

OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION AND THE GENDER WAGE GAP IN BRAZIL: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS*

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Abstract

Several countries experienced an increase in female labor participation during the twentieth century. Even so, few can be proud of the conditions female workers faced. This paper analyzes the occupational distribution by gender from 1978 to in 2007 in Brazil. It shows that women have penetrated traditionally male occupations to a certain extent, but that traditionally female occupations have maintained their gender composition over the past 30 years. We also provide a regression analysis with an Oaxaca decomposition that shows that the gender wage gap is lower than in 1978, but that it has remained constant over the last decade.

Keywords: wage differentials, discrimination, and female labor market.

Palavras-chave: diferenciais de salário, discriminação, mercado de trabalho feminino

JEL classification: J24, J31, J71.

1 Introduction

Virtually all countries experienced an increase in female labor participation during the twentieth century. Even so, few can be proud of the conditions that female workers face in dealing with family responsibilities and the labor market. The division of labor within families continues to fall along traditional gender lines, even when women engage in labor market activities. Women who are engaged in the labor market are still expected to be available to comply with their *family responsibilities* of housework, childcare and other activities (Hersch & Stratton 1994, Alvarez et al. 2006, Lundberg 2008, Madalozzo et al. 2008, Gupta & Ash 2008). Further, women continue to receive lower wages than men, even when controlling for personal characteristics and job attributes (Blau & Kahn 1997, Bertrand & Hallock 2001, Albrecht et al. 2003, Bayard et al. 2003, Bucheli & Sanroman 2005, Galarza et al. 2006, Madalozzo & Martins 2007, Olivetti & Petrongolo 2008). There is no consensus among specialists as to whether a gendered division of labor at home causes the wage gap or vice versa. However, the majority of studies agree that some intrinsic

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