

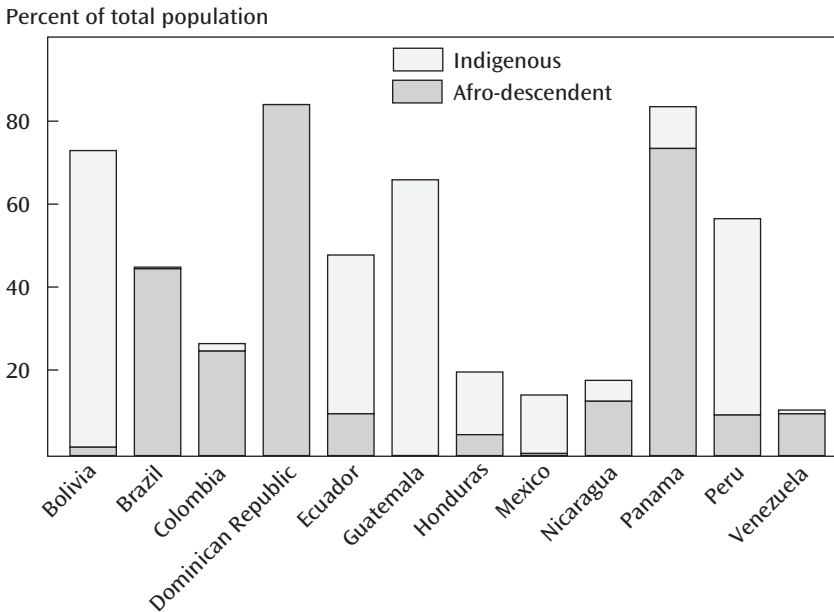
TEN

Dealing Openly with Discrimination

Data on racial and ethnic minorities in Latin America are poor, and the criteria for classification of minorities vary. Estimates suggest that indigenous groups account for about 10 percent (50 million) of the region's population and groups of African descent for 30 percent (150 million). Indigenous people constitute a majority of the population in Bolivia and Guatemala, and they are a significant minority in Ecuador and Peru. Afro-descendants are a majority in the Dominican Republic and Panama, and they form 45 percent of the population in Brazil and more than 10 percent of the population in Colombia, Venezuela, and Nicaragua (figure 10-1).¹

In Latin America, the contours of inequality run broadly along racial and ethnic lines. Compared with “whites,” indigenous and Afro-descendent people are, as a rule, less educated and less healthy and they have less access to such basic institutions as the justice system. They face greater difficulties in transforming educational and occupational achievement into income, generally earning considerably less for the same number of years of schooling (see box 10-1).

1. We exclude observations for the rest of the Caribbean, where Afro-descendants represent the vast majority of the population. Busso, Cicowiez, and Gasparini (2005) shows three different estimates of the size of indigenous and Afro-descendent populations in Latin American countries. Hall and Patrinos (2006) provides a lower-bound estimate of the indigenous population in Latin America of close to 30 million.

FIGURE 10-1. Indigenous and Afro-Descendent Populations^a

Source: De Ferranti and others (2004).

a. Includes countries where indigenous or Afro-descendent groups or both represent more than 10 percent of the population. Estimates of indigenous and Afro-descendent populations in Latin America vary widely. See note 1.

Yet until very recently, racial and ethnic issues have not been central to social and political discourse in the region. That neglect has contributed to and reinforced the myth that Latin American societies are color blind.

A Double Burden for Girls and Women

Indigenous girls' poor performance in school contrasts sharply with the general rule that, on average, girls throughout the region do as well as—and in some countries better than—boys.² In Guatemala, indigenous girls

2. Boys and girls start and complete schooling at similar rates in almost every country; in some (for example, Argentina, Brazil, Panama, Uruguay, and Venezuela) girls do better (PREAL 2006). See also Duryea and others (2007).

BOX 10-1. Lagging Behind: Selected Indicators on Afro-Descendent and Indigenous Groups in Latin America

Included are only those countries that have accessible and reliable data on significant indigenous and Afro-descendent populations. The omission of Venezuela, Dominican Republic, Honduras, and Nicaragua as well as the limited number of references to Panama are due to lack of reliable data.

Poverty

- ◆ In Peru, Bolivia, and Mexico, after other factors are accounted for, being indigenous increases the probability of being poor by 11, 13, and 30 percent respectively.
- ◆ In Ecuador, members of indigenous groups are almost twice as likely to live in poverty as non-indigenous groups and 4.5 times more likely to be extremely poor. In Guatemala, seven of every ten indigenous people are poor; the figure is fewer than four for every ten non-indigenous people.
- ◆ In the Pacific coast region of Colombia, where 90 percent of the population is Afro-Colombian, 85 percent live in poverty; the national average is 32 percent.
- ◆ In Brazil in the 1990s, after other factors were accounted for, racial differences accounted for one-fourth of poverty and inequality.

Education

- ◆ In Mexico, net secondary enrollment rates for indigenous peoples are 40 percent below the national average. The primary school drop-out rate of students in predominantly indigenous municipalities is twice that of students in non-indigenous municipalities.
- ◆ Brazil's 1990s education reforms extended schooling rates for Afro-descendants between seven and thirteen years of age more than for whites. But Afro-descendent students continue to record higher repetition and drop-out rates. While at school, they also record worse exam results than whites, even when the analysis controls for socioeconomic variables.¹ In Paraguay, close to 80 percent of indigenous youth (ages 15 to 19) did not finish primary school compared to less than 20 percent of non-indigenous teens.

1. Between one-third and one-half of the deficit in test results for Afro-descendent students is associated with differences in socioeconomic status or condition of schools. A slightly higher proportion of the deficit is attributable to both socioeconomic and school conditions taken together.

- ◆ In Ecuador, virtually all children start primary school, but completion rates of whites continue to exceed those of indigenous and Afro-descendent minorities. These groups also lag behind whites in test scores for language and math. The achievement scores of predominantly Afro-descendent schools are especially low—behind those of indigenous and Hispanic schools.²
- ◆ Panama has made significant progress in increasing alphabetization levels, including in poor areas. However, among indigenous groups less than two-thirds of children older than nine years of age can read or write.
- ◆ In Bolivia and Guatemala, more than half of indigenous girls have dropped out of school by age fourteen. At age seven, only half of Guatemala's Mayan (indigenous) girls have enrolled in school; the corresponding figures are 75 percent for non-indigenous girls and 71 percent for indigenous boys. In Bolivia, one of every four indigenous women more than thirty-five years of age is illiterate.
- ◆ In Ecuador, more than 80 percent of indigenous girls ages fifteen to seventeen are out of school, a rate more than double that of nonindigenous boys and girls—and 20 percent higher than the rate for indigenous boys.
- ◆ In Peru, rural indigenous girls are particularly prone to enter primary school late, and in recent years, drop-out rates among girls who speak a native language have increased. The illiteracy rate among indigenous women is 65 percent; it is 26 percent among non-indigenous women.

Labor market

- ◆ In Ecuador, indigenous workers earn 21 percent less on average than non-indigenous workers with the same amount of schooling. In Bolivia, non-indigenous workers receive on average an earnings gain of 85 percent for nine years of schooling, while the gain is about 59 percent for indigenous workers for the same amount of schooling.
- ◆ In urban Peru, predominantly white workers have higher access to human capital and physical capital assets and earn higher wages than predominantly indigenous workers in an analysis controlling for individual and household characteristics.

2. Fifth graders in Afro-descendent schools score 80 to 85 percent below indigenous and Hispanic schools in math and 20 to 35 percent below them in language.

(continued)

BOX 10-1. Lagging Behind: Selected Indicators on Afro-Descendent and Indigenous Groups in Latin America (*continued*)

- ◆ Afro-Brazilians with a secondary education earn 16 percent less on average than whites in an analysis controlling for workers' schooling, parents' education, and school quality. Pay discrimination is greater at the higher salary jobs for any skill level.
- ◆ In Guatemala, while 65 percent of urban non-indigenous workers have waged employment, less than 50 percent of urban indigenous workers do. In urban Ecuador, more than 50 percent of nonindigenous workers but only 28 percent of indigenous laborers are formally employed.

Health

- ◆ In Guatemala, maternal mortality among indigenous women is almost double that of non-indigenous women. In Honduras, maternal mortality ranges from 190 to 255 per 100,000 in communities with a high concentration of indigenous people; the national average is 147 per 100,000. In Peru and Bolivia, the corresponding rates are between 270 and 390 per 100,000 in indigenous areas. The average rate for the region is 125 per 100,000.
- ◆ In Mexico, infant mortality levels are higher in the states with a high concentration of indigenous residents (43 per 1,000 live births) than in non-indigenous states (26 per 1,000 live births). In Ecuador, infant mortality among indigenous peoples (68 per 1,000 live births) is more than twice that of non-indigenous people (30 per 1,000 live births).
- ◆ In the predominantly Afro-descendent Pacific coast region of Colombia, infant mortality rates are almost four times higher than the national average.
- ◆ Brazil shows differentials in infant mortality rates by race and ethnicity even when the analysis controls for socioeconomic variables, including education and income, and the racial disparities have been accentuated over time. While according to the 1980 census the differential between the infant mortality rate of Afro-descendents and of whites was 21 percent, twenty years later it reached 40 percent.

Sources: Patrinos and Skoufias (2007); ECLAC (2006a); Hall and Patrinos (2006); PREAL (2006); Lewis and Lockheed (2006); Perry and others (2006); De Ferranti and others (2004); Arias, Yamada, and Tejerina (2004); McEwan and Trowbridge (2007); McEwan (2004); Garcia Aracil and Winkler (2004); Barbosa (2004); Rosemberg (2004); Hall and Humphrey (2003); Henriques (2002); Nopo, Saavedra, and Torero (2004).

complete fewer than two years of schooling on average; the rate is (an also miserable) three years for indigenous boys and five and six years for non-indigenous girls and boys respectively. Indigenous girls start school later and drop out earlier than indigenous boys and non-indigenous boys and girls.³ In Mexico, illiteracy rates of women are systematically greater than those of men in municipalities with a higher share of indigenous people.⁴

Women of all minority groups suffer a kind of double discrimination. For Afro-Brazilian women in urban labor markets in São Paulo in the 1990s, a lower return on their education and age, compared with white men, accounted for 50 percent of their lower overall wages.⁵

As a group, all women still suffer discrimination in some arenas. Although that is true even in OECD countries, there is evidence that in one area—domestic violence—the situation in Latin America may be especially bad.⁶

A Visible Attack on Discrimination

The region has made some progress in the last fifteen years. Ecuador and Chile have created special secretariats dedicated to indigenous matters.⁷

3. World Bank (2003a); Lewis and Lockheed (2006).

4. Hall and Patrinos (2006). Illiteracy among indigenous women in Mexico is 43 percent—far above the national average of about 10 percent.

5. Silva (2000). Data refer to the city of São Paulo.

6. World Health Organization surveys in 1999 and 2000 show that in Nicaragua around 27 percent of adult women reported having been physically assaulted by a partner in an intimate relationship. In Quito, about 37 percent of women said that they had experienced domestic violence. In Lima, 31 percent of women reported experiencing physical violence by an intimate partner. In Colombia, a survey conducted in the mid-1990s found that one of every five women in some kind of union in 1995 had suffered physical violence inflicted by her spouse or partner. Among those, only 27 percent reported the violence to authorities, although the majority of respondents were aware of at least one institution that provided recourse against domestic violence. Estimates based on a social survey for urban households in 1999 found that poor women and younger women with fewer years of completed schooling were much more likely to be victims of domestic violence than wealthier, older, and more educated women. Each year of schooling reduced the probability of victimization by as much as 1.4 percentage points. Women who worked also were more likely to report experiencing incidents of domestic violence (World Bank 2007b).

7. Peru and Honduras have established similar mechanisms for the promotion of racial and ethnic equality. Panama, Venezuela, and the Dominican Republic, which have significant Afro-descendent populations, have failed to advance policies that address racial discrimination (IAC 2003). At the international level, the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and the Inter-Agency Consultation on Race in Latin America have

Argentina has a minimum number of electoral seats reserved for women in the national and local assemblies;⁸ Peru and Paraguay also have gender quotas.⁹ But progress has been limited on many practical issues, including bilingual education, affirmative action, outright discrimination, police violence, and domestic violence. While there are no easy answers, changing attitudes toward discrimination is at least one area in which leadership is far more critical than increased public spending.

What is the right agenda?

- ◆ Recognize the problem of racial and ethnic differences and sponsor assessment of racial and ethnic issues through data collection (censuses, household surveys, and periodic surveys) and social science research.¹⁰ Such efforts are best undertaken with the participation of

engaged in efforts to research and raise awareness of racial and ethnic inequalities in the region. Indigenous peoples have notably increased their presence in the legislatures of a number of countries: In Bolivia, indigenous representation in Congress rose from 1 percent in 1998 to 27 percent in 2001; similar growth occurred in Ecuador and, to a lesser extent, in Argentina and Colombia (Deruyttere 2006).

8. In early 2007, women headed 25 percent of the ministries in Latin America; in Peru, Nicaragua, and Ecuador, that number was 35 percent (Blanco 2007). Between 1990 and 2006, the proportion of seats held by women in national parliament rose, on average, from 6 to 35 percent in Argentina, 11 to 35 percent in Costa Rica, 12 to 26 percent in Mexico, and 6 to 18 percent in Peru (ECLAC 2007a). Most countries have a parliamentary commission on women's issues, and all countries have created special women's bureaus to monitor and implement public policies related to women, some at the ministerial level (Buvinic and Roza 2004; Buvinic and Mazza 2005). In Brazil, civil society organizations have been active in developing programs and services with gender-specific objectives.

9. By 2004, eleven countries in the region had instituted quotas establishing a minimum level of representation (between 20 and 40 percent) for women in party lists for legislative elections. Colombia also has defined a minimum quota of 30 percent for women's representation in the executive branch. Overall, quotas increased women's presence in legislatures by an average of 9 percent between 1990 and 2003, but there is significant variation in the success of quota laws across countries. Success in getting more women elected depends on the law—for example, whether it is obligatory; whether it only reserves a slot, as in Brazil, or requires the slot to be filled by a woman; or whether the woman must be placed in an electable position, as in Argentina, or merely at the bottom of the list. It also depends on the nature of the country's electoral system (closed versus open lists) (Buvinic and Roza 2004; Buvinic and Mazza 2005; Htun, 2003).

10. More than fifteen Latin American countries collect information on ethnicity through their census, but only a few—most notably Brazil and Colombia—collect data on Afro-descendants. In all countries, there are still significant gaps for almost every indicator and extensive problems in relevance, accuracy, consistency, and reliability of data. Only three countries compile an extensive bibliography on race and ethnic inequality issues: Brazil for Afro-descendants and Peru and Guatemala for indigenous groups (ECLAC 2006a; Urrea 2006; Del Popolo and Avila 2006).

the affected groups, especially in designing and implementing questionnaires. The availability of disaggregated data by race and ethnicity provides a necessary starting point not only for political and social recognition of diversity, but also for the analysis of and legal redress for discrimination.

- ◆ Take steps to encourage minority groups to exercise their political and social rights and to push for their own advancement. Colombia assigns seats in its house of representatives to Afro-Colombians. Brazil recently introduced affirmative action programs that include the use of quotas in the public university system and in a new scholarship program designed to encourage low-income students to enroll in private universities.¹¹
- ◆ Establish and strengthen programs to protect women against domestic violence. Gender-based violence reflects deep-seated attitudes, and governments can use the bully pulpit to help change those attitudes and legitimize civil society and community group efforts to combat violence.¹² Laws and policies should strengthen victims' rights, making violent behavior costlier to the abuser. Where laws and policies to protect women already exist, governments should improve the judicial process, strengthen programs that provide women with access to legal services, and step up awareness campaigns. In Guatemala, community-based programs

11. Between 2001 and 2005, sixteen public universities in Brazil (nine at the state level and seven at the federal level) implemented affirmative action programs with admission quotas for low-income and Afro-descendent and indigenous students. In a few states (including Rio de Janeiro, Mato Grosso, and Minas Gerais) the program is mandated by law. In others, the decision is made at the university level. By 2006, nearly thirty universities, both public and private, had adopted affirmative action programs (Dias da Silva 2006; Paiva 2004). Through its ProUni program, the Brazilian government encourages private universities to offer scholarships to low-income students—with a share reserved for Afro-descendent and indigenous students—in exchange for tax breaks. Around 163,000 scholarships were offered in 2007. The share allotted to each minority group is proportional to its representation in the population of each state. In the 2006 National Student Achievement Test, ProUni students performed better than their paying colleagues in nearly all university courses covered by the test, including law, business, and medicine (Brazil, Ministry of Education, “ProUni: Programa Universidade para Todos” (<http://prouni-inscricao.mec.gov.br/prouni>) [July 2007]). In 2004, Colombia approved plans to implement short-term affirmative action policies for Afro-Colombians, although these policies have yet to be defined (Stubbs 2007).

12. Community-based initiatives are shown to be especially effective in preventing gender-based violence and offering services to victims (Bott, Ellsberg, and Morrison 2004, 2005).

inform abused women of their rights and help them navigate the legal system. In Cali, Colombia, the *Consejerías de Familia* monitor cases and provide support and counseling (and in some cases temporary shelter) to abused women, who are referred to them by the city's judicial centers.¹³

13. Several countries in the region have enacted key legislative reforms addressing gender-based violence over the last two decades, including Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Mexico, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Honduras. Other noteworthy initiatives include establishing police stations for women, staffed and directed by women, a practice that was pioneered in Brazil and later adopted in Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Peru, and Uruguay. In Rio de Janeiro, nongovernment organizations (such as CEPIA) are implementing training programs on gender issues for judicial personnel, police, and health sector professionals. The Nicaragua Network of Women against Violence engages in annual awareness campaigns. In Peru's *Defensorías Comunitarias*, grassroots women act as community monitors to provide support and assistance to victims of domestic violence and abuse—helping to change deep-seated attitudes toward gender-based violence in some of the country's poorest areas, which are mostly rural and indigenous. *Projusticia* in Ecuador was relatively effective in providing legal aid services for poor women to deal with issues such as domestic violence and lack of child support (Bott, Ellsberg, and Morrison 2004, 2005; World Bank 2002b, 2003a; ECLAC 2007b).