

STATE OF THE ART

JOB AUTHORITY AND EMERGING RACIAL INCOME INEQUALITIES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

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Abstract

Has the adoption of “new governance” reforms over the last two decades eroded the public sector as a long-standing occupational niche for African Americans? Utilizing data from the General Social Survey, we address this issue in the context of earnings “returns” to three levels of job authority for African American men and women relative to their White counterparts. Findings, derived from analyses of three waves of the General Social Survey, indicate that the acceleration of this “business model” of work organization in the public sector has had relatively profound and negative consequences for African American income. Specifically, racial parity in earnings returns at all levels of authority in the “pre-reform” period (1992–1994) progressively eroded during “early reform” (2000–2002) and then even more so during the “late reform” (2010–2012) period. Much of this growing public sector disadvantage—a disadvantage that is approaching that seen in the private sector—is driven largely by income gaps between White and African American men, although a similar (though smaller) racial gap is witnessed among women. We conclude by discussing the occupational niche status of public sector work for African Americans, calling for further analyses of the growing inequality patterns identified in our analyses, and drawing attention to the implications for contemporary racial disadvantages.

Keywords: Race, Work, Stratification, Public Sector

INTRODUCTION

Sociologists have documented that, in the post-1965 civil rights era, public sector work has served as an important “occupational niche” for African Americans (Model 1985; Waldinger 1996).¹ By niche, we are referring to the fact that public sector is the location in a differentiated labor market that has offered relative racial equity in

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socioeconomic rewards and routes for advancement (Brown and Erie, 1981; Model 1985; Waldinger 1995). Indeed, in the case of African Americans, this is precisely what research has found: relative parity in income (Farley 2005; Jaynes and Williams, 1989), promotion prospects (Farley and Allen, 1987; Glass Ceiling Commission 1995), and ability to retain jobs (Jaynes and Williams, 1989; Wilson et al., 2013). Bart Landry and Kris Marsh (2011) capture this historical pattern quite nicely in noting that “government employment has compensated for the legacy of private sector discrimination, serving to build a Black middle class that is stable, prosperous and extends to life-chance opportunities on an inter-generational basis” (p. 117).

As important as the public sector has been in addressing historical racial exclusions and inequalities over the past few decades, we should remain cognizant of the fact that occupational niches of racial minorities are historically contingent, fluid, and require constant re-examination (Model 1985; Waldinger 1996). Indeed, we suspect the historically favorable public sector status of African Americans is now in jeopardy. We base this on observations surrounding the emergence of “new governance” reforms of civil service work, marking “the end of government work as we know it” (Kamarck 2007, p. 131). Steadily gaining momentum in the last two decades, new governance alters the nature of employment from a public service to a business model. In doing so, it may very well be replicating stratification-pertinent aspects of the workplace protections, labor process, and gatekeeper decision-making that have historically been the bases of significant private sector minority disadvantages (Kamarck 2007; Wilson 2006). Of particular interest are the prods to generate “efficiency” and “flexibility” by reducing size, enhancing managerial discretion, eradicating traditional worker employment rights, and debureaucratizing employment-based rules and regulations (Kamarck 2007; Morgan and Cook, 2014).

Analyses of the implications of public sector reforms, noted above, have been relatively sparse. Two specific studies, by George Wilson and colleagues (2013, 2015), utilize data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics and find that African American men have been progressively losing parity with their White male peers when it comes to downward mobility and gross income. In this article, we expand on this prior work in several important regards including but not limited to: (1) a focus on workers at privileged authority levels of the occupational structure, who may be either vulnerable given their higher statuses or protected by those very statuses; (2) incorporation of specific and unique indicators of new governance within our modeling of income and our assessment of racial income gaps over time; (3) the explicit inclusion and consideration of women in our analyses; and (4) sensitivity to public sector changes over three discrete periods (i.e., pre-reform, early reform, and late reform).

The role of job authority in protecting against, generating or sustaining inequality, beyond its obvious implications for African American workplace vulnerability and changes to public sector employment noted above, represents one of the most important advances in stratification research in recent decades (Kalleberg and Griffin, 1980; Tilly 2005; Western 1994; Wright 1985). Sociologists, for instance, have documented that one of the most tangible benefits derived from authority attainment is earnings. In fact, studies have shown that variation in authority position generates wage differentials among identical workers and, moreover, explains earnings better than a variety of traditional measures of workplace inequality (e.g., socioeconomic status and occupational prestige) (Halaby 1979; Kalleberg 2010; Roos 1981; Wilson 1997). Charles Halaby and David Weakliem (1993) conclude that consideration of job authority constitutes the principal contribution to the analysis of earnings:

The main idea is that crucial reward-relevant properties of jobs derives from their location in the hierarchical structure of the workplace as defined by the unequal distribution of authority rights.... (p. 6).

Building on insights regarding both the trends toward new governance in the public sector and what we know regarding the inequality relevance of authority, we draw on the General Social Survey (GSS) in this study and analyze racial differences in earnings “returns” to job authority across public and private sectors and three time periods, pre-reform (1992–1994), early reform (2000–2002), and late reform (2010–2012). Such temporal data allows for assessment of racial and sector-specific inequalities over time for men and women occupying varying status positions, and also allows us to highlight the extent to which new governance reforms are implicated.

THE EVOLVING PUBLIC SECTOR

Pre-New Governance

Across the first three decades of the post-1965 civil rights era, government employment was seen as a “public service” and was premised on a “career system” (Bowman and West, 2006; Light 1999). At its peak in 1990, this system covered a majority of the 18.2 million full-time public sector employees at the federal and state levels (Kamarck 2007) and included a favorable employment package and meaningful employment protections in exchange for public service. Those designated as “classified,” for instance, were afforded “property rights” in jobs, i.e., worker termination restricted to “just cause” reasons, relatively elaborate equal employment opportunity laws, and a guarantee of formal bureaucratic procedures (Bernhardt and Dresser, 2002; Cornwell and Kellough, 1994).

The Rise and Spread of New Governance

The “new governance” model of workplace reforms, emerging and spreading since the early 1990s, is a reflection of neoliberal economic sentiment in national political discourse—sentiment that prioritizes open markets, profit, and competition in economic activity (Bowman and West, 2007; Kamarck 2007). Its application to the public sector has been viewed as redressing “the perceived ills associated with a bloated and inefficient government that has outlived its usefulness in effectively delivering public services and protection of basic public rights” (Kamarck 2007, p. 134).

Predicated on the logic of “bottom line” financial principles, the “new governance movement” places a premium on increasing performance, efficiency, and results: it calls for a more incentive-laden public sector. Such incentives, in turn, are believed to enhance productivity and increase the flexibility of managers to make efficiency mandated personnel adjustments at a time when a more fluid public sector is perceived a response to the rapid pace of social change (Bowman and West, 2007; Wilson 2006). Significantly, new governance calls for shared responsibility between the public and private sectors. Phenomena such as the outsourcing of long-historic public functions, and the rise of competitive bidding for government contracts between public and private entities are manifestations of the new intersector partnership, fundamentally altering conditions of work among incumbents and new hires in the public sector. This includes, most dominantly, the ever-increasing designation of employees as “declassified.” It has also entailed the supplanting of a highly bureaucratized work environment by one that is more clearly decentralized such that onsite discretion of

managers, including the potential biases therein, increasingly determines stratification aspects of work (Bowman and West, 2007, Lawthler 2003).

Beyond declassification and decentralization, it is essential to recognize the implications of such changes for the very conditions of work (e.g., task/unit assignments) pertinent to inequality. This is especially true when segregation exists or persists (Wilson 2006).² Under “new governance” reforms, declassified workers lose property rights in their jobs, becoming employees “at will” (Malamud 1995) who, absent narrowly carved judicial and legislative exceptions, can be terminated for “any or not reason at all” (Villemez and Bridges, 1994). No less important, broader opportunities to invoke equal opportunity laws to contest employers’ decisions are constricted (Dobbin 2009; Wilson 2006).

Table 1 reports the progressive adoption of new governance at the state level across time. In 1994, only three states had adopted aspects of it; by 2002 that number had increased to twenty-six states; by 2012, forty-two states had adopted aspects of it. Noteworthy as well, by 2008 five of the six largest federal agencies had implemented aspects of it. Indeed, new governance reforms had become so dominant that President George Bush gained congressional approval to use new governance as a template for all future federal government hires. By 2012, over 65% of full-time state and federal government workers were subject to new governance reforms (Morgan and Cook, 2014). The expansion of declassified employment status was the most often adopted aspect of new governance across the three time periods (over two-thirds of states adopted across each of the three time periods) while reductions in grievance procedures were the least adopted (at least 50% of states across each of the time periods).

IMPLICATIONS FOR RACIAL INEQUALITY

The increasing adoption of new governance has likely had important consequences for racial inequalities in earnings returns to job authority. This expectation is in line with sociological research that captures the dynamics of African American socioeconomic disadvantage at privileged occupational levels in the private sector, particularly in White-owned and -managed firms (Bielby 2012; Collins 1997; Dobbin 2009; Elliot and Smith, 2001; Feagin and McKinney, 2003; Fernandez 1981; Haveman et al., 2009; Landry and Marsh, 2011; Roscigno 2007; Smith 1997, 2005; Tomaskovic-Devey and Stainback, 2007, Wilson 1997; Wilson et al., 1999; Wingfield 2010).

Rooted in the pioneering work of sociologists such as Gordon Allport (1954), Thomas Pettigrew (1971) and Herbert Blumer (1966), this empirical work characterizes contemporary discrimination as situational, institutional, and ostensibly nonracial in nature. As such, workplace-based inequities are embedded in the daily operation of social institutions rather than being associated with individual psychological

Table 1. Adoption of New Governance

Year	Number of States Adopted	Expanded Declassified Status	Expanded At-Will	Reduced Grievance Issues
1994	3	2	1	1
2002	26	19	16	13
2012	42	36	27	26

Sources: Hays and Sowa (2007), Morgan and Cook (2014)

functioning (e.g., frustration-aggression-induced “scapegoating,” “authoritarian personality,” etc.) that was more characteristic of traditional “Jim Crow” racism (Bobo et al., 1997). Accordingly, dynamics such as the perceived need to achieve “bottom line” financial results and maintain a productive workplace as well as the generalized susceptibility to forms of cognitive bias encompassing “self-serving attribution bias” (Pettigrew 1985) and “statistical discrimination” (Tomaskovic-Devey and Skaggs, 1999) result in race-specific outcomes within finite gradations in the stratification system (Bielby 2012; Stainback and Tomaskovic-Devey, 2005).

The work cited above identifies an underlying firm-level mechanism that generates racial inequities at a nuanced stratification level: employers have difficulty deciphering evaluation-relevant criteria of their African American employees. Indeed, two substantive criteria emerge as difficult to decipher: (1) “signals of productivity” (Pettigrew 1985), referring to workplace performance as evidenced by, for example, demonstrated effort, commitment, initiative, and problem solving ability (Stainback and Tomaskovic-Devey, 2012), and; (2) “signals of personality” (Kluegel 1978; Wilson et al., 1999), which encompass a range of informal traits such as perceived loyalty, trustworthiness, and sound judgment. Such attributes are usually evaluated by proximate gatekeepers (i.e., supervisors and managers) within the process of hiring, promotion, demotion, and firing.

Managerial practices that limit minority opportunities to communicate evaluation-relevant criteria can take a variety of forms. Thomas Pettigrew and Joanne Martin (1987) as well as Steven Elliott and Ryan Smith (2001) maintain, for example, that restricting African American managers to segregated domains (i.e., over coracial group members) leaves them prone to “information bias”—a form of statistical discrimination in which demonstrated performance and formal credentialing are viewed as less credible than those of Whites. Further, Jomills Braddock and James McPartland (1987) and George Wilson (1997) argue that allocating minority managers and professionals to racially delineated work/task groups as well as the segregated operation of traineeship and internship program produces susceptibility to attribution bias (i.e., being evaluated on selective bases the reaffirm negative stereotypes about their suitability for, and productivity at, work). Finally, several authors—including Thomas Cox and Stella Nkomo (1990), Elliot and Smith (2001), and, John Fernandez (1981)—maintain that when not segregated, the tendency to subordinate African American managers/executives to Whites in authority hierarchies limits opportunities to demonstrate the range of performance-relevant and informal characteristics that may emerge, for example, when “taking the lead” and initiating solutions to workplace-based issues.

In sum, findings from this line of sociological research in conjunction with our knowledge regarding the structure of new governance provides a solid basis for maintaining that, in the context of earnings returns to job authority, the public sector should be progressively declining as the occupational niche for African Americans. Specifically, increasing managerial discretion—in terms of “bottom line” decision-making that emerges in association with changes wrought by new governance in the social organization of work, and the changing status/rights of workers—should result in progressively larger racial gaps that increasingly mirror those in the historically less minority-friendly private sector.

Along with racial inequalities, we also consider the possibility of gender variations by race given that the structural basis of inequality may vary (Browne and Misra, 2003). Irrespective of race, for instance, we know that women suffer from a shared “penalty,” tied to both segregation (Stainback and Tomaskovic-Devey, 2012; Wingfield 2010) and the persistence of gender-based stereotypes (e.g., commitment to work and fitness for lengthy tasks) (Browne and Kennelly, 1999; Browne and Misra, 2003). Accordingly, we posit that the wage penalties for

African American women are distinct. While suffering a race penalty, for instance African American women share a gender cost with their White female peers. As such, and while we expect a generally similar pattern of racial disadvantage for men and women, the overall trend and level of racial inequality will plausibly be less pronounced for women.

DATA AND MEASUREMENT

A sample of individuals from the files of the General Social Survey across three periods, the pre reform (1992–1994), early reform (2000–2002), and late reform (2010–2012) are utilized to examine trends in the racial gap in earnings returns to the attainment of three distinct hierarchical levels of job authority for both men and women. During each period, African American and White men and women between the ages of eighteen and sixty were included in the sample if they worked full-time in a non-self-employed capacity in either the private sector or public sector. Public sector employment is derived from industrial occupational codes, namely, those who work in “the government and social services” and do not work in “the private sector.” Further, all sample members responded to two authority questions. They were asked:

1. In your job, do you supervise anyone who is directly responsible to you? If Yes, do any of those persons supervise anyone else?
2. Do you have a supervisor on your job to whom you are directly responsible? If yes, does that person have a supervisor on the job to whom he/she is directly responsible?

From these questions, researchers (e.g., Smith 1997) have operationalized a three- category authority measure that consists of those in Upper Command, Middle Command, and Lower Command. Members of the Upper Command (coded as 2) supervise at least two levels of subordinates, but are not themselves supervised; members of the Middle Command (coded 1) have one supervisor above them and two levels of subordinates below them. Finally, those in positions of Lower Command (coded 0) have one or more supervisors above them and they supervise one level of subordinates below them.³

The criteria above resulted in a sample size of 4636 men and 2575 women across the pre-reform period (men=380 African American, 1165 White; women=214 African American, 626 White); early reform period (men=372 African American, 1156 White; women=220 African American, 620 White); later reform period (men=387 African American, 1176 White; women=243 African American, 652 White).

Dependent Variable: Our dependent variable is yearly wages. The effect of inflation on wages was removed by multiplying the measure by the Consumer Price Index. This results in a wage variable expressed in constant 2013 dollars. Finally, to facilitate ease of interpretation, we present wages in raw dollars.

Race and Sector: Race is coded as 1 for African American and 0 for White. The public sector is coded 1 and private sector is 0.

Control Variables:

Human Capital Credentials: We control for several influential human capital attributes. The first is level of educational attainment, represented by two dummy variables: “college degree,” and “post-college degree.” Respondents with a high school

degree or less serve as the reference category.⁴ Second, because a worker's physical capacity is treated as a human capital characteristic, respondents who said they had "health problems that limited their capacity to work" were coded 1 and all others were coded 0. Third, time in labor force is measured by number of years since age 18 respondent has worked full time.

Job/Labor Market Characteristics: Several job/labor market characteristics are included as controls. First, union status of job is measured by 1=yes, 0=no. Second, we separate federal (coded as 1) from the state level (coded as 0) in analyses.

Family/Household: We also control for marital status (1=married, 0=unmarried) as marriage has a documented positive impact on earnings (Ahituv and Lerman, 2007). Second, we account for number of children in a household, as their presence tends to be positively related to earnings (Caucutt et al., 2002).

Sociodemographic: Based on its unique—and relatively negative—historic track record regarding intergroup relations (Farley and Allen, 1987; Jaynes and Williams, 1989) and the distribution of socioeconomic resources across racial groups (Farley 2005; Jaynes and Williams, 1987), we include the South as a dummy variable relative to other regions in the United States. In addition, age (years) is included as a control. Finally, time is used to partial out the effects of variation in period effects within each of the three periods examined.

ANALYTIC STRATEGY AND RESULTS

Our analyses report OLS regressions on a pooled sample of African Americans and Whites working in the public and private sectors by gender.⁵ The sample is stratified across each of the three hierarchical levels of job authority within the pre-reform, early reform and late reform periods. In these analyses, sample weights are used for the production of point estimates of population parameters. These weights serve to ensure representativeness across cohorts as well as across sectors, thereby precluding the possibility that findings were driven by compositional differences in the GSS sample.

Aggregate Inequalities Across Sectors, Time and by Gender

Table 2 reports means and standard deviations for the racial gap in earnings returns to job authority among African American and White men and women in both the public and private sectors during the pre-reform, middle reform, and late reform periods with earnings being presented in raw dollars (the Appendix reports descriptive statistics for variables in the statistical model).⁶

Results indicate that among both men and women, the relative parity in earnings returns at all three levels of job authority achieved by African Americans in the public sector relative to the private sector during the early reform period progressively eroded because of widening racial gaps in the public sector.⁷ Specifically, and for men during the pre-reform period, the public sector racial gap in earnings returns favoring Whites over African Americans at the lower command level is \$3236, at the middle command level the gap is \$3390 and at the upper command level the racial gap in earnings returns is \$3564. During the middle reform period, the racial gap expands to \$5332 at the lower command level, \$5502 at the middle command level and \$5546 at the upper command level. During the late reform period, the racial gap in earnings returns further expands to \$8426 at the lower command level, \$8112 at the middle command level and \$8195 at the upper command level. Conversely, in the private sector, the racial gap favoring White men

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations of Men for Hourly Wages

	Men						Women					
	Public			Private			Public			Private		
	Afr. Am.	White	Diff.	Afr. Am.	White	Diff.	Afr. Am.	White	Diff.	Afr. Am.	White	Diff.
Pre-Reform												
Command Level												
Lower	\$64,969 (5.49)	\$68,205 (5.35)	\$3,236*	\$60,274 (6.06)	\$69,555 (5.26)	\$9,281***	\$58,371 (5.47)	\$59,312 (6.30)	\$941	\$55,063 (6.34)	\$59,346 (5.98)	\$4283**
Middle	\$67,176 (5.31)	\$70,866 (4.52)	\$3,390*	\$63,092 (5.77)	\$72,060 (5.88)	\$9,013**	\$60,298 (5.48)	\$62,318 (5.80)	\$1,020	\$56,985 (6.56)	\$61,102 (5.87)	\$4,117**
Upper	\$69,821 (5.51)	\$73,385 (6.01)	\$3,564*	\$65,300 (6.04)	\$74,313 (6.33)	\$9,013***	\$62,674 (6.13)	\$64,727 (5.95)	\$1,053	\$60,200 (6.26)	\$64,330 (5.99)	\$4,130**
Early Reform												
Command Level												
Lower	\$62,774 (6.44)	\$68,106 (5.85)	\$5,332**	\$60,085 (5.96)	\$69,202 (7.03)	\$9,117***	\$56,955 (6.45)	\$59,821 (6.36)	\$2,866*	\$55,449 (6.27)	\$60,001 (5.96)	\$4,552**
Middle	\$65,781 (6.42)	\$71,283 (7.02)	\$5,502**	\$61,713 (6.42)	\$70,993 (6.94)	\$9,280***	\$59,168 (6.22)	\$61,920 (6.30)	\$2,752*	\$58,405 (6.25)	\$62,475 (5.67)	\$4,070**
Upper	\$68,771 (5.93)	\$74,317* (7.00)	\$5,546**	\$64,149 (6.41)	\$73,115 (6.36)	\$8,966***	\$61,281 (7.11)	\$63,999 (6.52)	\$2,718*	\$60,840 (6.55)	\$64,913 (6.81)	\$4,073**

Continued

Table 2. continued

	Men						Women					
	Public			Private			Public			Private		
	Afr. Am.	White	Diff.	Afr. Am.	White	Diff.	Afr. Am.	White	Diff.	Afr. Am.	White	Diff.
Late Reform												
Command Level												
Lower	\$59,369 (6.02)	\$67,795 (5.55)	\$8,426***	\$59,781 (5.71)	\$68,886 (5.90)	\$9,105***	\$55,900 (6.45)	\$60,333 (5.35)	\$4,433**	\$56,337 (5.88)	\$60,456 (5.23)	\$4,119**
Middle	\$61,892 (6.18)	\$70,004 (5.86)	\$8,112***	\$61,693 (5.73)	\$71,015 (6.18)	\$9,322***	\$59,000 (5.98)	\$63,109 (5.83)	\$4,109**	\$58,992 (6.58)	\$63,108 (6.34)	\$4,263**
Upper	\$64,340 (7.03)	\$72,535 (5.94)	\$8,195***	\$65,106 (5.77)	\$74,112 (7.10)	\$9,006***	\$60,772 (5.36)	\$64,773 (5.97)	\$4,001**	\$60,764 (6.81)	\$65,027 (6.44)	\$4,263**

***P<.001, **P.01, *P<.05; Standard Deviations in Parentheses.

in earnings returns at all levels of job authority are relatively stable and robust across the three time periods.

Among women, a similar pattern emerges, although racial differences are less pronounced as we predicted earlier. Specifically, public sector racial inequality at the lower command level is \$941, at the middle command level the gap is \$1020, and at the upper command level the racial gap in earnings returns is \$1053 during the pre-reform period. These racial inequalities among women are magnified to \$2866, \$2752, and \$2718, respectively, at the lower, middle, and upper command levels during the early reform period and then, further, to \$4443, \$4109, and \$4001 at the three command levels during the later reform period. Notably, and as was the case with men, the racial gap favoring White women in earnings returns at all levels of job authority are relatively stable and robust across the three time periods in the private sector.

Wage Models of Racial Inequality Over Time

Table 3 reports the results for OLS wage models at the three hierarchical levels of job authority and across the three reform periods for men. The coefficient for race reflects the estimate of the racial wage gap in the private sector. Thus, the main effect of race should be interpreted as the penalty for being African American in the private sector. In the public sector, the racial wage gap is equal to the sum of the race coefficient and the coefficient of the interaction term. This interaction constitutes the “boost” that African Americans receive for working in the public sector relative to their private sector peers.⁸

Findings from Table 3 indicate—consistent with our predictions and the descriptives previously reported—the relative parity in earnings returns achieved by African American men in the public sector during the pre-reform period progressively eroded in the early reform and late reform periods primarily because of widening racial gaps in the public sector. Specifically, in the pre-reform period, African Americans were highly disadvantaged ($P < .001$) in the private sector in earnings returns to the attainment of all command levels (lower command $b = \$-6778$, middle command $b = \$-6921$, upper command $b = \$-6884$), while receiving a robust ($P < .001$) public sector wage “boost” within the context of public sector employment (lower command $b = \$6106$, middle command $b = \$6331$, upper command $b = \$6573$). This results in a non-significant racial disadvantage for African Americans in earnings in the public sector (lower command $b = \$-563$, middle command $b = \$-408$, upper command $b = \$-413$) during the early period.

In the early reform period, African American men were similarly highly disadvantaged within the private sector in earnings returns (lower command $b = \$-6820$, middle command $b = \$-7002$, upper command $b = \$-6946$), while receiving a moderate ($P < .01$) wage boost in public sector employment (lower command $b = \$4573$, middle command $b = \$4735$, upper command $b = \$4448$). This results, overall, in a modest ($P < .05$) level of racial disadvantage in the public sector (lower command $b = \$-2005$, middle command $b = \$2013$, upper command $b = \$-2144$). Finally, during the late reform period, African American men were similarly highly disadvantaged within the private sector in earnings returns (lower command $b = \$-6960$, middle command $b = \$-6847$, upper command $b = \$-6888$), while receiving a non-significant boost for employment in the public sector (lower command $b = \$118$, middle command $b = \$337$, upper command $b = \$317$). This results, overall, in a robust level of racial disadvantage in the public sector that increasingly resembles that observed in the private sector (lower command $b = \$-6612$, middle command $b = \$-6434$, upper command $b = \$-6582$).

Table 3. OLS Regressions for Hourly Wages Among Men: African Americans Relative to Whites in Authority Positions

	Pre-Reform						Early Reform						Late Reform						
	Lower		Middle		Upper		Lower		Middle		Upper		Lower		Middle		Upper		
	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	
Ascriptive																			
African American	-\$6,778***	.057	-\$6,921***	.057	-6,884***	.067	-\$6,820***	.057	-\$7,002***	.079	-\$6,946***	.082	-\$6,960***	.084	-\$6,847***	.077	-\$6,888***	.073	
Sector																			
Public	-\$563	.020	-\$408	.018	-\$413	.033	-\$2,005*	.074	-\$2,013*	.073	-\$2,144*	.080	-\$6,612***	.093	-\$6,434***	.090	-6,582***	.089	
Interaction																			
Afr. Am *Sector	\$6,016***	.087	\$6,331	.085	\$6,573	.103	\$4,573**	.102	\$4,735**	.101	\$4,448**	.104	\$118	.042	\$337	.058	\$317	.041	
Human Capital																			
Post College	\$1.85*	.090	\$0.60	.046	\$0.96	.057	\$1.02	.056	\$1.27	.069	\$1.77	.082	\$0.83	.054	\$0.63	.046	\$0.58	.033	
College	\$0.63	.050	\$0.72	.055	\$0.54	.030	\$1.50*	.065	\$0.46	.038	\$0.12	.010	\$0.42	.035	\$0.36	.022	\$0.44	.032	
Health Limitation	-\$0.11	.013	-\$0.69	.039	-\$0.75	.045	\$0.30	.026	-\$0.21	.016	-\$0.11	.009	-\$1.56*	.063	\$0.09	.006	\$0.16	.013	
Years in labor force	\$0.023	.015	\$0.063	.042	\$1.71*	.070	\$0.54	.039	\$0.44	.026	\$0.21	.014	\$0.35	.022	\$0.12	.009	\$0.73	.040	
Family/ Household																			
Married	\$0.21	.014	\$0.31	.024	\$0.15	.011	\$0.12	.008	\$0.29	.019	\$2.26**	.097	\$0.33	.026	\$0.19	.014	\$1.56*	.074	
# of Children	\$0.12	.008	\$0.66	.041	\$0.36	.026	\$1.60*	.072	\$0.04	.004	\$1.05	.055	\$0.50	.037	\$0.93	.049	\$1.45*	.070	

Continued

Table 3. continued

	Pre-Reform						Early Reform						Late Reform						
	Lower		Middle		Upper		Lower		Middle		Upper		Lower		Middle		Upper		
	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	
Job/Labor Market																			
Union	\$0.34	.020	\$1.46*	.064	\$0.20	.012	\$0.56	.044	\$1.74*	.070	\$0.39	.021	\$0.60	.037	\$2.21**	.082	\$0.45	.030	
Managers	\$0.32	.021	\$0.63	.047	-\$0.12	.009	\$0.15	.011	-\$0.04	.003	\$0.24	.018	\$0.13	.012	\$0.22	.015	\$0.30	.026	
Region and Sociod.																			
South	-\$0.47		-\$1.75*		-\$0.58		-\$1.63*		-\$0.22		-\$0.07		\$0.04		-\$0.56		\$-0.07		
Age	\$0.021	.034	\$0.06	.071	\$0.23	.038	\$0.02	.080	\$0.05	.015	\$0.03	.005	\$0.16	.003	\$0.27	.038	\$0.05	.006	
Time	\$0.02	.014	\$0.03	.004	\$0.01	.019	\$0.02	.002	\$0.03	.004	\$0.01	.002	\$0.04	.013	\$0.01	.020	\$0.02	.004	
Adj. R ²	13.8	.002	12.8	.002	13.1	.001	13.3	.002	11.9	.002	10.5	.001	12.2	.003	12.1	.001	11.3	.002	

***P<.001, **P.01, *P<.05; Standard Errors in Parentheses.

Table 4 reports similar multivariate analyses among women. Consistent with our predictions, findings indicate that: (1) the relative parity in earnings returns achieved by African American women in the public sector, relative to the private sector, during the pre-reform period progressively eroded in the early reform and late reform periods primarily because of widening racial gaps in the public sector; and, (2) levels of racial disadvantage are less overall among women. Specifically, during the pre-reform period, the moderate public sector wage “boost” African American women experienced in public sector employment (lower command $b=\$3753$, middle command $b=\$3687$, upper command $b=\$3583$) translated into a non-significant racial disadvantage for African Americans in earnings in the public sector (lower command $b=\$106$, middle command $b=\$117$; upper command $b=\$116$). During the early reform period, the modest public sector wage “boost” African American women experienced in public sector employment (lower command $b=\$2771$, middle command $b=\$2163$, upper command $b=\$2667$) translated into a modest racial disadvantage for African Americans in earnings in the public sector (lower command $b=-\$1,310$, middle command $b=-\$1,226$, upper command $b=-\$1,343$). Finally, during the late reform period, the non-significant public sector wage “boost” African American women experienced in public sector employment (lower command $b=\$676$, middle command $b=\$996$, upper command $b=\$283$) translated into a moderate racial disadvantage for African Americans in earnings in the public sector (lower command $b=-\$2,932$, middle command $b=-\$2,888$, upper command $b=-\$3,241$).⁹

Modeling The Impact of New Governance Specifically

Additional multivariate analyses help assess and more directly pinpoint the specific role of new governance reforms in the patterns of racial inequality reported above. To capture this, we disaggregate the public sector sample and assess whether, and to what degree, respondents are working in a state or federal agency that had adopted aspects (i.e., expansion of at-will status, expansion of declassified status, and reduced grievance procedures) of new governance. We coded this in nominal fashion (more than 1 aspect adopted; one aspect adopted; referent = no aspects adopted) and because of sample size limitations regarding African American men and women, we collapsed the three authority levels during each of the three time periods.

Findings reported in Table 5 indicate that when all factors in the statistical model are controlled, among both men and women, across the three time periods examined, working in a state or federal agency served to: (1) increase the racial wage gap; (2) increase the gap in a more pronounced fashion when at least two aspects of new governance were adopted; and (3) magnify the wage gap more so among men than women.

Among men specifically, when at least two aspects of new governance are adopted, the racial wage gap is robust with Whites earning an additional \$5952 during the pre-reform period, \$6022 during the early reform period, and \$5892 during the later reform period. Further, among men, when one aspect of new governance is adopted the racial wage gap is moderately significant with Whites earning an additional \$3072 during the pre-reform period, \$3102 during the early reform period, and \$3105 during the late reform period.

A similar pattern emerges for women in the public sector analyses though the racial wage gaps are more modest than for men. Specifically, among women, when at least two aspects of new governance are adopted the racial wage gap is

Table 4. OLS Regressions for Hourly Wages Among Women: African Americans Relative to Whites in Authority Positions

	Pre-Reform						Early Reform						Late Reform						
	Lower		Middle		Upper		Lower		Middle		Upper		Lower		Middle		Upper		
	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	
Ascriptive																			
African American	-\$3,947**	.057	-\$3,194**	.057	-\$3,886**	.067	-\$3,933**	.057	-\$3,338**	.079	-\$3,845**	.082	-\$3,675**	.084	-\$3,777**	.077	-\$3,489**	.073	
Sector																			
Public	-\$106	.020	-\$117	.018	-\$116	.033	-\$1,310*	.074	-\$1,226*	.073	-\$1,343*	.080	-\$2,932**	.093	-\$2,888**	.090	-3,241**	.089	
Interaction																			
Afr. Am *Sector	\$3,753**	.087	\$3,687**	.085	\$3,583**	.103	\$2,771*	.102	\$2,163*	.101	\$2,667*	.104	\$676	.042	\$996	.058	\$283	.041	
Human Capital																			
Post College	\$1.85*	.090	\$0.60	.046	\$0.96	.057	\$1.02	.056	\$1.27	.069	\$1.77	.082	\$0.83	.054	\$0.63	.046	\$0.58	.033	
College	\$0.63	.050	\$0.72	.055	\$0.54	.030	\$1.50*	.065	\$0.46	.038	\$0.12	.010	\$0.42	.035	\$0.36	.022	\$0.44	.032	
Health Limitation	-\$0.011	.013	-\$0.69	.039	-\$0.75	.045	\$0.30	.026	-\$0.21	.016	-\$0.11	.009	-\$1.56*	.063	\$0.09	.006	\$0.16	.013	
Years in labor force	\$0.023	.015	\$0.063	.042	\$1.71*	.070	\$0.54	.039	\$0.44	.026	\$0.21	.014	\$0.35	.022	\$0.12	.009	\$0.73	.040	
Family/Household																			
Married	\$0.21	.014	\$0.31	.024	\$0.15	.011	\$0.12	.008	\$0.29	.019	\$2.26**	.097	\$0.33	.026	\$0.19	.014	\$1.56*	.074	
# of Children	\$0.12	.008	\$0.66	.041	\$0.36	.026	\$1.60*	.072	\$0.04	.004	\$1.05	.055	\$0.50	.037	\$0.93	.049	\$1.45*	.070	

Continued

Table 4. continued

	Pre-Reform						Early Reform						Late Reform						
	Lower		Middle		Upper		Lower		Middle		Upper		Lower		Middle		Upper		
	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	(b)	(se)	
Job/Labor Market																			
Union	\$0.34	.020	\$1.46*	.064	\$0.20	.012	\$0.56	.044	\$1.74*	.070	\$0.39	.021	\$0.60	.037	\$2.21**	.082	\$0.45	.030	
Managers	\$0.32	.021	\$0.063	.047	-\$0.12	.009	\$0.15	.011	-\$0.04	.003	\$0.24	.018	\$0.13	.012	\$0.22	.015	\$0.30	.026	
Region and Sociod.																			
South	-\$0.47		-\$1.75*		-\$0.58		-\$1.63*		-\$0.22		-\$0.07		\$0.04		-\$0.56		-\$0.07		
Age	\$.021	.034	\$.06	.071	\$.023	.038	\$.02	.080	\$.05	.015	\$.03	.005	\$.16	.003	\$.27	.038	\$.05	.006	
Time	\$.02	.014	\$.03	.004	\$.01	.019	\$.02	.002	\$.03	.004	\$.01	.002	\$.04	.013	\$.01	.020	\$.02	.004	
Adj. R ²	13.8	.002	12.8	.002	13.1	.001	13.3	.002	11.9	.002	10.5	.001	12.2	.003	12.1	.001	11.3	.002	

***P<.001, **P.01, *P<.05; Standard Errors in parentheses

Table 5. Racial Wage Gap in Earnings from Aspects of New Governance Adopted

# of Aspects adopted	Pre-Reform		Early Reform		Late Reform	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
<1 Aspect	\$3,952***	\$2,516**	\$4,022***	\$2,673**	\$3,892***	\$2,611**
1 Aspect	\$3,072**	\$1,512*	\$3,102**	\$1,445*	\$3,105**	\$1,346*

***P<.001, **P.01, *P<.05

moderately significant with Whites earning an additional \$2516 during the pre-reform period, \$2673 during the early reform period, and \$2611 during the later reform period. When one aspect of new governance is adopted, the racial wage gap is modestly significant with Whites earning an additional \$1512 during the pre-reform period, \$1445 during the early reform period, and \$1346 during the late reform period.

Decomposing the Wage Gap

Finally, our analyses considered the extent to which racial gaps reported in Tables 3 and 4 are the product of differences in the characteristics people bring to the labor market relative to potential differences in the evaluation of these characteristics. For African Americans, we assess the relative contribution of evaluations (intercepts and slopes) and characteristics (means) to the group difference in wages through a regression decomposition. We specifically use the regression slopes from Tables 3 and 4 and the means from the Appendix to decompose the observed gaps based on the following formula (Jones and Kelley, 1984, p. 330):

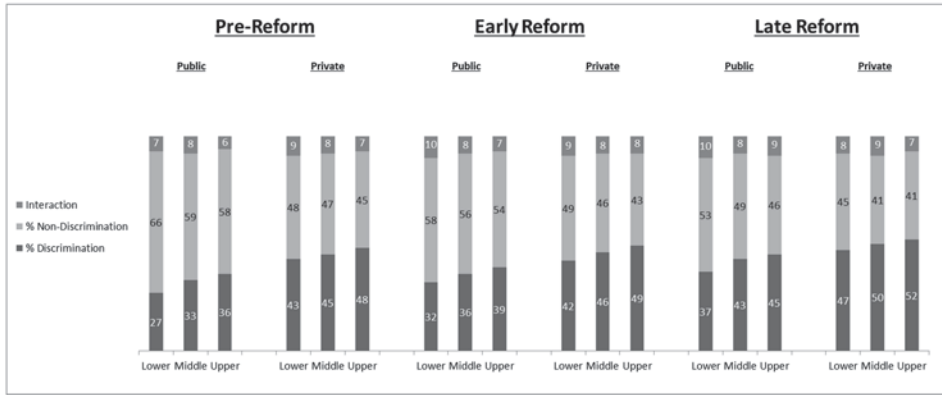
$$Y_w - Y_{aa} = (a_w - a_{mg}) + \sum (b_w - b_{mg}) X_w + \sum (b_w - b_{mg})(X_w - X_{mg}) + \sum (X_w - X_{mg}) B_{mg}$$

Where the subscripts w and mg refer to White and African Americans, respectively, Y is the mean of logged earnings, a is the y-intercept, b is the slope, and X is the mean of a predictor. The first term on the right side of the equation is the portion of the wage gap due to “group membership.” The second term on the right side of the equation is the portion of the wage gap due to differences in rates of return. The third term on the right side of the equation represents the interaction term between worker characteristics and their evaluation. The fourth term on the right side of the equation is the portion of the wage gap due to “nondiscriminatory” differences in worker characteristics brought to the labor market. Overall, combined are the group membership term and the returns term into a “potential discrimination” component, which assumes that the portion of the wage gap due to group membership reflects possible discriminatory factors. The size of the fourth or “means” component designates the expected gap between African Americans and White wages if African Americans entered the labor market with characteristics similar to those of Whites.¹⁰

Figure 1 reports the results of the earnings decomposition for all hierarchical levels of job authority across periods in both economic sectors among both men and women. For purposes of simplicity of presentation, the nondiscriminatory and discriminatory components are presented as percentages of the total earnings gap in hourly earnings.

The findings are consistent with those reached in previous multivariate analyses: discrimination levels captured in our modeling strategy remain relatively constant in

Men



Women

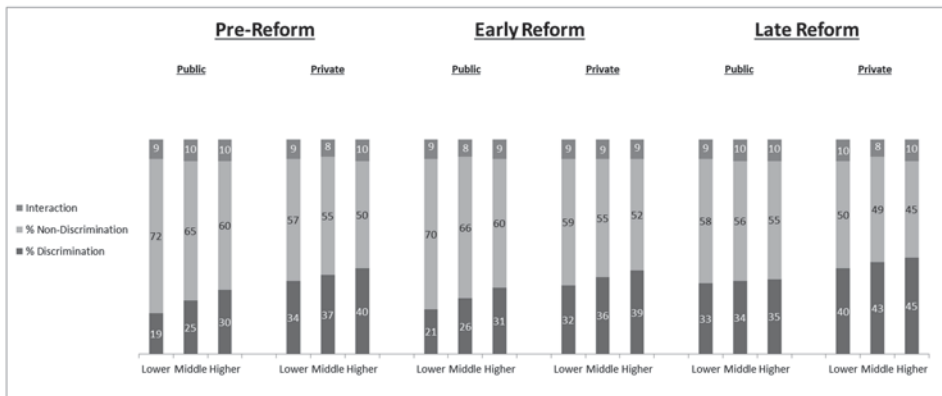


Fig. 1. Decomposition of Race Differences in Hourly Wages (African American vs. White)

the private sector at all levels of job authority and across the three periods. In contrast, we find progressively increasing discrimination as a component of the racial gap in earnings returns at all authority level across the three periods among both men and women.

Among African American men during the pre-reform period, the proportion of the public sector wage gap due to discrimination rises from 27% (lower command) to 33% (middle command) to 36% (upper command). During the early reform period, the proportion of the wage gap due to discrimination is higher overall, ranging from 32% (lower command) to 36% (middle command) to 39% (upper command). Finally, we see that, during the late reform period, the racial wage gap attributable to discrimination is highest, ranging from 37% (lower command) to 43% (middle command) to 45% (upper command). Conversely, in the private sector and among men, the proportion of the wage gap due to discrimination is pronounced yet relatively consistent over time.

A similar pattern is found among women. Specifically, and during the pre-reform period, the proportion of the wage gap due to discrimination ranges from 19% (lower command) to 25% (middle command) to 30% (upper command). This increases during the early reform to 21% (lower command), 26% (middle command) and 31% (upper command). Finally, during the late reform period, we find the greatest inequality attributable to discrimination, ranging from 33% (lower command) to 34%

(middle command) to 35% (upper command). Conversely, in the private sector, the proportion of the wage gap due to discrimination is pronounced but again more or less consistent across time.

DISCUSSION

Our analyses of GSS data indicates that rapidly advancing new governance reforms in public sector employment are having significant if not profound consequences for both levels of racial wage inequality and the long-standing economic niche status of the public sector as a context of greater racial equity. Indeed, the relative parity in earnings returns achieved by African Americans relative to their White and gender peers in the public sector relative to the private sector during the pre-reform period (1992–1994) progressively eroded during the early reform period (2000–2002) and even more so by late reform period (2010–2012).

Causally determinative in these patterns, we believe, are the ways in which new governance reforms—including the transition to both declassified and at-will employment status as well as the reduction of grievance rights—ultimately, remove bureaucratic formality and allow for enhanced managerial discretion. Such discretion results in: (1) the allocation of minorities into segregated work tasks/roles and; (2) the subordination of African Americans to Whites in authority hierarchies. Such disparate allocation and position specific subordination also translates into difficulty communicating evaluation relevant criteria to managers. This holds for men and women, though the disadvantage being created is less pronounced for African American women relative to their White female counterparts than it is for African American compared to White men. The “double disadvantage” experienced by African American women is partially countered by the gender penalty experienced by White women. African American men, however, are unique in their gender group in suffering a penalty—a more strictly racial one—which serves to widen inequities.

Significantly, the new governance movement does not appear to be transitory: calls to reform government have received support across both major political parties in the last decade with Democratic policy makers emerging as prime movers in the movement to make government more efficient through downsizing, decentralizing authority, and focusing more on results and less on rules (Kamarck 2007). Accordingly, if new governance continues unabated, African Americans will likely suffer long-term consequences as they have relatively few alternative locations in the American labor market to achieve more favorable earnings returns, and their relatively negligible accumulation of wealth makes it uniquely difficult to compensate for wage-based hardship (Byron 2010; Oliver and Shapiro, 1995). Moreover, declining access to resources wrought by the implementation of new governance likewise threatens the decades-old ability of African Americans in the public sector to accumulate the financial means to blunt discrimination and provide for the orderly transmission of privileged economic status on an inter-generational basis—a stratification phenomenon that has become a hallmark of the public sector for minorities during the civil rights era (Hout 1984; Landry and Marsh, 2011).

CONCLUSION

It is vital to implement protections that counteract the effects of new governance on African Americans. Enacting policy that balances the thrust of its “business model”

orientation with the need to achieve racial equity in socioeconomic outcomes such as wages is crucial. Accordingly, we believe that providing minorities with opportunities to contest managerial discretion in employment practices likely represents a suitable compromise. Indeed, sociological research documents that the negative impact of discretionary practices are most effectively blunted if minority workers can resort to a formal grievance procedure—with formal counsel—as part of due process in contesting managerial practices (Dobbin 2009; Kalev 2014; Kalev and Dobbin, 2006). In addition, establishing more permeable and flexible work-group boundaries and establishing minority leaders in integrated work settings increases the exposure of African Americans—and their work product—to a greater range of decision-makers. Achieving this will only facilitate integrated formal and informal social networks that render authority attainment a source, rather than barrier of, relative racial equality (Kalev 2009; Kalev and Dobbin, 2009).

The findings from this study should reorient social scientists toward the status of the public sector as a locus of racial stratification. Indeed, similar to the private sector, racial/ethnic stratification in government work emerges as fluid and volatile rather than static and monolithic. Additional analyses of racial stratification in the public sector are certainly warranted, and would benefit from the arsenal of theoretical/conceptual tools, such as “social closure” and “queuing” theory (Lieberson 1980) that have shed light on the mechanisms that drive racial stratification in the private sector. Indeed, it is significant in our view that Max Weber (1968) himself identified a factual situation of “social closure” similar to that experienced by African Americans in the “new public sector,” namely the devaluation of well-rewarded positions when few legitimate alternatives exist.

Considerably more research is needed to draw more definitive conclusions about the niche status of the public sector for African Americans, and for racial inequality in the United States more generally. Such research, to be sure, should proceed mindful of limitations in the research design of our study. Specifically, unmeasured factors not associated with new governance reform could certainly be contributing to some of the inequalities that we have outlined. Future work, for instance, might more directly link discretionary decision-making and race-based stratification outcomes such as earnings returns to authority attainment. Mixed methods approaches that encompass case studies of particular workplaces would be quite useful in this regard, particularly if purported causal factors can be observed first-hand. Such avenues can only enhance our understanding of the critical if not neglected issue of the public sector in racial stratification research and the stability and location of labor market niches for African Americans in the United States.

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NOTES

1. For a review see Landry and Marsh (2011).
2. We recognize—in accordance with sociology research—that bureaucratic or formalization of employment practices is not always synonymous with the elimination or reduction of racial inequality. A developing literature indicates that the stratification-relevant consequences of formalization is not the presence or absence of bureaucratic rules but rather the underlying logic that promotes formalization (Roscigno 2007; Stainback and Tomaskovic-Devey, 2012). Bureaucratization is fundamentally a system of control and coordination. In most workplaces, the core goals of bureaucratization are to enhance efficiency of the organization or the power of organizational leaders, but not always addressing issues or racial inequality. These are secondary goals stemming from the efforts

of some constituency who have enough influence to effectuate such ends. All-told, the underlying “cultural” logic and long-standing historical commitment to address issues of racial inequity, we believed, translates into developing and implementing bureaucratic and organizational rules toward “civil rights ends” (Stainback and Tomaskovic-Devey, 2012) a first priority.

3. We undertook steps to ensure that position in the command structure were related to general hierarchical placement in both the hierarchical occupational structure and hierarchical authority structure. First, across all three time periods, we: (A) linked sample respondents by gender within each command level and on a race-specific basis to their Duncan SEI scores, and (B) similarly linked respondents to census-based job titles. Both (A) and (B) go to placement in the occupational structure and (B) goes to placement in the authority structure. Findings indicate that position in the command structure is related to both occupational position and authority position. Specifically, with regards to (A), across all time periods, African Americans and Whites in command positions have the highest SEI scores. Specifically,

SEI Scores				
Across Time Periods				
Command Position	Men		Women	
	African Amer.	White	African Amer.	White
High	66.3 to 71.4	66.7 to 72.2	62.8 to 66.3	63.1 to 67.5
Medium	59.4 to 62.8	59.9 to 63.3	58.7 to 63.7	59.2 to 63.0
Low	47.8 to 56.6	49.3 to 57.1	47.6 to 56.3	49.5 to 55.8

Regarding (B) among both African Americans and Whites across all time periods, the highest proportion of individuals in census-based “white-collar authority positions” were those in a “high command” position. Specifically:

Proportion in White Collar Authority Position				
Across Time Periods				
Command Position	Men		Women	
	African Amer.	White	African Amer.	White
High	84.8 to 87.3	86.5 to 91.2	83.2 to 86.8	84.7 to 88.1
Medium	73.2 to 77.5	74.2 to 78.4	72.8 to 76.5	74.0 to 77.3
Low	50.6 to 55.3	51.7 to 56.6	50.5 to 54.8	50.9 to 54.3

Please note, in addition, that among both African Americans and Whites across all time periods, the highest proportion of individuals in census-based “blue-collar authority positions” (i.e., supervisors in, for example, construction, manufacturing, and service occupational categories).

4. Also we ran regressions with education coded as a continuous variable. Results were consistent with those reached in which education was coded as a series of dummy variables shown in Table 3.
5. All analyses were re-estimated without using the GSS weights. Results were similar to those reported in this study. Further, a parallel set of all analyses was performed in which the

dependent variable assumed a natural logarithmic transformation. In all cases results were consistent with those reported in this study. Specifically, Findings below summarize variation in the racial gap across the three levels of job authority when income is a natural log:

Public Sector			
	Pre-Reform	Early Reform	Late Reform
Men	3.46* to 4.42*	4.83** to 5.35**	6.21*** to 7.53***
Women	1.34 to 1.58	2.29** to 2.45**	3.33** to 3.55**
Private Sector			
	Pre-Reform	Early Reform	Late Reform
Men	5.46*** to 6.12***	6.32** to 6.28***	6.25*** to 6.94***
Women	3.35** to 3.52**	3.29** to 3.47**	3.30** to 3.51**

- We tested for the robustness of racial gaps in yearly earnings with both the PSID and Current Population Survey. First, the PSID was used to assess gaps among those employed in “managerial” occupations. Second, Current Populations Survey data were used to examine racial gaps among those employed in “upper” versus “lower” managerial levels. Across both data sets findings were entirely consistent with those reported in Tables 3 and 4 with data from the General Social Survey.
- We recognize that the absence of firm-level information on racial composition of firms is a limitation of the decomposition analysis. Nevertheless, we believe it is not a fatal shortcoming: over 95% of firms in the United States in 2010 were predominantly White-owned and -managed in the private sector, a proportion that is similar to that in 1990. In fact, this figure has been used to justify publication of similar race-based decomposition of income gaps in the absence of this direct information (Farley 2005; McGuire and Reskin, 1993; Mintz and Krymkowski, 2010; Pettigrew and Martin, 1987). In the public sector, firms are not “owned” but rather are part of the state, and, in addition, several recent survey have found that level of employers are underrepresented in upper-management decision making positions in the public sector.
- We also tested to see if the disproportionate outsourcing of jobs held by African Americans could be responsible for widening racial wage gaps. The logic of the outsourcing argument is that across time it removes from the sample more highly paid African Americans than Whites. We believe, overall, there is abundant evidence to conclude disproportionate outsourcing is not driving the findings. Specifically, results from t-tests indicate that levels of statistically significant differences in proportion of African Americans and Whites at all three command levels did not change across the three time periods examined. In fact, these findings are consistent with sociological research which documents that in the last several decades outsourcing of job disproportionately impacts on on-managerial positions. Specifically, outsourcing is most preponderant (estimates that over 75% of jobs outsourced overseas) among positions in the traditional manufacturing sector (Kalleberg 2010).
- The small numbers of African American men and women at several levels of the command structure during several of the time periods examined is not adequate to sustain quantitative analyses is not adequate to sustain quantitative analyses separately across all racial and gender groups by command level. Nevertheless, we believe the present analyses which compares racial groups along gender lines is entirely appropriate when examining the issue of niche occupational status: in sociological research niche status has been generally restricted to cross-group comparisons (e.g., Portes 1993), and, indeed, this gender-specific focus across racial groups has generally defined the focus of studies that examine minority niche status (Waldinger 1996).

10. We would have liked to distinguish between state and federal employees but the measures of sectoral location do not differentiate within the public sector. Nevertheless, as new governance has permeated both levels of the public sector contemporaneously, we believe the present study speaks to new governance-driven emerging patterns of racial inequality at both state and federal levels.

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APPENDIX

Descriptive Statistics for GSS Sample

	African American		White	
	X	SD	X	SD
Pre-Reform				
Human Capital				
College	71%		75%	
Post-College	53%		58%	
Health Problems	24%		22%	
Years in Labor Force	15.9	3.2	16.3	3.0

Continued

Appendix continued

	African American		White	
	X	SD	X	SD
Early Reform				
Job/Labor Market				
Unionized	20%		21%	
Public Sector	28%		26%	
Family/Household				
Married	48%		47%	
Children	2.6	1.2	2.4	1.1
Sociodemographic				
South	32%		18%	
Age	38.3	4.3	37.5	3.9
Late Reform				
Human Capital				
College	72%		74%	
Post-College	61%		60%	
Health Problems	23%		21%	
Years in Labor Force	15.8	3.0	16.2	2.9
Job/Labor Market				
Unionized	18%		19%	
Public Sector	27%		25%	
Family/Household				
Married	52%		57%	
Children	2.5	1.0	2.4	1.1
Sociodemographic				
South	30%		17%	
Age	38.7	2.2	38.3	2.4
Early Reform				
Human Capital				
College	74%		73%	
Post-College	58%		57%	
Health Problems	21%		21%	
Years in Labor Force	15.4	3.1	16.2	3.2
Job/Labor Market				
Unionized	18%		19%	
Public Sector	28%		24%	
Family/Household				
Married	45%		47%	
Children	2.6	2.4	2.4	1.6
Sociodemographic				
South	28%		17%	
Age	38.8	2	38.4	2.5