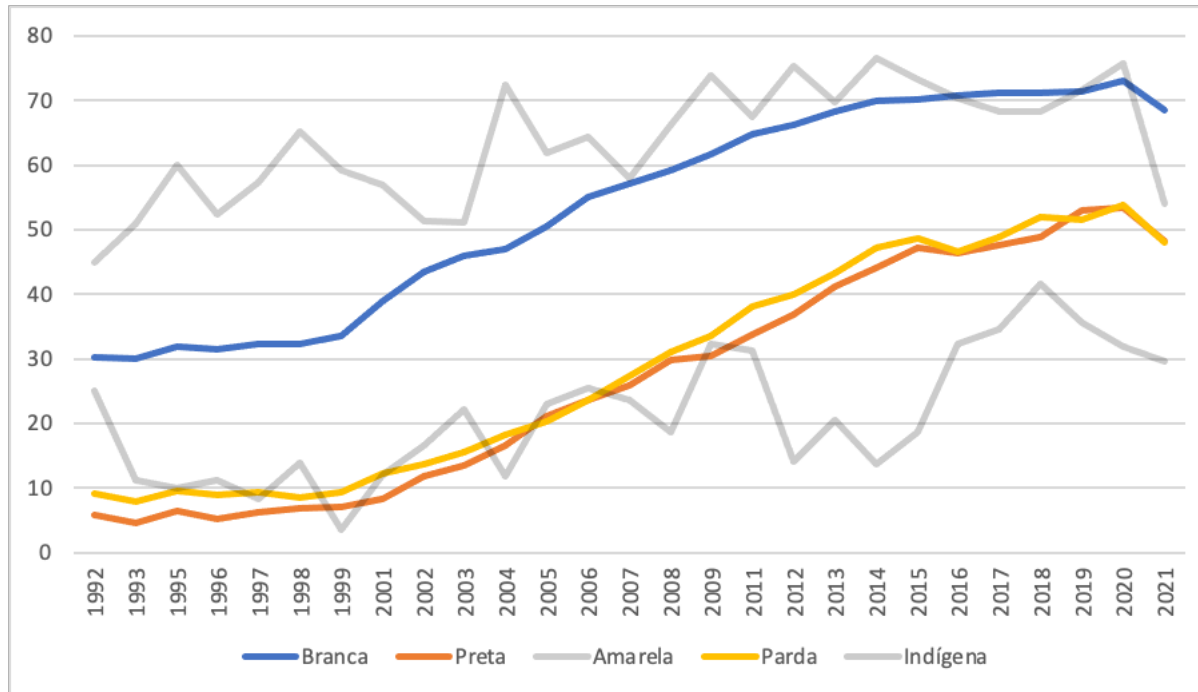
Source: Pesquisa Nacional para Amostra de Domicilios (PNADs), 1992-2021

Figure 15: Portuguese and math proficiency test scores for 8th/9th graders in brazil by race and sex in 2001 and 2021
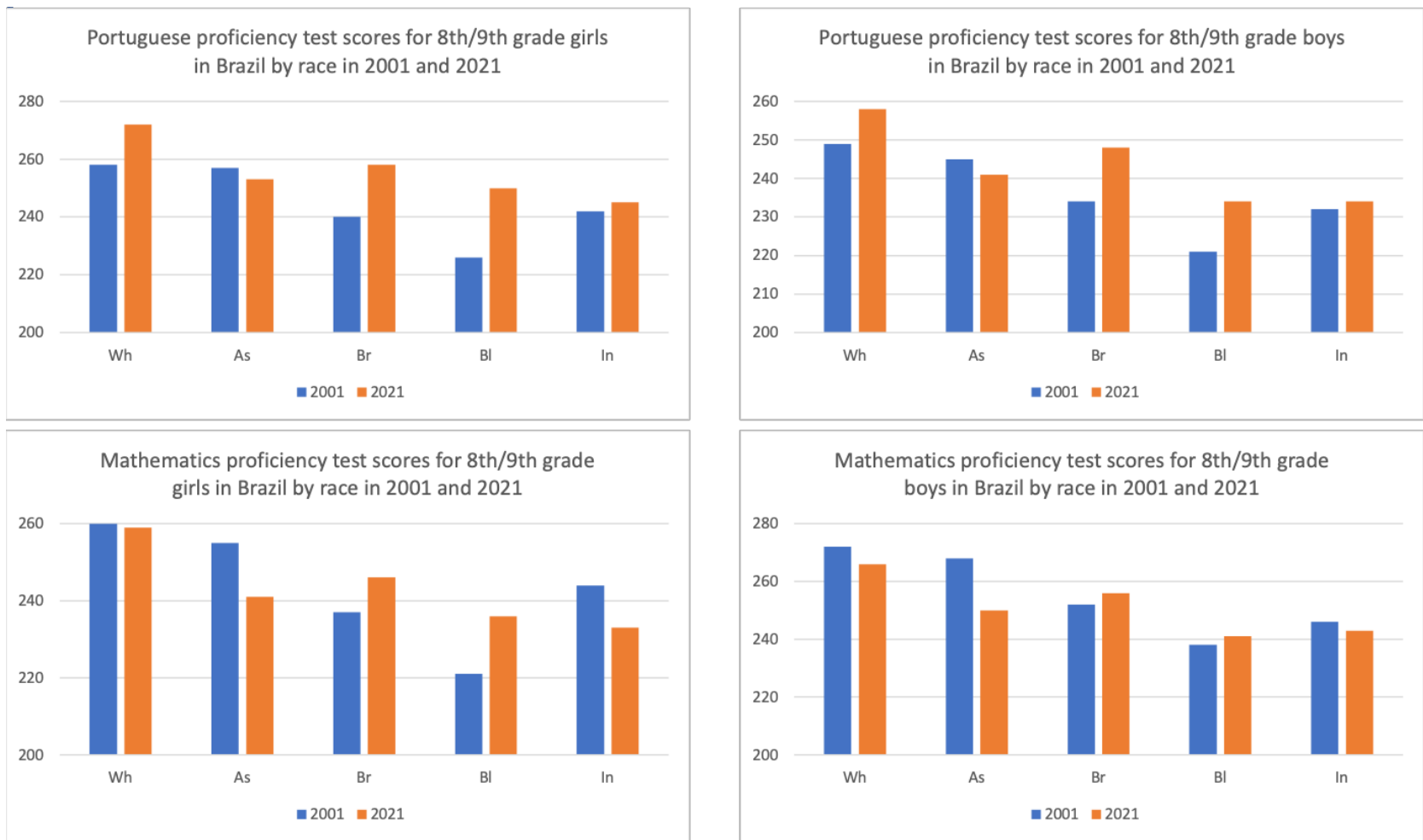
Table 1: Panamanian socioeconomic indicators by race, 2010

	Distribution	University Degree	Mean Income	Mean Years of Schooling	% Urban	% In Capital City	% Self-Employed	% Professional and Administrative Occupations
All Negros	8.92	22.00	4582.91	11.65	88.13	36.79	19.95	21.04
Negros coloniales	2.32	25.87	4248.25	12.21	89.27	39.20	17.64	23.07
Negros antillanos	1.93	26.77	4881.94	12.47	92.70	41.60	18.25	23.41
Negros	4.22	16.80	4647.66	10.88	85.15	33.19	22.62	15.07
Negros otros	0.45	27.45	4408.47	12.14	85.42	35.09	16.45	22.64
Indigenous	12.2	2.85	5262.83	5.59	43.43	22.71	40.65	5.89
Residual Race	78.88	19.03	4048.23	10.46	70.67	29.15	24.11	17.11

Source: 2010 census of Panama

Table 2: Mean portuguese and math proficiency scores in the 8th grade by race, sex, and maternal education, 2001

Maternal Education	Portuguese Scores										Math Scores									
	Girls					Boys					Girls					Boys				
	W	A	Bl	Br	Ind	W	A	Bl	Br	Ind	W	A	Bl	Br	Ind	W	A	Bl	Br	Ind
Inc. Elementary	233	237	219	228	226	227	228	213	219	217	230	230	215	222	228	244	248	229	236	227
Compl. Elementary	247	246	228	235	241	237	241	220	227	222	246	243	222	232	238	256	253	233	245	238
Compl. Secondary	271	267	247	258	260	258	254	229	247	246	273	267	237	254	257	281	281	250	265	263
Compl. University	292	288	250	276	272	278	267	253	268	267	301	292	247	281	283	308	299	274	294	288

Source: SAEB

Table 3: Mean portuguese and math proficiency scores in the 8th grade by race, sex, and maternal education, 2021

Maternal Education	Portuguese Scores										Math Scores									
	Girls					Boys					Girls					Boys				
	W	A	Bl	Br	Ind	W	A	Bl	Br	Ind	W	A	Bl	Br	Ind	W	A	Bl	Br	Ind
Inc. Elementary	249	248	247	248	248	247	248	247	246	248	244	243	243	242	243	244	244	243	243	244
Compl. Elementary	270	253	251	260	248	255	238	232	247	232	257	242	237	248	235	262	247	239	255	240
Compl. Secondary	281	264	262	269	255	267	251	243	256	243	268	252	247	256	241	274	260	250	264	251
Compl. University	290	269	268	276	259	275	256	249	263	246	278	259	253	263	247	284	267	256	271	256

Source: SAEB

Table 4: Percent Reporting They Experienced Color Discrimination, by Racial and Color Category in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Peru, 2010

Country	Racial Category			Color Category		
	White	Mestizo/Pardo	Black or Indigenous	Light	Medium	Dark
Brazil	6	10	34	7	9	26
Colombia	4	9	28	4	9	24
Mexico	9	14	20	13	13	26
Peru	16	21	31	14	26	36

Source: Project on Ethnicity and Race in Latin America surveys, 2010

Table 5: Percent Reporting Witnessing Discrimination Based on Skin Color or Language in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Peru, 2010

Country	Respondent's Race			Respodent's Skin Color		
	White	Mestizo/Pardo	Black or Indigenous[1]	Light	Medium	Dark
Witnessed Discrimination on the basis of Race						
Brazil	28	25	42	22	21	35
Colombia	58	59	74	59	56	71
Mexico	49	62	58	66	56	55
Peru	68	67	70	65	68	73
Witnessed Discrimination on the basis of Language or Accent[2]						
Mexico	41	57	55	63	52	48
Peru	48	57	68	58	62	67

Source: Project on Ethnicity and Race in Latin America surveys, 2010
[1] Refers to Blacks in Brazil and Colombia and Indigenous in Mexico and Peru.
[2] Discrimination on the Basis of Language only Asked in Mexico and Peru

Appendix on Comparative Race/Ethnicity Formats in Latin American Censuses

National censuses are essential to ensuring the visibility and enumeration of Afro-descendant and Indigenous populations in any country. This is critical because whether to count a person as Indigenous, Afro-descendant, white, mestizo, or in another category may have implications for the population size of these groups, levels of ethnoracial inequality, and other vital indicators of ethnoracial wellbeing. The decision about how to count its people is made by national censuses primarily through its choice of ethnoracial questions and response categories and often with the final approval by federal authorities. Given the fluidity of race and ethnicity in Latin America, ethnoracial counts are sensitive to particular social identities, contexts, and situations but also depend on census formats. The latter – how census questions are framed and the response categories used - is generally decided by a political process (Loveman 2014). While such decisions were largely top-down in the past, they are increasingly democratic, sometimes involving varying amounts of civil society and social science participation (Loveman 2014).

Appendix Table 1 shows the questions and response categories used by the Latin American censuses to collect the race/ethnicity data we used. Table 1 reveals the vast heterogeneity in Census questions and response categories among the 15 countries we examine. While all countries use the international self-identification standard, question framing varies widely. To take just one comparison for counting the Afrodescendant/Black population, note the first two rows of Table 1, which represent the questions and categories in Uruguay and Cuba. The Uruguayan census asks residents whether they have Afro or Black ancestry (*Afro* or *Negro*), while the Cuban Census asks respondents about their skin color, with Black (*negro*) as a possible response.

Comparisons across two censuses in the same country illustrate how changes in census questions may affect ethnoracial composition. While many countries like Brazil maintain the same or similar questions and categories across Censuses, many have made significant changes in subsequent censuses. Appendix Table 2 shows inter-census changes in questions and response categories for five countries, where such changes greatly affected population counts by race and ethnicity. Those changes in the population size of the Indigenous or Afro-descendant populations are shown in the fourth and fifth columns of Appendix Table 2. The observed changes substantially exceed those possibly posited through demographic processes (fertility, mortality, and migration), and available evidence suggests that changes in question format drive these shifts. Changing ethnoracial identities – such as from growing black consciousness - between the two censuses may also be a factor. Still, the limited studies (cited above) show that it (nor demographic changes) cannot account for such changes.

In particular, Table 2 shows the significant changes between Censuses in the count of the Afro-descendant populations of Colombia, Costa Rica, and Panama and the indigenous populations in Bolivia and Mexico. To take the most recent example, the black population in Panama (bottom row) increased from 9.2% to 32.8% of the national population from 2010 to 2012. This is more than a three-fold increase! Given the recency of the 2022 Census, studies need to examine the factors accounting for the dramatic shifts, but the main culprit may be in several additional response categories. In 2010, Panamanians were asked if they considered themselves black or Afro-descendant, but in 2022, many more categories were added. Notable among them is the widely used but color-ambiguous "moreno" category. The Brazilian census, for example, has long rejected the incorporation of the ambiguous moreno

category (Telles 2004), though Venezuela included moreno in its latest census despite its ambiguity (Telles and PERLA 2014).

Similarly, the black populations of Colombia and Costa Rica increased by seven and almost four times in recent censuses, while the indigenous population in Mexico more than doubled from 2000 to 2010. In one case of decline, the Indigenous population of Bolivia was 62% in 2001 but decreased to 41% in 2012. This was especially paradoxical and unintentional since the 2012 Census was administered under the Presidency of Evo Morales, which sought the empowerment of that country's indigenous population (Moreno 2016).

More specifically, the studies showing the effect of census formats have examined Black and Indigenous peoples in Mexico (Sue, Riosmena and Telles 2021), the Indigenous in Bolivia (Moreno 2016), a comparison of Indigenous in Mexico and Peru (Telles and Torche 2019) and the Indigenous in Mexico (Flores, Vignau and Martinez 2023). These studies demonstrate the significant effects on population size and inequality estimates produced by changes in census and survey questions. These studies are based on temporal, single-country, and cross-country census studies, including correlational and experimental designs.

Several issues produce the differences in the enumeration of ethnoracial populations, which we can observe in the questions in Appendix Tables 1 and 2. Often, there are multiple issues in each format, making for many possibilities in question framing. (We refer to examples in parentheses.) These include whether to ask an essentialist (seemingly biological) question about whether "they are" (*Usted es?*- El Salvador 2007), do they have a particular ancestry (Uruguay 2011, Argentina 2010), or a more constructivist question about whether they consider themselves of a specific ethnicity (*se considera* in Panama 2010, Chile 2017, Costa

Rica 2011 or *se identifica* in Ecuador 2010). Questions also differ in whether they ask respondents if they belong to an ethnic or population "group," as in Honduras in 2001.

For blacks, question formats may mention physical appearance or phenotype (Colombia 2005). In other countries, census questions regarding Afro-descendants eschew phenotype and focus instead on an individual's recognition of ties to a "black community or culture" (Colombia 1993, Mexico 2010). For the indigenous, some questions ask about particular ethnic groups (Nicaragua 2005) while others ask if they are in the pan-ethnic "indigenous" category (Brazil 2010, Ecuador 2010). Moreover, do you ask about the white and mestizo categories (Brazil 2010, Ecuador 2010) or merely treat them as residual categories (Uruguay 2011, Colombia 2005)? Brazil and Cuba ask about skin color. Finally, response categories like the highly ambiguous *Moreno* category, when treated as a proxy for Afro-descendant, may lead to an overestimation of black populations (e.g., in Panama 2022). There are other issues as well.

Appendix Table 1 Ethnoracial Census Questions

Country	Year	Question	Response Categories
Uruguay	2011	Cree tener *ancestria…*? Cual considera principal?	Afro o Negra; Asiática o Amarilla; Blanca; Indígena; Otra; Ninguna (no hay una principal)
Cuba	2012	¿Cuál es su *color* de piel?	Blanco; Negro; Mestizo o mulato
Brazil	2010	A sua *cor* ou *raça* é:	Branca, Parda, Preta, Amarela, Indigena
El Salvador	2007	¿*Es usted*?	Blanco; Mestizo (mezcla de blanco con indigena); Indigena; Negro (de raza); Otro
Ecuador	2010	¿Cómo se identifica (....) según su *cultura y costumbres*	Indígena?;Afroecuatoriano/a Afrodescendiente?; Negro/a?; Mulato/a?; *Montubio/a?*; *Mestizo/a?; Blanco/a?*; Otro /a?
Argentina	2010	¿Alguna persona de este hogar es indígena o *descendiente* de *pueblos* indigenas (originarios o aborigenes)?	Si; No
Argentina	2010	¿Ud. o alguna persona de este hogar *es* afrodescendiente o tiene antepasados *de origen* afrodescendiente o africano (padre, madre, abuelos/as, bisabuelos/as)?	Si; No
Honduras	2001	¿A qué *grupo poblacional* pertenece?	Garífuna; Negro Ingles; Tolupán; Pech (Paya); Misquito; Lenca; Tawahka (Sumo); NeChortí; Otro
Nicaragua	2005	A cuál de los siguientes *pueblos* indígenas o etnias *pertenece* […]:	Rama; Garifuna; Mayangna-Sumu; Miskitu; Ulwa; Creole (Kriol); Mestizo de la costa caribeña; Xui-Sutiava; Nahoa-Nicarao; Chorotega-Nahua-Mange; Cacaopera-Matagalpa; Otro; No sabe
Panama	2010	¿*Se considera* usted.. [Alguna persona de este hogar se considera negro(a) o afrodescendiente? Sí o No	1 Colonial black; 2 Antillean black; 3 Black; 4 Other (specify) ____; 5 None
Chile	2017	. ¿*Se considera perteneciente* a algún pueblo indígena u originario?	Mapuche; Aymara; Rapa Nui; Lican Antai; Quechua; Colla; Diaguita; Kawésqar; Yagán or Yamana; Otro (Especifique)
Costa Rica	2011	¿ (Nombre) *se considera...*	negro(a) o afrodescendiente?); mulato(a)?); Chino(a)?; Blanco(a) o mestizo(a)
Colombia	2005	¿De acuerdo con su cultura, pueblo o *rasgos físicos*, ... es o se reconoce como: (BÁSICO) 1. Indígena?; ¿A cuál pueblo indígena pertenece? Escriba el nombre del pueblo	Indígena?; Rom?; Raizal del archipiélago de San Andrés y Providencia?; Palenquero de San Basilio; Negro(a), mulato(a), Afrocolombiano(a) o afrodescendiente?; Ninguno de los anteriores?

Mexico (intracenso)	2015	Autoadscripción indígena. De acuerdo con *su cultura*, ¿(nombre) se considera indígena?	Sí; Sí, en parte; No; No sabe
Mexico (intracenso)	2015	De acuerdo con *su cultura, historia y tradiciones*, ¿(NOMBRE) se considera negra(o), es decir, afromexicana(o) o afrodescendiente?	Sí; Sí, en parte; No; No sabe
Guatemala	2002	¿ A qué *grupo* étnico (pueblo) *pertenece*?	Achí; Akateko; Awakateko; Ch'orti'; Chuj; Itza; Ixil; Jakalteko (Popti'); Kaquichel; K'iche'; Mam; Mopán; Popomam; Poqomchí; Q'anjob'al; Q'eqchí; Sakapulteco; Sipakapense; Takaneco; Tz'utujil; Uspanteco; Xinka; Garifuna; Ladino; Spanish language; None; Other

Appendix Table 2 Subsequent Census Ethnoracial Questions and Resulting Population Size of Black and Indigenous Populations

	Question Census 1	Question Census 2	Census 1	Census 2
Bolivia (2001,2012)	¿Se considera perteneciente a alguno de los siguientes pueblos originarios o indígenas? Quechua? Aymara? Guaraní? Chiquitano 5. Mojeño? Otro native? [especificar] 7. Ninguno	Como boliviana o boliviano ¿pertenece a alguna nación o pueblo indígena originario campesino o afro boliviano? Sí – No – No soy boliviano(a) Si es que sí, ¿a cuál?	62.0% indigena	41.1% indigena
Colombia (1993, 2005)	¿Pertenece a alguna etnia, grupo indígena o comunidad negra ? Sí. ¿A cuál? _____ No	¿De acuerdo con su cultura, pueblo o *rasgos físicos* … se reconoce como: Indígena? Nombre del pueblo:__ Rom? Raizal del archipiélago de San Andrés y Providencia? Palenquero de San Basilio? Negro(a), mulato(a), Afrocolombiano(a) o afrodescendiente? Ninguno de los anteriores?	1.5% negra	10.6% negra
Costa Rica (2000, 2011)	¿Pertenece ... a la *cultura* ...? Indígena, afrocostarricense o negra, china, ninguna de las anteriores	¿(Nombre)*se considera*...negro (a)o afrodescendiente? mulato(a)? chino(a)? blanco(a) o mestizo? Otro? Ninguna...	2.0% negra	7.8% negra
Mexico (2000,2010)	¿Es ... *náhuatl, maya, zapoteco, mixteco* o de otro *grupo indígena*?	¿De acuerdo con la cultura de (nombre), ella (él) se considera *indígena*?	6.3% indigena	15.1% indigena
Panama (2010, 2022)	Alguna persona de este hogar se considera negro(a) o afrodescendiente? Sí o No	Por sus costumbres, tradiciones y sus antepasados, se considera…? Afrodescendiente? afropanameño(a)? moreno(a)? negro(a)? Afrocolonial? Afroantillano? otro grupo afrodescendiente (culiso, *trigueño*, mulato, *canela*, caribali, costeño)?	9.2% negra	32.8% negra