Postindustrial Era Restructuring in the Public Sector: The Effect on Black, Latina and White Women Workers 1970-2000*

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This study offers a comparative analysis that uncovers shifts in the public sector among different racial/ethnic groups of women workers from 1970 through 2000. Using the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, we find that workers who earned the least benefited the most from the public sector. Moreover, after controlling for individual characteristics, we find that the public sector premium disappears for white women and is strongest for black women. We also uncover important variations in the public sector premium by level of government. Findings suggest that federal and state employment benefits all women. While local-level employment does benefit black women, we find that white and Latina women experience a wage penalty in local government jobs.

Due to the bureaucratic regulations designed to ensure nondiscriminatory hiring, compensation and advancement in government jobs (Post and Siegel 2000; Heckman and Payner, 1989), the public sector has been the preferred place of employment for decades, especially among minority and women workers (Rosenfeld and Kalleberg 1991; Carrington et al. 1996; Collins 1997). But, times have changed. In recent years, scholars have noted that the premium of wages offered in the public sector relative to the private sector has declined precipitously over the past three decades (Borjas 2002; Carrington et al. 1996), and there have been changes in women's share of jobs in this sector. For example, while the overall employment in the public sector decreased slightly from 20 percent in the 1970s to 16 percent by 2000 (Borjas 2000), the proportion of college-educated black women employed in this sector declined from 80 percent in 1970 to 50 percent by 1990 (Carrington et al. 1996). In fact, due to the historical trajectories of black, Latina and white women with respect to employment in this sector, it is also reasonable to suspect that these workers have been differentially affected by changes in this sector. However, because scholars have paid less attention to *intra*gender differences among women workers employed in the public sector, it is unclear how the wage premium and the employment opportunities in this sector have changed over the past 30 years.

In this article, we offer a comparative analysis of the effect of public sector employment for different racial/ethnic groups of women in order to expand what is known about the relative earnings and employment patterns of women workers from 1970 through 2000. In order to determine which workers in this sector were most affected by changes in public sector employment, the analyses in this study assess where the public sector premium is concentrated within the earnings, occupational and educational distribution. Hence, by examining cross-group variations in this premium among women over time, we address the following research questions: How does the public sector premium vary across race/ethnic groups over time? Is the premium concentrated at a particular section of the occupation/pay scale or a particular education group? How is the effect of public sector employment affected by worker characteristics? And, to what degree do sectoral differences and worker characteristics influence the effect of the public sector wage premium throughout the period of study?

Trends in the Postindustrial Era

Race and Sex Differences in Pubic Sector Employment

In the past three decades, public sector employment has played a substantial role in integrating women (Gornick and Jacobs 1998) and minority workers (Beggs 1995; Burbridge 1994; Hout 1984) into the labor market. A sizeable literature on gender and the welfare state has examined the influence of public sector employment on gender differences in pay (Gornick and Jacobs 1998; Blank 1985), and a smaller literature on race and public employment has focused on the benefits of the public sector for male workers (Pomer 1986; Hout 1984; Wilson 1978). The intersection of these literatures – intragender racial differences – has yet to be examined. For example, Hout (1984) finds that between 1962 and 1973, employment in the public sector gave black men a greater chance of maintaining their occupational standing than if they were employed by a private firm. Hout argues that the public sector was a better option for black men because compared to private sector employment it (1. offered greater mobility due to federal legislation making way for greater recruitment among black workers and (2. provided more opportunities in professional and managerial positions than in the private sector.

With 1989-1992 cross-national data from the Luxembourg Income Study, Gornick and Jacobs (1998) examine the influence of public sector employment on gender differences and find that

the premium disappeared for men and women after controlling for differences in the composition of workers in each of the sectors. They also found that the higher education levels of public sector workers partially explains the premium of this sector, and that variations in the amount of public sector employment did not explain variations in the gender wage gap. Because women workers still benefit the most from the public sector premium, our insertion begins in the smaller body of work that examines racial differences in employment outcomes among women. Browne (1999) argues that much of the race inequality among women continues to be unexplained. This is this case, despite the fact that inequality among women continues to be a salient feature of the postindustrial era U.S. economy (Thistle 2006; McCall 2001).

Because there are few comparisons among women and even fewer that include Latinas, we include Latinas into our analysis in order to explore how their public sector experiences compare to white and black women workers.[1] Whereas black female professional workers are overrepresented in the sector relative to their white counterparts (Collins 1990; Sokoloff 1992), Latinas historically have been *under*represented in the sector relative to both groups. Sanders (2007) found that immigrants (including Latino immigrants), like native minorities, are motivated to seek work in the public sector, and often find out about such work through ethnic-based interpersonal networks. The chief attractions are higher pay, benefits and the perception that discrimination is less rampant in the public sector. Barriers to their entry have included the higher educational and citizenship requirements common to public sector jobs. However, given that the educational attainment for Latinas has risen over the past 30 years, we expect that they will increase their representation in this sector over the period of study.

Likewise, we expect white women to rely on the public sector premium less because their employment progress in the postindustrial era has been more expansive than their black (Thistle 2006; Bernhardt, Morris, Handcock 1995) and Latina American counterparts (Amott and Matthaei 1996; Reskin 1999) with similar work experience and education. For instance, Amott and Matthaei's (1996) show in 1990 that African-American, Chicana and U.S. Puerto Rican women were still less likely to hold the professional and technical occupations European American women held in 1930. As a result, previous research indicates that white women workers are not as attached to the public sector as their black female counterparts (Carrington et al. 1996). In fact, Carrington et al. (1996) show that from 1963 until 1993, black women were more than 11 percent more likely than white women to be employed in the public sector.

Shifts in the Structure of Public Sector Work

Despite these disparities, the public sector has been characterized as an egalitarian labor market institution because it is thought that minorities and women are discriminated against less in this sector than in the private sector (Ehrenberg and Schwarz 1986). However, recent trends indicate that the importance of the public sector to minority and women's employment may be changing. In their study of the public/private sector wage gap 1965-1990, Carrington et al. (1996) found that the public sector premium dropped off substantially. At the beginning of the study period, blacks started out better off in the public than in the private sector. But, by 1990, their findings indicate that this public sector advantage gave way to improvements in private sector, which were encouraged by the black/white convergence in wages in the private sector.

In addition to the observed shifts in the public sector premium, evidence suggests that changes in the public sector labor supply also have been mediated by hiring shifts at different levels of government that privileged some groups and neglected the needs of others (Marwell 2004; Weir 1992; Erie 1988). In previous eras, local governments were an important source of employment and mobility for ethnic groups. As early as the late 1870s into the early 1880s, Irish-run

Democratic machines that emerged in cities including New York and San Francisco (Erie 1988) helped Irish immigrants with minimal skills move out of the laboring class; these machines dominated public sector jobs, which offered more social mobility than jobs in the private sector. But, after World War II, access to local level government jobs became increasingly restricted when blacks and Hispanics migrated to northern cities. They were not afforded the same opportunities that were extended to Irish and Italian immigrants (1980) and were met with a mounting fiscal crisis that negatively influenced the accessibility and quality of government jobs (Erie 1988).

On the whole, previous research clearly indicates that the role of the public sector in women and minorities' employment is changing, but knowledge about the lingering significance of public sector employment is limited because we don't know where the effects of these shifts are concentrated within the public sector workforce. This research attempts to fill that gap by examining cross-group variations in the public sector premium and employment opportunities among black, Latina and white women throughout the postindustrial era. The relative earnings and employment of women workers employed in the public sector by race between 1970 and 2000 are examined to order to determine the extent to which public sector employment has contributed to women's wages and employment opportunities.

Data and Methods

Our findings derive from a large and nationally representative sample of U.S. Census data drawn from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) includes 39 samples of the American population that were drawn from 15 censuses (1850-2000). Data from IPUMS allows researchers to use uniform record layouts, coding schemes and documentation to explore change in outcomes such as educational differences, employment patterns, and wage gaps over time. We randomly selected a 1 percent sample from the IPUMS database that includes representative samples of the United States for years 1970 though 2000. With these data, we explore public/private differentials by comparing earnings ratios between native-born, public and private sector women workers at different levels of the earnings distribution.

In this analysis, we examine both inter- and intra-group variations. We account for intergroup comparisons by taking into account the cross-group variations in earnings ratios between public sector women workers that derive from median earnings estimates. We account for intra-group comparisons by tracing the relative distribution of the public sector premium within groups at different levels of the earnings distribution. The intent of this strategy is to help determine whether the public sector premium is specific to a particular class of worker and to make sense of how these trends develop over time. As an effort to compare within group wage inequality, we estimate the earnings ratios by earnings percentiles across year and race, in addition to the ratio of the earnings of the 90^{th} percentile wage group to the 10^{th} percentile wage group. We also explore these variations within high education and low education categories in order to make sense of the relative effect of declines in public sector jobs among women workers over time.

We utilize ordinary least squares regressions as an effort to estimate the gross and net effects of the public sector premium over time. The dependent variable in these models is the natural logarithm of the respondent's earnings because proportional increases in earnings are more common and hypothetically more meaningful. Control variables in these models include age, age squared, marital status, number of children, educational attainment, occupation, sector of employment, region of residence, metropolitan status, usual hours worked,[2] weeks employed last year, and a dummy variable representing public sector employment.[3] Moreover, we also did

separate runs within each sector in order to explore how the public sector premium varies by level of government.

Results

Table 1: Percentage of Employed Female Workers by Sector, Year and Race/Ethnicity

Table 1 reports the distribution of women workers by race, year and sector of employment for the purposes of illustrating how supply shifts throughout the postindustrial era have influenced the structure of opportunity available to women workers employed in the public and private sectors. From this table, we learn that all women experienced a decline in their share of public sector jobs between 1970 and 2000. At the same time, all women experienced declines in their share of federal positions and increases in their share of state level public sector jobs. Likewise, despite the fact that white and Latina women experienced net declines in their share of local public sector jobs, black women experienced net increases in their respective share of these jobs throughout the period of study.

Table 2: Public- Sector/Private Sector Earnings Ratios among Women Workers by Race/Ethnicity and Year

The findings in Table 2 begin to address the relationship between public sector employment and earnings by distinguishing earnings differentials across race/ethnicity, class and time. In 1970, earnings ratios were highest among black women workers and lowest among white women workers, but by 2000, the public sector/private sector earnings ratios were highest among white women. Earnings ratios among women seemed to level gradually due to steady increases in the median wages of workers in the private sector. This is especially true among black women, who saw declines in the median wages in the public sector between 1990 and 2000, while experiencing persistent wage gains in the private sector during this time. Overall, findings in this table confirm conclusions from previous studies because they illustrate a general decline in the postindustrial public sector premium among women workers, regardless of race/ethnicity. However, does the public sector premium hold for all classes of workers? The next section examines intra-race comparisons of the public/private sector differential.

Table 3: Education among Women Workers by Year, Race/Ethnicity and Employment Sector

We report in Table 3 the extent to which highly educated (four years of college education or more) workers and those with the least amount of education (high school education or less) relied on public sector employment 1970-2000. Also in this table are cross-group distinctions in the odds of workers from these contrasting educational backgrounds being employed in public sector jobs over time.[4] It is evident that blacks and Latinas in high education categories have been heavily dependent on public sector jobs over time. However, this dependence was most substantial in 1970 and has decreased over time. Of the jobs they held in the public sector, black and Latina women in the high education category held 77 percent and nearly 58 percent of public sector jobs respectively in 1970. But by 2000, slightly more than 37 percent of the public sector jobs held by black women went to the highly educated segment of this group. This is also the case among highly educated Latinas, who experienced a similar decline in their percentage of public sector jobs by 2000.

Another finding that stands out in this table is that black women workers in high education categories tend to have a higher odds of working in the public sector, and are therefore more dependent on this sector than other women. These differences in their relative dependence

were most robust in the early periods, and declined substantially by 2000. Public/Private Sector odds ratios tell this story best. After 1980, the public/private ratio among black women in 1970 was 3.35 and continued to decline over time to .59 in 2000. White women experienced similar declines during this time. Public/private sector ratios among these workers were 1.26 in 1970 and .39 in 2000. Latina women experienced similar declines throughout the period of study. Their public/private sector earnings ratios declined from 1.36 in 1970 to .40 in 2000.

Trends are different among the women in the low education categories. First, the odds of a woman worker in a low education category working in the public sector are only a fraction of those odds for highly educated women. Another significant finding is that the odds of women in low education categories working public sector jobs peaked in 1980 only to decline slightly among white women and drastically among black and Latina women. White women in this education category, on average, were the least reliant on public sector work and experienced a slight and steady decline in their share of public sector jobs throughout the period of study. Meanwhile, black and Latina women in this education category increased their share of public sector jobs 1970-1980, only to see these gains decline in the post-1980 era.

Although black women in low education categories also experienced steady declines in their share of public sector jobs in the post-1980 period, they are still more likely than other women in the educational category to hold a public sector job. These black women workers were .24 times more likely to be employed in the public sector in 1970 compared to white women with the likelihood of .14 and Latinas who were .15 more likely. By 2000, black women were .22 times more likely to be employed in the public sector, compared to white women with a likelihood of .11, and Latinas who were .13 more likely.

Table 4: Public and Private Share of Women's Employment, by Decile, Year and Race

Table 4 reports how women are distributed across the 10^{th} and 90^{th} percentiles by year and race in order to demonstrate how supply shifts affected the structure of opportunity available to the richest and poorest workers in the labor market from 1970 through 2000. This table confirms findings from the previous table that show the least educated workers saw slight improvements in their share of public sector jobs throughout the period of study while those with the best educational credentials experienced a steady decline in their share of these jobs. Black women and Latinas in the 10^{th} percentile experienced net increases in their share of public sector jobs, while white women's share of these positions declined. The 10^{th} percentile women that experienced the most improvement in their share of public sector positions were black women. At the same time, although all women in the 90^{th} percentile saw declines in their share of public sector jobs, women of color, especially black women are still more dependent on public sector jobs than white women workers.

Table 5: Public/Private Earnings Ratios by Earnings Percentile, Year and Race, Ages 25-64

Table 5 documents the consequences of postindustrial public sector restructuring by comparing public/private earnings ratios and the earnings percentile of workers in the 10^{th} and 90^{th} percentiles by race and year. The results in this table demonstrate how earnings dispersion, as measured by 90^{th} percentile/10^{th} percentile earnings ratios in the public and private sectors, change over time. Overall, the findings in Table 5 illustrate that the public sector premium varies substantially at different levels of the earnings distribution both within and across racial groups. In fact, evidence in this table illustrate that prior to the post-1980 period, the public sector premium increased among low-wage income workers, and decreased substantially among high wage workers. This marks a shift from what we have come to expect, especially among black

women. Research suggests that much of the growth in high-paying jobs among blacks has been attributed to increases in their share of public sector jobs, but says very little about its influence on the lowest wage earners (Zipp 1994; Wilson 1978).

Table 5 also illustrates that despite the fact that both black and white women in the 10th percentile experienced net declines in the public sector premium, black women in this category experienced the most decline during this time. Black women public sector workers in the 10th percentile earned more than twice as much as those in the 10th percentile in the private sector in 1970, and their earnings ratio decreased to 1.64 in 2000. Likewise, in 1970, white women in the 10th percentile earned 1.5 times more than other white women working for private employers. By 2000, the earnings ratios among white women in the 10th percentile declined to 1.35. Earnings ratios were distinctive among Latinas in the 10th percentile. Earnings ratios increased among these women workers during the 1970-1980 decade, and declined in the post-1980 period.

All women in the 90th percentile experienced declines in their public/private sector ratios. In 1970 Latinas in the 90th percentile had a pubic/private sector earnings ratio of 1.30, which decreased to 1.10 by 2000. Meanwhile, black and white women's earnings ratios in this decile decreased, respectively, from 1.50 and 1.31 in 1970 to 1.21 and 1.07 in 2000.

Findings also indicate the extent to which earnings differentials compare between women workers who are at the top of the earnings distribution and those at the bottom of the earnings distribution. Among all women, inequality between the 10th and 90th percentiles was most robust among private sector workers. What this means is that intra-group inequality is less pronounced in the public sector, regardless of race/ethnicity or time period. These findings confirm Gornick and Jacobs' (1998) claim that despite post-industrial changes in the public sector premium, the public sector still has a narrower salary structure than what is available in the private sector. Black and white women in general experienced declines in the inequality among private sector workers throughout the period of study. At the same time, Latinas saw vast increases in inequality between 10th and 90th percentile workers, especially within the private sector in the post-1980 period.

Table 6: Top 5 Occupations Held Women Workers by Race, Sector and Decile, 1970 and 2000

As evidenced by Table 6, one of the reasons why inequality among black and white women workers in the public sector declined is because women in the 10th percentile experienced qualitative improvements in their job ceiling. Black women in the 10th percentile went from primarily working as laundry women and personal service workers in 1970 to being predominately employed as health care and office workers by 2000. This finding reflects King (1993) and Woody's (1992) observations of the significant occupational shift of black women in the post-civil rights era who were able to leave domestic and agricultural work in large numbers and move into clerical work. The public sector was key in affording them these opportunities. Public sector white and Latina women in the 10th percentile similarly improved their job holding status throughout the period of study. White women were able to retain their teaching positions and began to hold large numbers of human resource and library clerk positions. Accordingly, Latina women were also able to improve their standing because they continued to make progress in the teaching fields and elevated their status by moving from kitchen work to childcare.

Generally, 10th percentile workers had gone from being predominately employed as personal service workers in 1970 to administrative support and sales workers in 2000. On average, workers such as launderers, ironers and private household cooks earned $6.88 an hour in 1987,

and 64 percent of these workers were employed part-time (Hirsch and Macpherson 1998). Meanwhile, administrative support workers such as typists earned $10.47 an hour and only 23 percent of this workforce was employed part-time in 1987 (Hirsch and Macpherson 1998). By 1997, the average hourly wage earned by typists improved to $13.22 (Hirsch and Macpherson 1998). These workers also saw slight improvements in their part-time status, which decreased to 21 percent in 1997.

On the contrary, 90th percentile women workers, black women in particular, experienced qualitative declines in their job status within the public sector, while their job standing generally improved in the private sector. Although public sector black women in the 90th percentile were able to hold on to primary school teaching positions, they lost ground in secondary teaching as well as licensed practical nursing jobs by 2000. At that time, instead of primarily working in education and health occupations, they began to become predominately employed by social service agencies. Evidence from Hirsch and Macpherson's (1998) work suggests that this job shift might have translated into less earning power and fewer chances for mobility for these workers. In general, evidence from this source illustrates how losing ground in secondary teaching was a major setback for public sector 90th percentile black women workers because wages were higher and a large percentage of secondary teachers were covered by collective bargaining agreements.

Table 7: Effects of Public Sector Employment on Logged Women's Wages by Year and Race

Table 7 displays the findings from regression analyses of logged earnings, which illustrates the magnitude of the public sector premium among women workers by year. The unstandardized regression coefficients in this table illustrate the effect of public sector employment across race/ethnic groups on logged earnings, while controlling for key human capital and structural factors. In Model 1, gross effects of public sector employment are reported, illustrating the effect of having a public sector job without controlling for human capital and structural variables. Model 2 results include the net effect of having a public sector job, which controls for human capital and other pertinent structural factors such as occupation, metropolitan area and region of residence.

Just focusing on the gross effects in Table 7, we can see that the effect of public sector employment on earnings is highest for black women. Evidence in Table 7 also illustrates that the net effects of public sector employment among women workers are much higher among black women workers than white women and Latinas. We see that black women benefit the most over time from public sector jobs, even when controlling for various capital, motivation, structural and demographic measures. On the other hand, white women's benefit from public sector work declined substantially throughout the post-industrial period.

Table 8: Effects of Public Sector Employment on Logged Women's Wages by Level of Government, Year and Race

Confirming Lobao and Hooks' (2003) findings about distinctions within public sector employment by level of government, our research indicates that women receive their biggest benefit from federal jobs. At the same time, a few important racial differences also emerge. We can see in Table 8 that regardless of the level of government, black women receive a larger public sector premium than their white and Latina women counterparts. Also, white women generally saw declines in the benefit of being employed by state employers, despite a spike in 1990. While the benefit of working for federal employers has been relatively stable over time among white women, they saw drastic declines in the benefit of working for local employers over time. This is

especially true when we consider this effect while controlling for other important individual-level factors. In this case, the net effect for being employed by a local employer decreased from .083 in 1970 to -.109 in 2000.

Discussion

This analysis offers insight into how public sector employment has affected the economic returns to women workers over the past three decades. The public sector premium still exists for all women workers, especially women of color because they continue to earn more when they are employed within this sector. The public sector premium has also become concentrated among earners at the lowest end of the earnings distribution, regardless of race/ethnicity. In fact, we found that the workers that earned the least were better off working for a public employer than a private employer because their wages were higher in the public sector. Another important finding is a progression in the decline of public sector employment that continued during the period of study among all women. We also learned that variations in the public sector premium among women are related to how rewards are allocated by level of government; while all women workers benefited more from being employed by the federal government, those employed by local governments experienced substantial declines in the effect of the public sector premium that outpaced declines in the premium among state government employees.

These shifts in the public sector premium were caused by changes in demand spurred by the political pressure and institutional changes in the nature of public sector work that unfolded in the post-1980 period. Implementation of mandatory government workfare programs and fluctuations in the political viability of public sector unions were two of these. Labor market policies created throughout the Nixon era set the stage for these trends because as Weir (1992) notes “as the logic of individual initiative replaced older notions of government responsibility, the boundaries of employment policy constricted, and the scope of government activity narrowed.” (Weir 1992:162) Hence, due to these political pressures to reform public employment efforts, we believe that the boundaries of public sector employment changed in the 1980s and 1990s because many positions created during this time were designed to channel workers into low-wage jobs, instead of creating career sustaining, high-wage jobs (Rose 1993). In turn, we suspect that the nature of the public sector premium shifted in the late 1970s to benefit low-wage workers because the mission of government work programs changed from placing and training young workers for professional, technical and skilled work to supplying low-wage jobs in the public sector and elsewhere for unemployed workers (Howard 1997; Weir 1992).

At the same time, the fate of public sector women employees can also be attributed to fluctuations in the political viability of public sector unions throughout the period of study. Public sector unionism expanded substantially between 1959 and 1978 (Edwards 1989). But, by the mid 1970s, the nature of labor relations in the public sector changed substantially. Researchers contend that public sector union membership declined by as much as 37 percent between 1976 and 1986 (Freeman, Ichniowski and Zax 1988). Since this time, public sector unionism has become less instrumental in improving the work lives of government workers. This is the case even on the federal level wherein unionism has a history of being relatively successful because these unions have been more likely than state and local level unions to possess the organizational resources needed to manipulate public opinion (Ichniowski and Zax 1991; Masters 1985).

Due to downward shifts in the quality of job opportunities as well as declines in the ability of political institutions to protect the employment rights of public sector workers, the findings in this study suggest that the function of public sector employment among women workers has

changed for the worse, especially on the local level. These findings illustrate that public sector employment has become less useful to highly educated, professional workers and has become increasingly important to less-skilled, low-wage workers. Instead of playing a direct role in maximizing the earning power and advancement potential of black women workers in particular (Collins, 1990), the findings in this study illustrate that public employment now functions as an institution that controls fluctuations in their unemployment rate by ensuring that the less-skilled in this social group have a sufficient supply of low-paying jobs at their disposal. Moreover, due to the nature of job loss and creation in this sector, some workers are at a disadvantage when they are working a public sector job; this is especially true in the case of white and Latina workers who experience a wage penalty in local government jobs.

Conclusion

This study confirms previous research that shows how certain populations benefit more than others from public sector employment. Despite declines in the public sector premium throughout the post-industrial era, these findings demonstrate that women of color, especially black women, are still dependent on government jobs, and pinpoint where this dependence is concentrated. But, this analysis should only be treated as a starting point for substantive investigations of the public sector premium among women workers, especially in light of evidence that suggests that public sector employment is no longer the gateway to employment advancement and economic security it once was to many minority and women workers.

In order to learn more about how these patterns emerged, and how they vary across different employment and social contexts, more research needs to be done that explores the mediating factors shaping these patterns over time. Based on our findings, it appears as if the politics of job creation after the War on Poverty (Weir 1992) and especially throughout the 1980s (Mucciaroni 1990) played a crucial role in reconstructing the benefit of public sector employment. However, because exploring the qualitative differences in the jobs public sector employees work is beyond the scope of this article, research on the nature of employment opportunities is necessary. In fact, a worthwhile area for future research is an exploration of these shifts in the jobs public sector women predominately work that relates recent trends to the policy decisions that prompted these changes. At the same time, given the rapid decline in the effect of holding a local government job, further research is needed to enhance what we know about the qualitative shifts in public sector work on the local level, and how these changes affected the earning potential and job security of workers.

The findings in this article illustrate the consequences of post-industrial era public-sector restructuring among women workers from various racial/ethnic backgrounds. The story we uncover is that postindustrial public sector restructuring had class-specific implications that had distinctive racial/ethnic trajectories. Despite the fact that government jobs were once inaccessible to low-wage workers, these findings illustrate that the public sector premium is no longer the domain of middle-class blacks and is now primarily most beneficial to less skilled, low-wage workers. Evidence in this study also suggests that these shifts in the public sector premium are the products of explicit policy choices and demographic trends throughout the post-industrial era. However, in order to learn more about the consequences of this transformation, we need research that is capable of exploring the qualitative shifts in these jobs, while also taking into consideration the institutional and political decisions that brought about these postindustrial era changes in the nature of public sector work.

Notes

1. Despite the fact that Hispanic origin was addressed in the 1970 Form 1 samples, it is not comparable to the Hispanic samples gathered from 1980 through 2000 due to a host of reasons from changes in the U.S. Census Bureau's public relations efforts to shifts in the sequence and availability of necessary categories that are used to code Hispanic origin. (See page B-13 of the Census Bureau's original 1990 codebook for explanation for why the Hispanic data form 1970 is not directly comparable to 1980-2000 data). For this reason, we use "HISPAN1970" to track the employment patterns of Latina women in 1970. For years 1980-2000, we use "HISPAN," which identifies persons of Hispanic/Spanish/Latin origin and sorts them by their country of origin. IPUMS created the HISPAN1970 variable based on the following eight rules: (1. respondent was born in a Hispanic country or Hispanic area within the US (i.e. Arizona, California, and New Mexico); (2. respondent's father or mother was born in a Hispanic country; (3. respondent's grandparent was born in a Hispanic country; (4. spouse is Hispanic; (5. respondent is a relative a Hispanic householder; (6. respondent has a Hispanic surname; has a father that is Hispanic; (7. female respondent whose spouse is Hispanic; (8. relative of householder that is Hispanic.

2 Due to gaps in the U.S. Census data that account for hours worked in 1970-2000, we use a mixed variable approach in order to ensure that our combination of the available variables is comparable over time. The problem with these data is that we could not account for hours worked with the same variable throughout the period of study. IPUMS offers three possible measures. HRSWORK1 accounts for hours worked last week, but is only available for 1980 and 1990. HRSWORK2 gives estimates for hours worked last week that is intervalled. This variable is only available for the 1970-1990 period. UHRSWORK is the other possible measure for hours worked, which accounts for the number of hours per week that the respondent usually worked during the previous year 1980-2000. In order to discover how the different coding schemes affected our results, we ran the models two ways. First, we used HRSWORK2 only for 1970 and UHRSWORK for 1980-2000. In the contrasting models for this test, we used HRSWORK2 for 1970-1990 and UHRSWORK for 2000 only. After noting how these different models affected key associations like the public sector effect in addition to the magnitude and significance of the hours worked variable, we determined that using the first combination had the least affect on the results. This approach offers the best way of accounting for hours worked without compromising the results.

3 A dummy variable, which derives from the class of worker variable, is used in the regression analysis to represent public sector employment. The public sector variable is coded 0 for private sector workers, and 1 corresponds to workers who are employed in the public sector.

4 Odds ratios for both high education and professional occupation category derive from the following formula:

odds ratio = (x/y)/(a/b)
whereas x = percentage of professional/high education workers employed in public jobs
y = percentage of workers in all other categories employed in public jobs
a = percentage of professional/high education workers employed in private sector jobs
b = percentage of workers in all other categories employed in private jobs

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Table 1: Percentage of Employed Female Workers by Sector, Year and Race/Ethnicity

	Black	*White*	*Latin*
1970			
Private	75.1	80.7	79.9
Public			
Local	11.7	11	10.9
State	5.4	4.8	4.8
Federal	7.8	3.6	4.3
1990			
Private	68.2	79.7	78.3
Public			
Local	15.3	10.7	11.2
State	7.6	6.2	6.3
Federal	8.9	3.4	4.1
1990			
Private	70.2	80.4	79.3
Public			
Local	10.7	9.6	9.7
State	11.6	6.6	7.1
Federal	7.5	3.4	4
2000			
Private	73	79.8	79.1
Public			
Local	12.8	10.6	10.6
State	7.9	7	7
Federal	6.2	2.6	3.3

Table 2: Public-Sector Earnings Ratios among Women Workers by Race/Ethnicity and Year

	1970	*1980*	*1990*	*2000*
Median Annual Earnings (in 2005 dollars)				
Black				
Private	$12,085.31	$15,451.31	$17,937.22	$20,408.16
Public	$20,853.08	$20,201.90	$28,400.60	$28,004.54
White				
Private	$15,876.78	$16,235.15	$19,431.99	$22,675.74
Public	$23,933.65	$21,864.61	$28,400.60	$31,746.03
Latin				
Private	$15,402.84	$16,068.88	$19,133.03	$22,562.36
Public	$23,459.72	$21,389.55	$28,251.12	$30,158.73
Public-Sector/Private-Sector Earnings Ratios				
Black	1.73	1.31	1.58	1.37
White	1.51	1.35	1.46	1.40
Latin	1.52	1.33	1.48	1.34

Table 3: Education among Women Workers by Year, Race/Ethnicity and Employment Sector

	1970	*1980*	*1990*	*2000*
Percentage in High Education Category				
Black Women:				
Public:	77	55.9	49.8	37.2
Private:	23	44.1	50.2	62.8
Odds Ratio:	3.35	1.27	.99	.59
White Women:				
Public:	55.7	44.8	31.7	28.1
Private:	44.3	55.2	68.3	71.9
Odds Ratio:	1.26	.81	.46	.39
Latin Women:				
Public:	57.7	45	32.9	28.5
Private:	42.3	55	67.1	71.5
Odds Ratio:	1.36	.82	.49	.40
Percentage in Low Education Category				
Black Women:				
Public:	19.1	25.7	16.2	18
Private:	80.9	74.3	83.8	82
Odds Ratio:	.24	.35	.19	.22
White Women:				
Public:	12	12.7	10.3	10.1
Private:	88	87.3	89.7	89.9
Odds Ratio:	.14	.15	.11	.11
Latin Women:				
Public:	13.1	20	14.5	11.3
Private:	86.9	80	85.5	88.7
Odds Ratio:	.15	.25	.17	.13

Table 4: Public and Private Share of Women's Employment, by Decile, Year and Race

	1970		*1980*		*1990*		*2000*	
	Public	**Private**	**Public**	**Private**	**Public**	**Private**	**Public**	**Private**
Black								
10th Percentile	14.3	85.7	25.8	74.2	15.7	84.3	16.2	83.8
90th Percentile	25.4	74.6	32.3	67.7	28	72	24.9	75.1
White								
10th Percentile	14.1	85.9	14.1	85.9	13.4	86.6	13.4	86.6
90th Percentile	19.5	80.5	20.2	79.8	17.2	82.8	17.3	82.7
Latin								
10th Percentile	13.2	86.8	15.7	84.3	13.8	86.2	14.5	85.5
90th Percentile	20.2	79.8	21.7	78.3	18.5	81.5	18.3	81.7

Table 5: Publlic/Private Earnings Ratios by Earnings Percentile, Year and Race, Ages 25-64

	1970	*1980*	*1990*	*2000*
Black Women				
Earnings Percentile				
10th	2.06	1.86	2.65	1.64
90th	1.50	1.26	1.17	1.21
Earnings Ratio (90th/10th Percentile)				
Public Sector	9.83	9.21	6.72	8.86
Private Sector	13.56	13.62	15.22	12.00
White Women				
Earnings Percentile				
10th	1.50	1.54	1.31	1.35
90th	1.31	1.23	1.13	1.07
Earnings Ratios (9oth/10th Percentile)				
Public Sector	10.05	9.98	9.99	8.80
Private Sector	11.56	11.25	11.64	11.10
Latin Women				
Earnings Percentile				
10th	.77	1.61	1.41	1.25
90th	1.30	1.24	1.17	1.10
Earnings Ratios (90th/10th Percentile)				
Public Sector	9.45	8.99	9.93	9.71
Private Sector	5.65	5.79	11.98	11.02

Table 6: Top 5 Occupations Held Women Workers by Race, Sector and Decile, 1970 and 2000

	Public		*Private*	
	1970	**2000**	**1970**	**2000**
10th Percentile				
Black	1. Laundry Work	1. Registered Nurse	1. Domestic	1. Cashier
	2. Personal Service	2. Child Care	2. Farm Worker	2. Waitress
	3. Typist	3. Nursing Aide	3. Child Care	3. Housekeeper
	4. Teacher's Aide	4. Office Clerk	4. Machine Operator	4. Nursing Aide
	5. Primary Teacher	5. Cashier	5. Office Clerk	5. Food Prep. Worker
White	1. Primary Teacher	1. Teachers, nec	1. Retail Sales	1. Cashier
	2. Secretary	2. Primary Teacher	2. Waitress	2. Retail Sales
	3. Teacher's Aide	3. Office Clerk	3. Child Care	3. Waitress
	4. Kitchen Worker	4. Human Res. Clerk	4. Cashier	4. Child Care
	5. Manager, nec	5. Library Asst.	5. Secretary	5. Teacher, nec
Latin	1. Primary Teacher	1. Teacher, nec	1. Waitress	1. Cashier
	2. Teacher's Aide	2. Primary Teacher	2. Cashier	2. Waitress
	3. Kitchen Worker	3. Child Care	3. Domestic	3. Nursing Aide
	4. Secretary	4. Office Clerk	4. Personal Service	4. Child Care
	5. Personal Service	5. Nursing Aide	5. Machine Operator	5. Food Prep. Worker
90th Percentile				
Black	1. Primary Teacher	1. Primary Teacher	1. Domestic	1. Cashier
	2. Typist	2. Office Clerk	2. Machine Operator	2. Secretary
	3. Lic. Practical Nurse	3. Social Worker	3. Laundry Worker	3. Retail Sales
	4. Secondary Teacher	4. Vocational Instructor	4. Textile Sewing	4. Receptionist
	5. Nursing Aide	5. Welfare Service Aide	5. Cook	5. Lic. Practical Nurse
White	1. Primary Teacher	1. Primary Teacher	1. Secretary	1. Typist
	2. Secretary	2. Secretary	2. Retail Sales	2. Cashier
	3. Secondary Teacher	3. Secondary Teacher	3. Auditing Clerk	3. Registered Nurse
	4. Registered Nurse	4. Office Clerk	4. Office Clerk	4. Customer Service Rep.
Latin	1. Primary Teacher	1. Primary Teacher	1. Machine Operator	1. Secretary
	2. Secondary Teacher	2. Secretary	2. Waitress	2. Cashier
	3. Secretary	3. Office Clerk	3. Textile Sewing	3. Customer Service Rep.
	4. Registered Nurse	4. Secondary Teacher	4. Domestic	4. Registered Nurse
	5. Administrator	5. Registered Nurse	5. Assembler of Elec. Equip.	5. Manager of Sales Jobs

Note: Numbers in brackets are standard errors. Model 1 is the zero order correlation. Model 2 shows the effect of public sector employment with added controls.

[a]Controls are added for individual level differences in region of residence, suburban or urban residence, parental status, marital status, education, age, age squared, occupation, hours worked (1970), usual hours worked (1980-2000), and weeks worked per year.

**P , .005 *P , .05

Table 7: Effects of Public Sector Employment on Logged Women's Wages by Year and Race

Race/Model	*1970*	*1980*	*1990*	*2000*
Black Women				
Model 1: Gross Effect	.549**	.342**	.488**	.288**
	[.007]	[.008]	[.008]	[.010]
Model 2: Net Effect (with selection and controls)	.314**	.211**	.098**	.131**
	[.006]	[.006]	[.005]	[.007]
White Women				
Model 1: Gross Effect	.368**	.296**	.236**	.123**
	[.003]	[.005]	[.004]	[.006]
Model 2: Net Effect (with selection and controls)	.171**	.062**	.030**	-.036**
	[.002]	[.002]	[.002]	[.004]
Latin Women				
Model 1: Gross Effect	.376**	.287**	.284**	.152**
	[.004]	[.003]	[.003]	[.005]
Model 2: Net Effect (with selection and controls)	.148**	.073**	.051**	.01**
	[.003]	[.002]	[.002]	[.003]

Note: Numbers in brackets are standard errors. Model 1 is the zero order correlation. Model 2 shows the effect of public sector employment with added controls.

[a]Controls are added for individual level differences in region of residence, suburban or urban residence, parental status, marital status, education, age, age squared, occupation, hours worked (1970), usual hours worked (1980-2000), and weeks worked per year.

Table 8: Effects of Public Sector Employment on Logged Women's Wages by Level of Government, Year and Race

Race/Model	*1970*	*1980*	*1990*	*2000*
Black Women				
State Employer				
Model 1: Gross Effect	.426**	.297**	.521**	.282**
	[.014]	[.014]	[.012]	[.018]
Model 2: Net Effect (with selection and controls)	.287**	.212**	-.065**	.108**
	[.012]	[.010]	[.008]	[.012]
Local Employer				
Model 1: Gross Effect	.485**	.285**	.359**	.151**
	[.010]	[.010]	[.012]	[.013]
Model 2: Net Effect (with selection and controls)	.236**	.142**	.139**	.073**
	[.008]	[.008]	[.008]	[.009]
Federal Employer				
Model 1: Gross Effect	.738**	.477**	.636**	.577**
	[.012]	[.013]	[.014]	[.018]
Model 2: Net Effect (with selection and controls)	.454**	.320**	.239**	.281**
	[.010]	[.010]	[.009]	[.012]
White Women				
State Employer				
Model 1: Gross Effect	.297**	.221**	.247**	.132**
	[.006]	[.006]	[.006]	[.011]
Model 2: Net Effect (with selection and controls)	.135**	.033**	.103**	.017**
	[.004]	[.004]	[.004]	[.007]
Local Employer				
Model 1: Gross Effect	.351**	.273**	.235**	.035**
	[.004]	[.004]	[.005]	[.007]
Model 2: Net Effect (with selection and controls)	.083**	.031**	-.010**	-.109**
	[.003]	[.003]	[.003]	[.005]
Federal Employer				
Model 1: Gross Effect	.540**	.498**	.221**	.493**
	[.007]	[.008]	[.009]	[.015]
Model 2: Net Effect (with selection and controls)	.200**	.199**	.019**	.18**
	[.005]	[.005]	[.005]	[.009]
Latin Women				
State Employer				
Model 1: Gross Effect	.291**	.215**	.305**	.100**
	[.007]	[.005]	[.005]	[.008]
Model 2: Net Effect (with selection and	.176**	.044**	.060**	.01
	[.005]	[.004]	[.027]	[.005]

controls)				
Local Employer				
Model 1: Gross Effect	.377**	.255**	.257**	.073**
	[.005]	[.004]	[.004]	[.006]
Model 2: Net Effect (with selection and controls)	.099**	.026**	.029**	-.049**
	[.004]	[.003]	[.003]	[.004]
Federal Employer				
Model 1: Gross Effect	.482**	.48**	.315**	.473**
	[.008]	[.006]	[.007]	[.010]
Model 2: Net Effect (with selection and controls)	.243**	.235**	.090**	.195**
	[.006]	[.004]	[.004]	[.006]

Note: Numbers in brackets are standard errors. Model 1 is the zero order correlation. Model 2 shows the effect of public sector employment with added controls.

[a] Controls are added for individual level differences in region of residence, suburban or urban residence, parental status, marital status, education, age, age squared and occupation, hours worked (1970 only), usual hours worked (1980-2000), and weeks worked per year.