

# GENDERING JOB COMPETITION: IMMIGRATION AND AFRICAN AMERICAN EMPLOYMENT IN CHICAGO, 1990–2000<sup>1</sup>

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*Abstract:* This investigation of demographic changes between 1990 and 2000 within African American employment concentrations in Chicago finds that the effects of immigration on African American employment differ by gender. Black women increasingly shared their niche industries with immigrant women without being displaced, a pattern of coexistence that indicates the primacy of gender in sorting women into employment. By contrast, similar patterns were absent between African American and immigrant men, and several niche industries reflected competition. Yet economic restructuring more significantly affected African American male and female employment than immigration. Among women, these same trends also affected immigrants. Both groups were adversely affected by the growth of low-wage employment in female-dominated, care-work jobs—their primary industries of overlap. These findings underscore the significance of gender in problematizing ethnic/racial divisions of labor and the need to consider economic consequences that cross these divisions as well as derive from them within urban economies. [Key words: urban labor markets, immigration, African American employment, gender.]

As international migration patterns have dramatically changed the residential populations of U.S. metropolitan areas over the past several decades, a prominent debate has focused on how new immigrant workers affect the employment prospects of lower-skill native-born minorities, particularly African Americans. Results of research engaging the so-called Black/immigrant competition debate remain mixed and run the spectrum: some studies find minimal or no negative effects of immigration on African American workers (Card, 1997, 2005), some suggest positive effects (Rosenfeld and Tienda, 1999), and others indicate detrimental effects (Borjas, 2003).

Few of these studies, however, address or incorporate gender differences in employment—a gender lacuna, I argue, that opens important lines of inquiry into the question of Black/immigrant competition in the labor market. This gender absence is particularly surprising within the sociological literature given that a major consequence of sociological research on the ethnic/racial and immigrant division of labor has been to reveal the socially contingent nature of employment outcomes. Yet most studies addressing immigrant and African American employment focus exclusively on race and ethnicity as mediating constructs through which social processes influence employment (e.g., ethnic networks), bypassing gender as a key dimension of social difference (e.g., Waldinger, 1996). Importantly, pioneering work on the gender division of labor provides a conceptual

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foundation for research on the ethnic division of labor. Thus Reskin and Roos's (1990) "gender queues" sit alongside Lieberman's (1980) "labor queues" as concepts foundational to the ethnic niche model.

Gendered analyses of the immigrant labor market reveal the limitations of conclusions drawn from gender-blind research. Take, for example, those studies that challenge the generalizability of the ethnic enclave hypothesis—the prediction that workers within the ethnic enclave economy receive a wage boost relative to workers employed outside. Studies such as those by Zhou and Logan (1989) and Gilbertson (1995) have shown that female immigrants working in the ethnic enclave economy receive lower wages than they would in the open labor market, contrary to the ethnic enclave's purported salutary effects. Thus the effects of employment within the ethnic enclave economy depend on gender in quite different ways—positive for men, negative for women.

The effect of immigration on African American employment may depend similarly on gender. Studies that simultaneously assess ethnic/racial and gendered divisions of labor reveal that gender often precedes ethnicity and race as a dimension of segregation; that is, workers are more segregated by gender than by ethnicity and race (King, 1992; Reskin and Cassirer, 1996). This literature strongly suggests that immigrants and African Americans, as non-gender-differentiated group, cannot be assumed to be either labor complements or substitutes.

Therefore, bringing gender into the Black/immigrant competition debate challenges the assumption that racial and ethnic identity (and by association, nativity) operates as the primary social dimension of difference and, correspondingly, competition in the labor market. In this study, I hypothesize that African American women and immigrant women may be more alike in their labor market experiences *as women* than they are different as foreign- and native-born workers, or as representatives of different ethnic/racial groups, given the extensive degree of gender segregation and sex-typing of work (Reskin, 1993). Patterns of immigrant and African American employment may differ between male and female workers such that competition effects may be observable between African American and immigrant men, but not women.

Further, I question the emphasis on competition that is routinely accepted as the experience of labor market substitutes: might patterns of coexistence among different nativity and ethnic/racial groups emerge if gender serves as the primary characteristic by which workers are sorted into jobs? Empirical support for such employment patterns would call into question the generalizability of conclusions drawn from gender-blind studies of the racial and ethnic division of labor that address the so-called Black/immigrant competition debate.

For urban geographers, gendering analyses of how global city restructuring processes affect multiple groups of workers exposes patterns of intersectionality (Browne and Misra, 2003; McCall, 2005) and their articulation with processes of segmentation.<sup>3</sup> Yet

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<sup>3</sup>A large literature under the rubric of intersectionality exists that engages both theoretical and empirical questions addressing the relationships among multiple ascribed statuses and social relations. I refer readers to McCall (2005) for an excellent review and assessment of the methodologies used to study intersectionality. My study shares a methodological approach most similar to the "intercategorical complexity" approach she describes (p. 1784).

few geographic studies of urban labor markets engage a simultaneous comparative analysis of nativity, ethnicity, race, and gender to ascertain these nodes and patterns of articulation (for exceptions, see Hiebert, 1999; Wright and Ellis, 2000; Parks, 2004). Comparative analysis is essential to critically engage global city narratives that elide the presence of native-born workers in lower-paying service-sector jobs (e.g., Sassen, 1991, pp. 316–317), as well as to determine for whom processes of urban inequality matter most.

The ensuing comparative demographic analysis contributes to this line of urban inquiry by examining the extent to which gender mediated immigration effects on African American employment during the 1990s in a major global city, Chicago. Industries of employment are identified in which African American men and women were disproportionately employed, and patterns of immigrant movement into these industries are charted between 1990 and 2000. Significantly, I find that immigrant incursion into these industries leads to African American employment outcomes that differ strikingly by gender. Thus “bringing gender in” has significant consequences for how researchers conceptualize for whom the Black/immigrant competition debate is relevant—or not.

#### THE ETHNIC NICHE: A WINDOW ON BLACK/IMMIGRANT COMPETITION

Sociologists studying hiring processes highlight the central role that social networks play in matching workers to jobs (Granovetter, 1974; Waldinger and Lichter, 2003). Employers and workers both participate in this social process, with employers tapping workers’ recruitment networks as a low-cost and low-risk alternative to the formal procedures of job postings, applications, and interviews. Scholars highlight the ethnic homogeneity of social networks, especially among immigrants, predicated on social norms such as “bounded solidarity” (Portes, 1998). As exemplified in the work of Model (1993) and Waldinger (1996), these ethnically homogeneous recruitment networks channel groups narrowly into certain jobs, yielding disproportionate representation of a particular group in a particular line of work—an “ethnic niche.”

The social processes that give rise to an ethnic niche also serve to exclude other groups—the “other side of embeddedness” (as coined by Waldinger, 1995, p. 555). Thus immigrant incursion into a particular line of work can give way to displacement of incumbent native workers as newcomers’ networks identify and fill new vacancies. Given prior socio-historical processes that positioned African Americans in jobs more vulnerable to displacement (Katz et al., 2005) and racial discrimination in the form of employer “preferences” that put African Americans at the back of the hiring queue (Kirschenman and Neckerman, 1991; Lim, 2004), we may expect African Americans to be the native-born group at greatest risk of immigrant displacement. A number of qualitative studies found just such a displacement effect on native-born Blacks as a result of immigration (Waldinger, 1995, 1997; Newman, 1999; Waters, 1999).

In contrast to the conclusion drawn from qualitative case studies that immigrants displace African Americans in the labor market, most macro-economic studies fail to find an explicit negative effect of immigration on native Blacks in the form of higher unemployment or lower wages, though the evidence has become more mixed of late (e.g., Card, 1997, 2005; Borjas, 2003; for reviews, see Lim, 2001 and Murray et al., 2006). Theoretically, these analyses view workers as bundles of skills and disallow investigation into, or the possibility of, social mediation of the labor market despite an empirically rich body

of work that convincingly argues that *homo economicus* rarely gets the job that *homo societas* lands (to paraphrase Waldinger, 1995; see also Granovetter, 1974; Fernandez and Weinberg, 1997; Waldinger and Lichter, 2003). On the other hand, qualitative results stem from case studies that select on the dependent variable—they investigate industries where immigrant succession is evident. In short, these case studies select *for* competition.

In order to reconcile the conclusions derived from macro-economic and qualitative case studies, studies such as those by Rosenfeld and Tienda (1999) and Lim (2001) employ an analysis of the ethnic division of labor in order to engage an analytic “middle ground” (Lim, 2001, p. 204). Rosenfeld and Tienda (1999) and Lim (2001) center their analyses on the concept of the ethnic niche, charting changes in the make-up of African American niche occupations and industries between 1970 and 1990. African American niches are of interest because they represent industries in which Blacks are disproportionately represented. If immigrants do indeed displace Black workers, then displacement will be most visible in these industries where a majority of Blacks find, and rely upon, employment. Further, examination of a set of African American niches over time allows researchers to discern changes in Black employment patterns that may not be due to immigration.

Rosenfeld and Tienda (1999) investigate the demographic changes within 10 occupational niches of African American men and women across Los Angeles, Chicago, and Atlanta. Though they find evidence that immigrants displace African Americans in some low-skill jobs, they also argue that immigration creates job opportunities for African Americans: a growing immigrant population fuels demand for services in industries already dominated by African Americans, such as the postal service, schools, and hospitals. In these cases, argue Rosenfeld and Tienda (1999, p. 97), immigrants “push natives upward in the occupational stratification system.”

Lim’s (2001) study of New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, and Miami yielded similar findings. Across these five metropolitan labor markets, Lim (2001) found a high degree of similarity among the industries in which African American workers concentrated in 1970, including a number of industries characterized by low-status jobs such as domestic service, laundries, and hotels. Similarity across the five labor markets characterized African American employment in 1990 as well, although the kinds of jobs differed from those held in 1970. By 1990, African Americans had gravitated in large numbers to public sector employment, the new niches of dominance, as their presence in many private sector industries such as personal services and manufacturing diminished. African Americans were no longer concentrated in their 1970 niche industries in which immigrant representation had been highest, including private household service, apparel manufacturing, laundering, hotels, and auto repair. The new African American niches of 1990—primarily in public sector industries—provided higher quality employment than the old 1970 niches conferred.

This pattern reflects replacement rather than displacement. Because the same pattern of convergence emerged across all five urban regions, each with varying levels of immigration, Lim (2001) argues that African Americans were “pulled” into these new employment sectors by factors endogenous to African Americans as a group rather than “pushed” out of their old employment niches by immigrants. Lim (2001, p. 216) describes this as “the ethnic nature of the black employment pattern”—a pattern observable in cities with differing levels of immigration.

## GENDERING THE BLACK/IMMIGRANT EMPLOYMENT DEBATE

High levels of gender segregation within the labor market raise questions about the extent to which conclusions drawn from gender-blind studies of immigration's effect on African American employment hold. Comparing immigrant to African American employment patterns without regard for gender differences privileges ethnic and racial segregation as the primary axis of differentiation within the labor market, yet segregation by gender is arguably the starkest, most persistent pattern of employment difference (Reskin, 1993; Blau et al., 1998; Hiebert, 1999). Studies comparing levels of segregation by race, ethnicity, and gender indicate that employment segregates first and foremost by gender, not race; that is, workers are more segregated by gender than by race and ethnicity (King, 1992; Reskin and Cassirer, 1996). Reskin and Cassirer (1996) reported that in 1990 the mean male–female segregation index across occupations was 56.3. Within-gender pairings between different racial groups yielded lower segregation scores: between women of different races, the mean index was 29.1; between men, 34.0. Moreover, these indices point to the gendered mediation of ethnic/racial segregation: among women, ethnic/racial segregation is lower than among men. This evidence suggests that immigrant employment may converge on or diverge from African American employment in very different ways when gender differences within and between ethnic/racial groups are built into analyses of interethnic competition.

An example drawn from a comparison of Rosenfeld and Tienda (1999) and Lim's (2001) results reveals how a gendered analysis (the former) can yield quite different conclusions from that of a gender-blind analysis (the latter). Whereas Lim (2001, p. 213) argued that Chicago's personal services industry "retained only a residual African American workforce" (men and women combined) by 1990, Rosenfeld and Tienda (1999, p. 79) found that African American women maintained a "substantial foothold" in Chicago's maid jobs between 1970 and 1990. By 1990, African American women were still more than twice as likely as other women to be employed as maids, and they held a larger number of such jobs than any other female group, outnumbering Mexican immigrant women by three to one. In contrast to Lim's (2001) conclusion that African Americans had retreated from low-status employment in personal services, Rosenfeld and Tienda (1999) showed that African American women remained securely positioned in such jobs even as immigrant employment within them grew. In this case, gendering the analysis led to very different interpretations of African American job sorting vis-à-vis immigrants.

Because segregation by race and ethnicity is more pronounced among men of different ethnic/racial groups than women, the severity of gender segregation in the labor market more likely increases employment overlap without displacement between immigrant and African American women than between immigrant and African American men. Why should this be the case? One reason stems from the fact that gender segregation channels women into fewer occupations and industries than it does men. To use a statistical analogy, gender segregation reduces the degrees of freedom available for the operation of other forms of segregation in women's labor markets. Given the same number of ethnic and racial groups among men and women, the broader distribution of male jobs across the labor market expands the number of industries across which ethnic and racial groups can be sorted and segregated. The reverse holds true in the women's labor market: the same

number of ethnic and racial groups is sorted across a smaller set of industries and jobs, thereby decreasing segregation.

Additionally, when gender segregation in certain industries and occupations follows from and then further reinforces strong sex-typing, jobs may be primarily viewed as female, regardless of the ethnic/racial identity of available workers (but see Kaufman, 2002, on race–sex stereotyping). This is not to argue that lines of ethnic/racial segregation do not apply, but they likely have less room in the labor market to take hold. Research points to the predominance of gendered network hiring practices that follow from and further reinforce sex-typing: employer recruitment practices select on gender (Powell, 1993), women learn of female-dominated jobs through other women (Hanson and Pratt, 1991; Drentea, 1998; Huffman and Torres, 2001), women recruit and refer other women to jobs (Fernandez and Sosa, 2005). These network hiring practices hinge on gender, even as they radiate outward along more ethnically and racially specific channels, providing multiple ethnic/racial groups with comparable access to a delimited pool of female jobs. In contrast, the broader distribution of men’s jobs across the labor market dampens the effect of sex-typing for men’s employment outcomes, and facilitates the emergence of starker patterns of ethnic/racial segregation. Although both men’s and women’s gender-based networks radiate along ethnically and racially specific channels, the expanded pool of male jobs provides more opportunity for such divisions to result in sharper segregation by ethnicity and race.

In sum, incursion by immigrant women into African American women’s employment niches may yield substitution without displacement because both groups are preferred as female workers—a case of gender trumping race and ethnicity in sorting workers into jobs. As a result, a process of coexistence rather than competition may emerge between African American and immigrant women, particularly in occupations sex-typed as female (such as in industries where care-work predominates). If, however, ethnicity and nativity predominate in dictating how workers fit into the urban economy, then native displacement will likely accompany patterns of immigrant incursion.

## DATA AND METHODS

Following a methodological approach similar to Rosenfeld and Tienda (1999) and Lim (2001), changes are calculated in immigrant representation within African American male and female niche industries in the Chicago region between 1990 and 2000 using the Census 5-Percent Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS). African American niches are of interest because they represent industries in which Blacks have had success in securing jobs. If immigrants do indeed displace Black workers, then displacement will be most visible in these industries with concentrations of Black workers. Further, focusing on the types of jobs primarily held by African Americans hones in on a key anxiety that frequently surfaces in public discourse: that one group (immigrants) is taking the jobs of another (African Americans).

As is common in studies of the ethnic/racial division of labor (Wright and Ellis, 2000; Lim, 2001), I use industries to investigate demographic changes in employment relative to urban economic restructuring and industrial segmentation trends—critical sources of employment inequality (Reich et al., 1973). In particular, I identify niche industries separately for African American men and women. If gendered divisions mattered less than

ethnic/racial divisions, then these industries would be largely the same for Black men and women, as would be the industries' attendant patterns of immigrant employment (as my findings show, however, this is not the case). Data for 1990 and 2000 are evaluated in order to update earlier analyses of the ethnic/racial division of labor that end at 1990.

African American industry niches are separately identified for men and women, using a concentration quotient calculated as follows for each 3-digit industry with at least 500 workers (to guard against a small numbers problem) in the Chicago CMSA:

$$ICQ_j = (E_{ij}/E_j)/(E_{im}/E_m), \quad (1)$$

where  $ICQ_j$  is the industry concentration quotient for industry  $j$ ,  $E_{ij}$  is the employment of group  $i$  in industry  $j$ ,  $E_j$  is the total employment in industry  $j$ ,  $E_{im}$  is the employment of group  $i$  in the metropolitan area  $m$ , and  $E_m$  is the total employment in metropolitan area  $m$ . An industry is identified as a niche for a group if the industry concentration quotient is equal to or greater than 1.5 for that group. For instance, African American women are disproportionately represented at one-and-a-half times their expected share in industries in which their  $ICQ$  is equal to 1.5. An  $ICQ$  is then calculated for all foreign-born workers within each African American niche industry, separately by gender (e.g., an  $ICQ$  is calculated for all immigrant women employed in each African American female niche industry).<sup>4</sup>

Because of their large size and individual-level information on race, nativity, gender, and employment, the 1990 and 2000 Census 5-Percent Public Use Microdata Samples are utilized. Two important changes occurred between these censuses that are relevant for my analysis. First, respondents were given the opportunity in 2000 to check multiple racial and ethnic categories when describing their racial identity and ethnic background. Responses from the 2000 Census were recoded to best approximate the five 1990 categories of non-Hispanic White, non-Hispanic Black, non-Hispanic Asian, Latino, and all others. Native-born non-Hispanic Blacks, or African Americans, constitute the primary racial group of interest, but the presence of other native- and foreign-born racial groups in African American niche industries also was investigated. These results are not presented, but reference to them is made in the text when appropriate.

Second, the Census Bureau changed its industrial classification system in 2000 to accord with the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), the new categorization system that replaced the older Standard Industrial Classification System (SICS). Adopted in 1997 for use by all governmental agencies, the NAICS standardizes industrial classification in economic data across the United States, Canada, and Mexico, and is meant to better represent sectors of economic activity in the contemporary economy (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2007). As a result, employment by industry is not directly comparable between the 1990 and 2000 Census.

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<sup>4</sup>I utilize nativity as a key "anchor point" (Glenn, 2002, p. 14) in order to examine whether immigrants, as the social group and constructed category identified in both the academic and popular discourse most likely to move into industries of African American employment, do indeed follow this route. I recognize that this category eclipses salient divisions along lines of race and ethnicity within the immigrant population, but the decision is strategic to the question at hand and serves to manage complexity within the analysis (McCall, 2005, pp. 1786–1787).

To address this correspondence problem, Scopp (2003) constructed a crosswalk table that allows researchers to redistribute 1990 employment into the 2000 industry categories or vice versa. Here the former is undertaken, because I am interested in tracing racial, ethnic, and gender patterns in the new economy—representative sectors of which, especially in services and technology, are better captured in the 2000 classification system. To determine 1990 employment within the new industry categories, Scopp's crosswalk reassigns, by percentage, employment within each old 1990 industry category to a new industry category (the 2000 classification system).<sup>5</sup> Given the uneven racial and gender division of labor and its regional variation, I reallocated employment for each unique demographic group separately—e.g., native-born Black women (as per Scopp, 2003, p. 5).

Chicago offers a strategic demographic context within which to examine the dual labor market experiences of African Americans and immigrants as one of the three largest African American and immigrant metropolitan regions in the United States—or “multiple melting pot metros” to use Frey's (2002, p. 7) term (ranked by percent immigrant plus percent Black). Not only is metropolitan Chicago one of the top five immigrant receiving regions, it is also the third-largest African American metropolis by share of population (tied with Philadelphia). In absolute terms, Chicago is the largest African American metropolitan area in the country. This demographic mix provides a context well suited to investigating the effect of immigration on Black employment without the sheer size of any one group—immigrant or Black—overwhelming the results.

Finally, Chicago's contemporary demographics and status as a global city (Abu-Lughod, 1999), alongside its historic legacy as the “Black Metropolis” (Drake and Cayton, 1962) make it a compelling urban case through which to make race visible in our accounts of the global city. With its concentration of financial and producer services industries, a bifurcated service economy, and its recent population growth fueled by immigration (Johnson, 2002), Chicago's demographic and economic transformation during the final decades of the 20th century nicely fits the now well-rehearsed narrative of the rise of the postindustrial global city, perhaps even prototypically. In particular, Sassen's (1991) global city narrative perfectly predicts that Chicago's recent reversal of demographic fortune would depend upon an influx of immigrants, and asserts that these immigrants will come to dominate Chicago's low-end service sector jobs “even as middle-income blue- and white-collar native workers are experiencing high unemployment because their jobs are being either downgraded or expelled from the production process” (pp. 316–317).

Yet this global city hypothesis disallows the presence of native-born workers in these low-end service sector jobs. As a consequence, it also fails to explain how immigrant workers will come to dominate these jobs in relation to a workforce already in place, especially one comprised primarily of native-born workers of color (Waldinger, 1996, p. 16). A comparative analysis of ethnic/racial shifts in Chicago's division of labor elucidates, and perhaps challenges, these assumptions and elisions of the global city

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<sup>5</sup> The SAS program I used to reallocate 1990 employment across the new 2000 industrial categories is available by request (or at <http://home.uchicago.edu/~vparks/>).



hypothesis by examining African American and immigrant employment trends in tandem (see, for example, Parks, 2006).

## RESULTS

### *Trends in African American Women's Niche Industries*

Tables 1 and 2 list all niche industries for African American women in 1990 and 2000, ranked by share of employment. Perhaps the most striking trend evident in this table is the stability over the decade in niche industries for African American women. Among the top 12 in 1990, only the personal services industry was lost as a niche in 2000, and among all 30 niches in 1990, only six were lost by 2000. Hospitals and schools continued to employ the largest numbers of African American women by a considerable margin, and employment levels in these and other top niches, such as the postal service and banking, remained stable for African American women during the decade. The persistence of African American women's over-representation in sectors with dense concentrations of public employment, such as hospitals, schools, social services, and public finance, is notable and underscores the decades-long, continued importance of public sector employment for African American women, especially in Chicago (Rosenfeld and Tienda, 1999; Lim, 2001).

Another notable trend reveals the specifically gendered and racialized contours of economic restructuring: African American women increasingly secured footholds in care-work industries characterized by low wages during the 1990s. While sectors heavily dominated by care-work such as hospitals, nursing care facilities, and child care services continued to represent leading industries of employment for Black women, other care-work niches such as home health care and residential care increased in importance. In 2000, half of the top 10 niches for Black women, by share and concentration of employment, represented care-work industries: home health care ( $ICQ = 4.7$ ), nursing care ( $ICQ = 3.4$ ), child day care ( $ICQ = 2.9$ ), outpatient care centers ( $ICQ = 2.6$ ), and residential care facilities without nursing ( $ICQ = 2.6$ ).

Many of these industries experienced strong growth over the decade, thus expansion alone made room for new workers. But in many of these care-work industries, African American women not only increased their employment numbers absolutely but expanded their share of the workforce as well. Employment in the home health care sector, for example, grew by 340%, and African American women increased their share of the workforce from 19% to 36%. In the case of child care services, overall employment nearly doubled while African American women increased their share from 14% to 22%. Other ancillary health care sectors reflect similar trends.

Did immigrants move into these and other African American niche industries? Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the concentration of immigrant women relative to African American women in all African American female niche industries for 1990 and 2000, respectively. Each bubble represents an African American female niche industry and is scaled in size to represent the absolute number of jobs held by African American women. Each industry bubble is located along the y-axis according to African American women's concentration

**TABLE 1. ALL AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALE NICHES RANKED BY SHARE OF EMPLOYMENT, 1990**

Industry	Emp	NBBF Emp <sup>a</sup>	%NBBF	NBBF ICQ	%FBF <sup>b</sup>	FBF ICQ	Niche in 2000?
Administration of human resource programs	14,373	5,555	38.7	5.0	2.3	0.4	yes
Postal service	35,619	10,036	28.2	3.6	1.4	0.2	yes
Nursing care facilities	26,585	7,280	27.4	3.5	13.2	2.4	yes
Individual and family services	16,318	4,362	26.7	3.4	5.1	0.9	yes
Public finance activities	8,061	1,927	23.9	3.1	2.3	0.4	yes
Private households	12,229	2,734	22.4	2.9	31.6	5.8	no
Community food, housing, emergency services	1,283	284	22.2	2.9	5.8	1.1	yes
Home health care services	6,992	1,366	19.5	2.5	8.4	1.5	yes
Residential care facilities, without nursing	11,830	2,293	19.4	2.5	8.0	1.5	yes
Civic, social, advocacy organizations	13,886	2,538	18.3	2.4	4.0	0.7	yes
Other general government and support	23,586	4,157	17.6	2.3	2.1	0.4	yes
Hospitals	175,711	30,758	17.5	2.2	11.2	2.0	yes
Electronic shopping and mail-order houses	10,205	1,714	16.8	2.2	4.8	0.9	no
Executive offices and legislative bodies	6,486	1,074	16.6	2.1	2.4	0.4	no
Other health care services	14,613	2,408	16.5	2.1	6.2	1.1	yes
Business, professional, political organizations	6,534	1,067	16.3	2.1	3.7	0.7	no
Wired telecommunications carriers	31,550	5,094	16.1	2.1	3.1	0.6	yes
Other telecommunication services	15,647	2,468	15.8	2.1	3.1	0.6	yes
Administration of economic programs	9,794	1,531	15.8	2.0	1.6	0.3	yes
Vocational rehabilitation services	3,281	496	15.1	2.0	6.9	1.3	yes
Elementary and secondary schools	175,344	25,843	14.7	1.9	3.4	0.6	yes
Employment services	15,978	2,335	14.7	1.9	5.2	0.9	yes
Child day care services	21,364	3,047	14.3	1.9	7.3	1.3	yes
Administration of environmental quality and housing programs	4,268	599	14.0	1.8	1.0	0.2	yes
National security and international affairs	8,415	1,173	13.9	1.8	4.4	0.8	no
Sewing, needlework, and piece goods stores	2,390	333	13.9	1.8	7.6	1.4	no
Banking and related activities	78,317	10,645	13.6	1.8	7.5	1.4	yes
Outpatient care centers	9,251	1,228	13.3	1.7	7.5	1.4	yes
Department stores	61,911	8,172	13.3	1.7	6.8	1.2	yes
Offices of other health practitioners	8,298	1,090	13.2	1.7	6.6	1.2	no
Bus service and urban transit	19,245	2,432	13.1	1.6	0.9	0.2	yes
Beauty salons	19,114	2,404	12.6	1.6	14.6	2.7	yes
Soap/cleaning compound/cosmetic manufacturing	10,723	1,324	12.3	1.6	8.0	1.4	yes

<sup>a</sup>Native-born Black female.

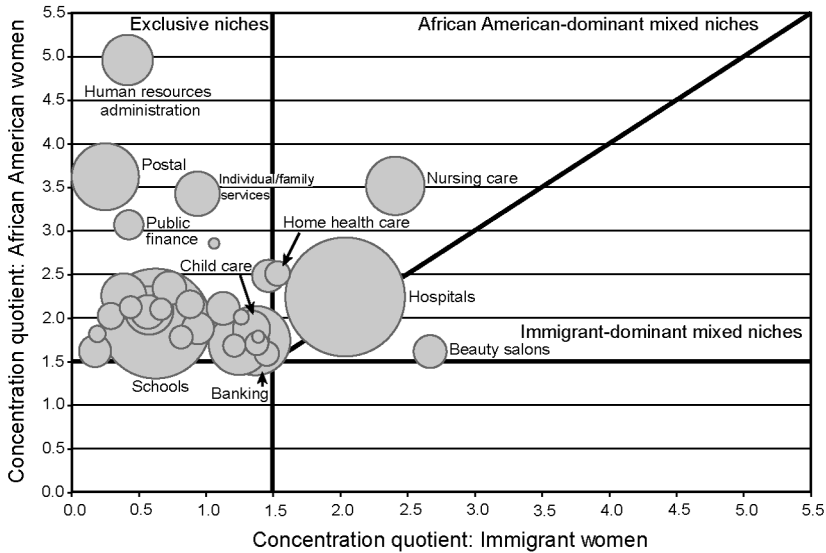
<sup>b</sup>Foreign-born female.

Source: 1990 5-percent PUMS, U.S. Census.

**TABLE 2. ALL AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALE NICHES RANKED BY SHARE OF EMPLOYMENT, 2000**

Industry	Emp	NBBF Emp	%NBBF	NBBF ICQ	%FBF	FBF ICQ	Niche in 1990?
Administration of human resource programs	19,077	7,532	39.5	5.1	4.7	0.6	yes
Home health care services	12,991	4,655	35.8	4.7	15.4	2.1	yes
Community food, housing, emergency services	1,614	560	34.7	4.5	8.1	1.1	yes
Individual and family services	23,121	7,132	30.8	4.0	7.3	1.0	yes
Postal service	34,844	9,414	27.0	3.5	3.8	0.5	yes
Nursing care facilities	41,596	11,012	25.5	3.4	19.7	2.6	yes
Public finance activities	7,483	1,694	22.6	2.9	2.9	0.4	yes
Child day care services	42,397	9,391	22.2	2.9	14.1	1.9	yes
Outpatient care centers	14,898	2,947	19.8	2.6	9.3	1.2	yes
Residential care facilities, without nursing	11,243	2,209	19.6	2.6	10.4	1.4	yes
Administration of environmental quality and housing programs	3,811	703	18.4	2.4	1.4	0.2	yes
Administration of economic programs	9,480	1,739	18.3	2.4	2.7	0.4	yes
Vocational rehabilitation services	6,243	1,046	16.8	2.2	3.4	0.5	yes
Hospitals	178,141	29,120	16.3	2.1	13.7	1.8	yes
Wired telecommunications carriers	33,317	5,372	16.1	2.1	3.9	0.5	yes
Civic, social, advocacy organizations	23,257	3,689	15.9	2.1	7.4	1.0	yes
Other general government and support	19,546	3,078	15.7	2.0	3.2	0.4	yes
Shoe stores	4,356	674	15.5	2.0	3.5	0.5	no
Other direct selling establishments	5,869	899	15.3	2.0	6.2	0.8	no
Bus service and urban transit	21,815	3,287	15.1	2.0	1.8	0.2	yes
Textile and fabric finishing and coating mills	588	86	14.6	1.9	27.2	3.6	no
Employment services	35,000	5,037	14.4	1.9	14.0	1.9	yes
Investigation and security services	18,202	2,577	14.4	1.8	1.7	0.2	no
Business support services	23,474	3,209	13.7	1.8	6.2	0.8	no
Other health care services	21,103	2,854	13.5	1.8	10.0	1.3	yes
Banking and related activities	77,992	10,304	13.2	1.7	9.1	1.2	yes
Traveler accommodation	33,250	4,200	12.6	1.6	18.7	2.5	no
Elementary and secondary schools	235,318	28,515	12.1	1.6	5.5	0.7	yes
Department stores	71,336	8,610	12.1	1.6	10.4	1.4	yes
Miscellaneous general merchandise stores	2,441	292	12.0	1.6	13.3	1.8	no
Vending machine operators	1,687	201	11.9	1.6	1.3	0.2	no
Soap/cleaning compound/cosmetic manufacturing	5,679	670	11.9	1.5	12.9	1.7	yes
Beauty salons	24,925	2,919	11.7	1.5	16.8	2.2	yes
Other telecommunication services	12,892	1,499	11.6	1.5	4.2	0.6	yes

Source: 2000 5-percent PUMS, U.S. Census.



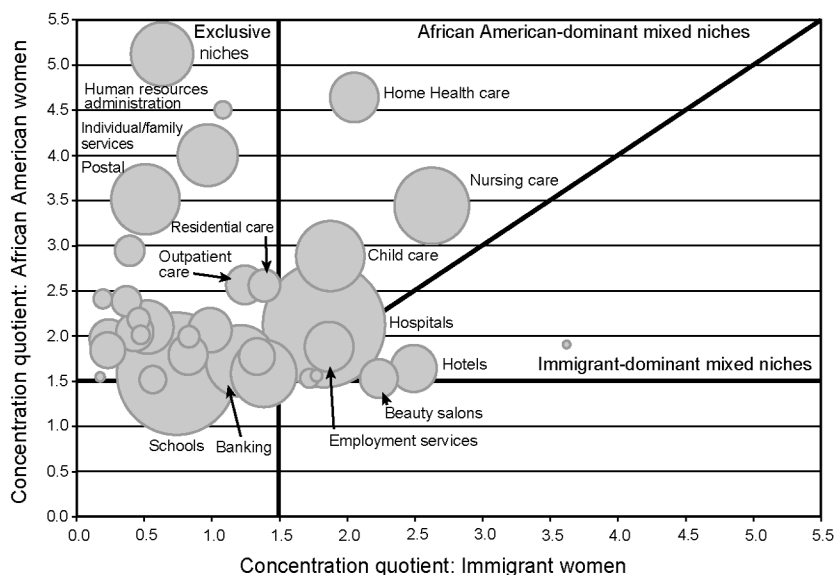
**Fig. 1.** Immigrant concentration in African American women's niche industries, 1990.

in the industry, as measured by an industry concentration quotient (*ICQ*). The *x*-axis represents immigrant women's concentration in the industry.<sup>6</sup>

Three specific patterns emerge in a comparison of Figures 1 and 2. First, the general shift up the *y*-axis indicates that African American women became more concentrated in many of their niche industries over the decade (e.g., African American women comprised more than 30% of the workforce in four niche industries in 2000, compared to only one in 1990). Second, the general shift to the right along the *x*-axis reflects the growing concentration of immigrant women across the majority of African American niche industries. And third, the workforces in most of these African American niche industries became more immigrant without becoming less African American. Only a slight downward shift (a decrease in African American female concentration) is evident between 1990 and 2000, indicating stability in African American women's concentration in their niche industries over the decade.

Three categories are defined that capture the primary Black/immigrant demographic profiles of these niche industries: (1) exclusive niches, (2) African American–dominant mixed niches, and (3) immigrant-dominant mixed niches. Industries such as the postal service, bus service and urban transit, and security services exemplify the first category. Exclusive niche industries contain disproportionately large African American female workforces, relatively marginal immigrant female workforces (e.g., 27% vs. 4% in the postal service, respectively), and are exclusive in that immigrant women are not

<sup>6</sup>The private household services industry is not depicted in Figure 1 as the immigrant *ICR* (5.6) extends beyond the *x*-axis scale. By 2000, this industry was no longer a niche for African American women.



**Fig. 2.** Immigrant concentration in African American women's niche industries, 2000.

disproportionately concentrated in the industry (they do not form niches alongside African American women). In a number of exclusive industries, no other native-born group is disproportionately concentrated either.

In Figures 1 and 2, exclusive niches occupy the upper left quadrant. These industries represent employment domains in which African Americans have a particularly strong group-specific advantage. As a set, these industries exhibit persistence as employment havens for African Americans; with the exception of security services, the same industries constitute this category between 1990 and 2000.

The second category, African American-dominated mixed niches, comprises industries in which both African American and immigrant women form niches, but in which African American women are more disproportionately concentrated (the significance of mixed niches is elaborated at the end of this section). These industries fall above the diagonal that cuts across the upper right quadrant of Figures 1 and 2. African American women exhibit greater concentration quotients than do immigrant women in industries located above this diagonal; immigrant women exhibit greater concentration quotients in the industries that fall below the diagonal. Hospitals and nursing care lie above the diagonal in both 1990 and 2000, but new industries make a striking appearance above the diagonal in 2000, particularly home health care, child care, and employment services.

Immigrant women increased their share of the workforce in all these industries over the decade. Yet in only a few cases did the African American share decrease, and then only slightly. In many cases, such as home health care and child day care services, African American women expanded their shares considerably (from 20% to 36% and from 15% to 22%, respectively). Employment services represents an industry at the intersection between African American-mixed and immigrant-dominant mixed niches.

Although African American women accounted for a barely larger share of the workforce than immigrant women in 2000, immigrant women had more than doubled their percentage share from 6% to 14% during the decade while African American women maintained their share of 14.5%. Both groups were equally concentrated in the industry in 2000 ( $ICQ = 1.9$ ).<sup>7</sup>

The final niche category—immigrant-dominant mixed niches—is comprised of African American female niche industries in which immigrant women are more greatly concentrated. In 1990, only two African American female niches (private household services, beauty salons) qualified for this category whereas five did in 2000 (traveler accommodation, beauty salons, miscellaneous general stores, soap/cosmetic manufacturing, textile mills). This category contains the only manufacturing niches held by African American women.

These immigrant-dominant mixed niches may represent tipping niches, soon to be industries in which immigrants exclusively form niches. Yet this trajectory describes but a few industries in this niche category (i.e., private household services and soap/cosmetic manufacturing). Other trajectories of demographic change, or stasis, are evident. The beauty salon industry, a niche in both 1990 and 2000, may tip immigrant without “tipping out” African American women (during the 1990s, immigrant women slightly increased their share of the workforce while Black women’s share decreased by less than one percentage point). Beauty salons may prove a persistent niche regardless of immigrant influx, primarily due to the Black beauty and hair-care market. Like other ethnic economy goods and services, the racially specific characteristics of the Black beauty and hair care market favor Black workers: residual segregation keeps Black beauty salons in Black neighborhoods, near local supplies of both labor and clients, and the racialization of hairstyling practices fuels a specific demand for Black workers (Lacwell-Harris, 2004, p. 169; Banks, 2009).

Ethnic markets, however, do not exclusively explain the persistence of African American workers in immigrant-dominant mixed niches. Employment services do not represent an ethnically specific commodity, yet its workforce similarly became more immigrant without becoming less Black. Further, other immigrant-dominant niche industries reveal an unexpected trend: three of the five industries in this category in 2000 were new African American niches (traveler accommodation, miscellaneous general stores, textile mills). In other words, African American women increased their concentration in these immigrant-dominant industries over the decade. The label “immigrant-dominant” belies this counter trend—African Americans made inroads into what we have come to think of as immigrant domains of employment.

These trends are further examined by evaluating “defunct” niches (niche industries in 1990 but not in 2000) alongside “new” niches (niche industries in 2000 but not in 1990), both documented in Table 3. Again, the loss of private household services as a niche and

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<sup>7</sup>In order to explore the full range of niche overlap, I also identified a set of mixed-niche industries by loosening my above restriction that immigrant women, as a single group, niche in a particular industry to investigate instances of niche overlap between African American women and any one immigrant pan-racial group (e.g., foreign-born White, Black, Asian, or Latina women). Using this criterion, nearly half of all African American female niches fell into this less restrictively defined set of mixed niches in 2000. This set of industries and their demographic compositions are available by request.

**TABLE 3. DEMOGRAPHICS OF NEW AND DEFUNCT AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALE NICHES**

	1990			2000		
	Emp	%NBBF	%FBF	Emp	%NBBF	%FBF
Defunct 1990 niches in 2000						
Executive offices and legislative bodies	6,486	16.2	2.4	8,563	11.5	3.1
National security and international affairs	7,738	14.0	4.4	4,124	8.1	8.8
Business, professional, political organizations	6,534	16.3	3.7	10,794	11.0	3.7
Electronic shopping and mail-order houses	10,205	16.8	4.8	13,665	7.3	10.1
Private households	12,229	22.4	31.6	14,485	8.1	52.2
Offices of other health practitioners	8,298	13.2	6.6	8,412	5.1	8.1
Sewing, needlework and piece goods stores	2,390	13.9	7.6	1,174	0.0	9.8
New niches in 2000						
Textile/fabric finishing and coating mills	788	5.5	9.5	588	14.6	27.2
Shoe stores	6,599	8.7	4.4	4,356	15.5	3.5
Miscellaneous general merchandise stores	6,926	7.2	6.9	2,441	12.0	13.3
Vending machine operators	3,105	4.5	3.1	1,687	11.9	1.3
Other direct selling establishments	7,006	10.6	4.6	5,869	15.3	6.2
Business support services	17,421	6.6	4.8	23,474	13.7	6.2
Investigation and security services	13,115	8.7	1.6	18,202	14.4	1.7
Traveler accommodation	33,304	10.5	12.6	33,250	12.6	18.7

Source: 1990 and 2000 5-percent PUMS, U.S. Census.

the gain of traveler accommodation (hotels) between 1990 and 2000 stand out as the most notable changes to the roster of niche industries. Strikingly, these industries both exemplify low-end service work characteristic of a polarized service economy and typically portrayed as immigrant jobs, largely because native workers are perceived as spurning such employment. Yet these two niche industries simultaneously stand as evidence for and against this narrative. In the former case, African American women are moving out of private household services, work often typified as menial and carrying stigma. By contrast, trends in Chicago's hotel industry do not support purported claims that Blacks are vacating low-end service jobs: African American women simply are not leaving this industry as they have been described to have done in other cities (Waldinger, 1992; Lim, 2001).

In part, this discordance may be a methodological artifact: gender-blind analyses likely miss the strong foothold that one gender of a particular ethnic/racial group may have in an industry that the aggregate group (men and women together) may not occupy. In this case, African American women count hotels as a niche industry in 2000, whereas

African Americans as a group do not. Another methodological artifice bears comment: in 1990, African American women's hotel employment barely missed the numerical threshold to qualify as a niche industry, yet small changes in their level of employment triggered the inclusion of hotels as a niche industry in 2000. When the occupation of hotel housekeeping is isolated, Parks (2006) found that African American women were over-represented in this job category in both 1990 and 2000. The movement back and forth across the niche threshold over time raises a cautionary flag vis-à-vis short-term case study accounts that too readily interpret immigrant-dominant African American niches as industries in which African Americans are losing their foothold.

Importantly, African American women's presence in the hotel industry in Chicago, especially as housekeepers, challenges the blanket assertion that native workers do not want difficult, lower-paying jobs. Such a finding points to the necessity for qualitative research into such cases in order to discover why and how African American women remain in these jobs. Contextual factors, such as unionization campaigns or local socio-cultural norms, may help explain the continued, or emerging, presence of African Americans in such jobs (e.g., Parks, 2006).

#### *Mixed Niches: Coexistence and Shared Inequality*

Mixed niches—both African American-dominant and immigrant-dominant—comprise the group of African American niche industries that experienced the greatest growth during the 1990s, both as a category and in terms of employment.<sup>8</sup> The increased number of mixed niches over the decade may signal a rise in the number of African American niche industries making the transition to immigrant-dominant industries; but evidence also indicates that many of these niches represent industries in which African American and immigrant female workers coexist in the workforce without displacing one another. In home health care, for example, both the African American and immigrant female workforces increased, both absolutely and relatively.

Yet these trends reveal emerging labor market positions of shared inequality. Both African American and immigrant employment grew fastest in mixed-niche industries characterized by low-wage service work, an increase due to rapid industrial expansion as well as to the exodus of native-born Whites. Both groups' employment prospects were weaker in higher-paid service work where overall growth was relatively stagnant, offering fewer employment opportunities overall.

Patterns within the health care industry exemplify such trends. On the economic side, employment downgrading clearly attended restructuring within this industry: growth shifted from higher-wage core sectors such as hospitals to ancillary lower-wage sectors such as home health care (growth of 340%), outpatient care (61%), and other care services like diagnostic services (44%). On the demographic side, a pattern of nonwhite racialization of lower-level feminized care work is also exemplified by the health care industry. By 2000, native-born White women were underrepresented in the lower echelons of Chicago's health care industry, sectors in which both African American and

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<sup>8</sup>This is a less restrictive definition of mixed niches than those displayed in the "mixed-niche" quadrants of Figures 1 and 2.



immigrant women were not only overrepresented but had further increased their workforce shares. The home health care industry reveals one of the starkest patterns of racialization. Even though all groups experienced employment gains in this industry over the decade due to its explosive growth, native-born White women's absolute gains were far outpaced by those of African American and immigrant women. The combined workforce shares of African American and immigrant women grew from 28% to 51% over the decade while native-born White women's representation dropped from 45% to 37%.

The economic ramifications of these growth shifts are significant for all workers, but especially for African American women who have long held a niche in Chicago's higher-paying health sectors such as hospitals. Whereas hospital work is more extensively professionalized, raising wages by both increasing skill requirements and institutionalizing mechanisms that "upgrade the job," employment in home health care, nursing care, and outpatient care is largely outside the public sector, unprotected by union contracts, and de-professionalized (Boris and Klein, 2006). The ratios of the median wage in these ancillary care sectors to the median wage in hospitals for African American women in 2000 reflect the declining economic opportunities these new growth niches offer. In other care services, African American women earned 92% of what they did in hospitals; in outpatient care, 83%; in nursing care facilities, 69%; and in home health care, 61%. Because African American women have experienced a shift in their job opportunities away from industries that once provided them with some degree of economic shelter to industries characterized by poorer-quality jobs, restructuring during the 1990s served to exacerbate their relative experience of employment inequality.

In sum, mixed niches reflect significant demographic and economic restructuring trends that serve as important strategic research sites within the labor market as they reveal the articulated nature of gendered and racialized processes of labor market inequality that prevail in a late-20th-century global city. The trends identified here reflect a process of gender segmentation articulating with other social divisions rooted in nativity and race: African American and immigrant women's employment grew fastest in lower-wage service industries typified by gender-specific work, but into gendered work from which native-born white women were leaving. These trends point to the influence of larger-scale social processes that structure labor market sorting, such as sex-typing and racial discrimination, over such microlevel processes as ethnic networks. The former do not obviate the latter, but likely shape and delimit the latter's field of operation within the labor market.

#### *Trends in African American Men's Niche Industries*

Tables 4 and 5 list all Chicago's niche industries for African American men in 1990 and 2000, ranked by employment share and concentration. Compared to African American women, there is less stability over the decade in men's top niches: only 5 of the top 10 niches in 2000 were in the top 10 in 1990. Bus and transit services remained the first-ranked niche for African American men between 1990 and 2000: they comprised 34% of the transit workforce in 1990 and 30% in 2000. The postal service dropped from having the second-largest African American male workforce in 1990 (29%) to the fourth-largest in 2000 (22%), trading positions with investigative services. In absolute terms, the postal service moved from being the niche employing the greatest number of Black men in 1990

**TABLE 4. ALL AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE NICHES  
RANKED BY SHARE OF EMPLOYMENT, 1990**

Industry	Emp	NBBM Emp	%NBB M	NBBM ICQ	%FBM	FBM ICQ	Niche in 2000?
Bus service and urban transit	19,245	6,466	33.6	5.2	6.5	0.7	yes
Postal service	35,619	10,212	28.7	4.4	2.5	0.3	yes
Car washes	3,438	962	28.0	4.3	18.8	2.2	yes
Investigation and security services	13,115	3,449	26.3	4.1	4.4	0.5	yes
Taxi and limousine service	5,897	1,196	20.3	3.1	41.0	4.8	yes
Beverage manufacturing	4,976	1,002	20.1	3.1	6.0	0.7	yes
Farm product raw material wholesalers	814	134	16.4	2.5	4.4	0.5	yes
Iron/steel mills, steel product manufacturing	46,116	7,541	16.4	2.5	10.8	1.3	yes
Aerospace products and parts manufacturing	609	99	16.3	2.5	3.0	0.3	no
Footwear and leather goods repair	598	90	15.0	2.3	35.2	4.1	no
Scenic and sightseeing transportation	1,549	229	14.8	2.3	6.7	0.8	no
Railroad rolling stock manufacturing	4,334	641	14.8	2.3	11.8	1.4	no
Truck transportation	41,732	6,059	14.5	2.2	6.5	0.8	yes
Water, air-conditioning, irrigation systems	5,066	725	14.3	2.2	6.6	0.8	yes
Pulp, paper, and paperboard mills	4,226	594	14.1	2.2	16.9	2.0	no
Rail transportation	16,062	2,218	13.8	2.1	9.7	1.1	yes
Couriers and messengers	9,786	1,351	13.8	2.1	6.5	0.8	yes
Alcoholic beverage wholesalers	4,196	565	13.5	2.1	2.0	0.2	no
National security and international affairs	8,415	1,132	13.4	2.1	3.6	0.4	yes
Water transportation	647	87	13.4	2.1	7.6	0.9	no
Sewage treatment facilities	3,359	448	13.3	2.1	4.7	0.5	no
Fruit/vegetable preserving and specialty food manufacturing	2,637	345	13.1	2.0	24.1	2.8	no
Justice, public order, and safety activities	57,318	7,444	13.0	2.0	1.9	0.2	yes
Other personal services	6,742	864	12.8	2.0	9.6	1.1	yes
Barber shops	1,878	231	12.3	1.9	16.2	1.9	yes
Warehousing and storage	8,052	975	12.1	1.9	11.8	1.4	no
Soap/cleaning compound/cosmetic manufacturing	10,723	1,295	12.1	1.9	8.6	1.0	no
Foundries	5,665	673	11.9	1.8	17.0	2.0	no
Bakeries, except retail	12,592	1,468	11.7	1.8	18.2	2.1	no
Beer, wine, and liquor stores	4,506	518	11.5	1.8	15.4	1.8	no
Animal food, grain, and oilseed milling	3,828	431	11.3	1.7	10.2	1.2	no

*Table continues*

TABLE 4. *continued*

Industry	Emp	NBBM Emp	%NBB M	NBBM ICQ	%FBM	FBM ICQ	Niche in 2000?
Administration of economic programs	9,794	1,086	11.1	1.7	3.3	0.4	yes
Automotive equipment rental and leasing	5,099	563	11.0	1.7	7.1	0.8	yes
Waste management and remediation services	11,752	1,287	10.9	1.7	8.2	0.9	yes
Shoe stores	6,599	711	10.8	1.7	9.4	1.1	yes
Recyclable materials	4,962	528	10.6	1.6	17.9	2.1	no
Administration of human resource programs	14,373	1,521	10.6	1.6	2.2	0.3	yes
Auto parts, accessories, and tire stores	8,911	943	10.6	1.6	8.2	1.0	no
Petroleum refining	8,410	882	10.5	1.6	5.0	0.6	no
Industrial and miscellaneous chemicals	15,868	1,646	10.4	1.6	10.6	1.2	no
Community food, housing, emergency services	1,283	132	10.3	1.6	3.7	0.4	no
Admin. of enviro. quality and housing programs	4,268	439	10.3	1.6	3.9	0.4	no
Not specified metal industries	3,037	310	10.2	1.6	29.9	3.5	no
Paperboard containers and boxes	9,792	980	10.0	1.5	17.1	2.0	no
Executive offices and legislative bodies	6,486	646	10.0	1.5	2.7	0.3	yes
Other health care services	14,613	1,450	9.9	1.5	5.3	0.6	no
Residential care facilities, without nursing	11,830	1,163	9.8	1.5	4.5	0.5	yes
Radio and television broadcasting and cable	8,952	879	9.8	1.5	5.6	0.6	no
Electric power generation/ transmission/distribution	12,080	1,182	9.8	1.5	4.9	0.6	no

Source: 1990 5-percent PUMS, U.S. Census.

(10,212) to the third-largest employer of Black men in 2000 (7,610) behind justice, public order, and safety activities (9,341) and truck transportation (7,955).

Changes between 1990 and 2000 in the demographic compositions of African American men's niche industries depicted in Figures 3 and 4 are more pronounced than those evident among African American women's niche industries (Figs. 1 and 2). Again, each bubble represents a niche industry for African American men and is configured in size to represent the number of jobs held by African American men. The y-axis depicts African American men's concentration in an industry, measured by an industry concentration quotient (*ICQ*); the x-axis depicts immigrant men's concentration.

A general rightward shift in industry bubbles from Figures 3 to 4 indicates growing immigrant shares in most African American men's niche industries between 1990 and

**TABLE 5. ALL AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE NICHES  
RANKED BY SHARE OF EMPLOYMENT, 2000**

Industry	Emp	NBBM Emp	%NBB M	NBBM ICQ	%FBM	FBM ICQ	Niche in 1990?
Bus service and urban transit	21,815	6,541	30.0	5.0	8.8	0.8	yes
Investigation and security services	18,202	5,027	27.6	4.6	6.7	0.6	yes
Barber shops	2,074	557	26.9	4.5	17.0	1.5	yes
Postal service	34,844	7,610	21.8	3.7	6.2	0.5	yes
Rail transportation	15,299	3,009	19.7	3.3	8.4	0.7	yes
Couriers and messengers	21,211	4,171	19.7	2.6	6.5	0.6	yes
Beverage manufacturing	4,944	869	17.6	2.4	10.2	0.9	yes
Iron/steel mills, steel product manufacturing	41,607	6,389	15.4	2.4	12.6	1.1	yes
Water, air-conditioning, irrigation systems	4,743	690	14.6	2.4	5.8	0.5	yes
Other personal services	9,163	1,309	14.3	2.3	14.4	1.3	yes
Natural gas distribution	4,660	656	14.1	2.3	8.8	0.8	no
Truck transportation	58,253	7,955	13.7	2.3	15.2	1.3	yes
Automotive equipment rental and leasing	6,607	898	13.6	2.3	7.0	0.6	yes
Waste management and remediation services	9,957	1,351	13.6	2.3	3.5	0.3	yes
Shoe stores	4,356	574	13.6	2.2	13.8	1.2	yes
Electric and gas and other combinations	1,087	128	11.8	2.1	4.8	0.4	no
Justice, public order, and safety activities	75,975	9,341	12.3	2.1	7.0	0.6	yes
Funeral homes, cemeteries and crematories	3,965	494	11.8	2.0	0.0	0.0	no
Administration of economic programs	9,480	1,110	11.7	2.0	13.0	1.1	yes
Services incidental to transportation	25,106	2,943	11.7	2.0	8.0	0.7	no
Motor vehicle/equipment manufacturing	26,917	3,059	11.4	1.9	16.4	1.4	no
Administration of environmental quality and housing programs	3,811	430	11.3	1.9	6.5	0.6	yes
Vocational rehabilitation services	6,243	700	11.2	1.9	2.3	0.2	no
Paint, coating, and adhesives manufacturing	5,297	584	11.0	1.9	14.3	1.3	no
Car washes	5,307	576	10.9	1.8	34.5	3.0	yes
Sound recording industries	1,163	126	10.8	1.8	4.0	0.4	no
National security and international affairs	4,124	446	10.8	1.8	13.7	1.2	yes
Administration of human resource programs	19,077	2,034	10.7	1.8	2.7	0.2	yes

*Table continues*

TABLE 5. continued

Industry	Emp	NBBM Emp	%NBB M	NBBM ICQ	%FBM	FBM ICQ	Niche in 1990?
Recyclable materials	4,073	432	10.6	1.8	26.6	2.3	yes
Executive offices and legislative bodies	8,563	904	10.6	1.8	1.2	0.1	yes
Other general government and support	19,546	2,046	10.5	1.8	4.5	0.4	no
Electronic and precision equipment repair	5,063	507	10.0	1.7	13.8	1.2	yes
Glass and glass product manufacturing	3,330	310	9.3	1.6	25.2	2.2	no
Wired telecommunications carriers	33,317	3,032	9.1	1.5	6.6	0.6	yes
Religious organizations	28,800	2,601	9.0	1.5	7.5	0.7	no
Residential care facilities, without nursing	11,243	1,015	9.0	1.5	4.0	0.4	yes
Taxi and limousine service	10,008	899	9.0	1.5	57.6	5.1	yes
Radio and television broadcasting and cable	15,085	1,351	9.0	1.5	6.4	0.6	yes

Source: 2000 5-percent PUMS, U.S. Census.

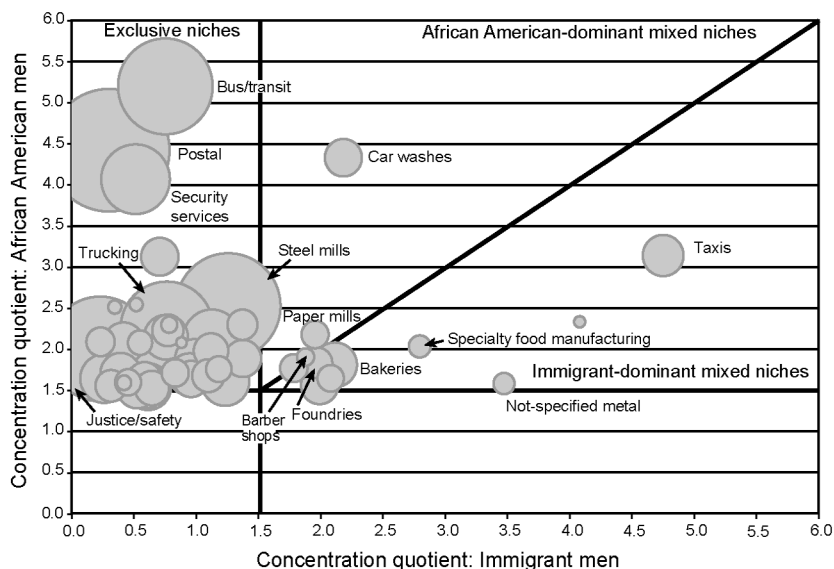


Fig. 3. Immigrant concentration in African American men's niche industries, 1990.

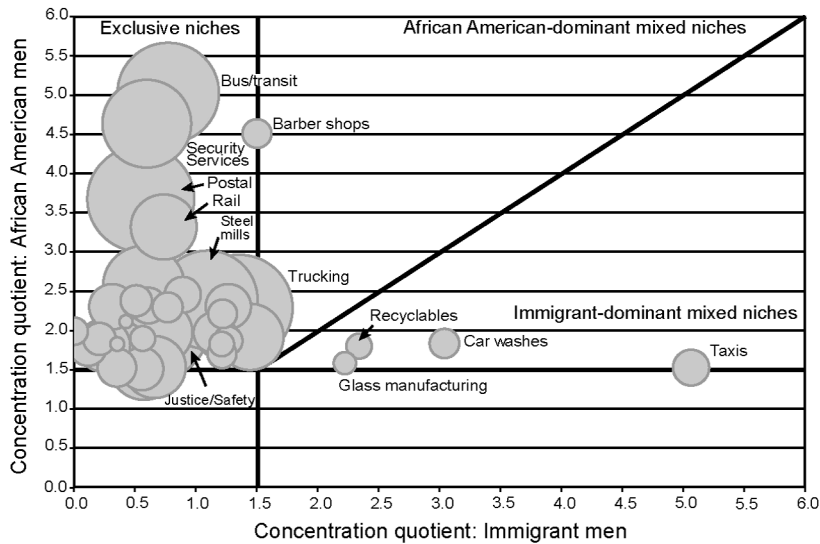


Fig. 4. Immigrant concentration in African American men's niche industries, 2000.

2000, a pattern also evident among African American women's niche industries. Unlike Black women's industries, however, a simultaneous decline in many industries' Black male workforces is illustrated by a general shift of industries down the y-axis.

Key exclusive niche industries for African American men reflect this decline most dramatically. In bus and transit services, an industry in which African American men were overrepresented by more than five times their expected share in 1990, employment gains among Black men through the 1990s were weak (1%) despite an industry-wide employment growth of 10%. As a result, Black men's share of the workforce dropped four percentage points, from 34% to 30%. In the postal service, African American men's losses were dramatic. Although overall postal employment remained stable over the decade, African American male employment decreased by 25% absolutely, and their share of the workforce dropped from 29% to 22%. African American women suffered no such decline, revealing a clear gender break in the "ethnic nature" of this employment niche. African American women also made absolute and relative gains in bus and transit services. Together, these industries' demographic trajectories signal the emergence of a critical gendered difference in the significance of what have historically been protected industries of African American employment.

Trends among African American men's mixed niches contrast sharply against those for African American women's mixed niches. Most notably, the number of mixed niche industries, either African American-dominant or immigrant-dominant, decreased dramatically over the decade for men, whereas the number increased for women. Therefore, as African American and immigrant women experienced increasing convergence in their niche industries of employment, men experienced increasing divergence—driven to some extent by the movement of African American men out of industries into which immigrant men moved. Figures 3 and 4 clearly illustrate these trends. First, few mixed

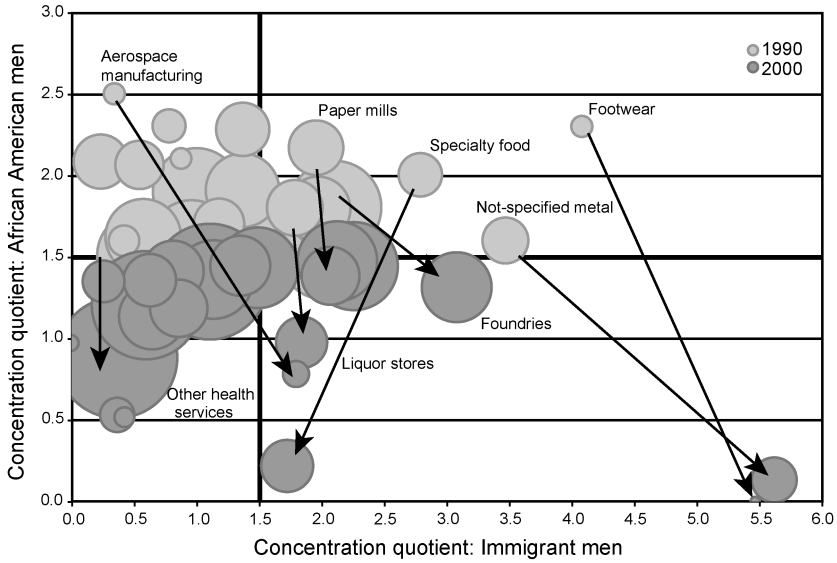


Fig. 5. Immigrant concentration in African American men’s defunct niches, 1990–2000.

niche industries remained by 2000, illustrated by the nearly empty upper right quadrant of Figure 4. Second, industries that populate this quadrant for both 1990 and 2000—car washes, taxis, recyclables—occupy an even more rightward and downward position in Figure 4 than in Figure 3, illustrating that these industries became more heavily immigrant as their African American workforces declined (e.g., the African American male concentration quotient dropped from 4.3 to 1.8 in car washes and from 3 to 1.5 in taxis).

In some cases, immigrant incursions led to ethnic succession. Table 6 displays the set of defunct niches, those industries in which African American men were overrepresented in 1990 but not in 2000. Nearly every defunct niche industry experienced a decline in its Black male workforce coupled with an increase in its foreign-born workforce. Though these shifts were moderate in more than half the cases, a number of these industries experienced sharp growth in their immigrant workforces and a marked decline in their African American male workforces. In foundries, the African American workforce decreased from 12% to 8% as the immigrant male workforce expanded from 17% to 35%. In not specified metal industries, Black men dropped from 10% to less than 1% of the workforce while immigrants grew from 30% to 64% (total employment in this industry was relatively small at 3,037). In contrast, only one defunct niche for African American women—personal services—had a high percentage of immigrants in 2000. African American women moved out of their defunct niche industries for reasons unrelated to immigrant incursion.

Ethnic succession does not, however, describe all defunct niches for African American men. Figure 5 illustrates the change in the demographic composition of defunct African American male niche industries between 1990 and 2000. The lighter bubbles represent the demographic composition of these industries in 1990; the darker bubbles represent their

**TABLE 6. DEMOGRAPHICS OF NEW AND DEFUNCT AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE NICHES**

	1990			2000		
	Emp	%NBBM	%FBM	Emp	%NBBM	%FBM
Defunct 1990 niches						
Community food, housing, emergency services	1,283	10.3	3.7	1,614	3.2	4.2
Soap/cleaning compound/cosmetic manufacturing	10,723	12.1	8.6	5,679	8.4	9.2
Other health care services	14,613	9.1	5.3	21,103	5.3	4.1
Bakeries, except retail	12,592	11.7	18.2	10,952	8.6	25.7
Paperboard containers and boxes	9,792	10.0	17.1	8,993	8.8	24.2
Electric power generation/transmission/distribution	12,080	9.8	4.9	16,695	7.2	6.8
Animal food, grain, and oilseed milling	3,828	11.3	10.2	4,760	7.1	9.8
Industrial and miscellaneous chemicals	15,868	10.4	10.6	18,190	8.1	12.6
Warehousing and storage	8,052	12.1	11.8	9,675	8.5	16.9
Alcoholic beverage wholesalers	4,196	13.5	2.0	4,110	8.1	7.1
Petroleum refining	8,410	10.5	5.0	6,173	6.8	7.3
Sewage treatment facilities	3,359	13.3	4.7	2,506	8.1	3.0
Railroad rolling stock manufacturing	4,334	14.8	11.8	5,288	8.6	15.4
Beer, wine, and liquor stores	4,506	11.5	15.4	3,916	5.8	20.9
Pulp, paper, and paperboard mills	4,226	14.1	16.9	4,586	8.2	23.5
Auto parts, accessories, and tire stores	8,911	10.6	8.2	9,190	8.1	13.0
Foundries	5,665	11.9	17.0	6,833	7.8	35.1
Water transportation	647	13.4	7.6	586	3.1	4.8
Scenic and sightseeing transportation	1,549	14.8	6.7	381	5.8	0.0
Fruit/vegetable preserving and specialty food manufacturing	2,637	13.1	24.1	3,694	1.3	19.7
Aerospace product and parts manufacturing	609	16.3	3.0	1,007	4.7	20.5
Not specified metal industries	3,037	10.2	29.9	2,933	0.8	64.0
Footwear and leather goods repair	595	15.0	35.2	119	0.0	62.2
New niches 2000						
Natural gas distribution	4,240	8.33	3.52	4,660	14.1	8.8
Electric and gas and other combinations	1,278	9.07	2.67	1,087	11.8	4.8
Paint, coating, and adhesives manufacturing	5,010	8.03	17.01	5,297	11.0	14.3
Glass and glass product manufacturing	4,517	4.36	13.12	3,330	9.3	25.2
Motor vehicle/equipment manufacturing	8,028	5.29	17.92	26,917	11.4	16.4
Services incidental to transportation	21,170	7.77	7.48	25,106	11.7	8.0
Sound recording industries	1,759	5.90	6.48	1,163	10.8	4.0
Vocational rehabilitation services	3,281	6.83	1.46	6,243	11.2	2.3
Funeral homes, cemeteries and crematories	5,347	6.56	5.45	3,965	11.8	0.0
Religious organizations	23,785	7.28	3.32	28,800	9.0	7.5
Other general government and support	23,586	9.15	3.67	19,546	10.5	4.5

Source: 1990 and 2000 5-percent PUMS, U.S. Census.



demographic composition in 2000. A large number of bubbles remain to the left of the foreign-born niche axis (the 1.5 vertical line), showing that as the presence of Black men declined in these 1990 niche industries over the decade, a majority of these industries did not experience a significant increase in their immigrant densities. Thus, immigrant employment growth can be considered a contributing factor in the decrease of African American male employment in only a select number of industries.

The absence of an adverse immigration effect in a number of industries indicates other, more significant influences on African American men's employment, such as economic restructuring and a racialized labor market regime. Particularly compelling are trends within a number of key exclusive niche industries, such as the rapid and dramatic loss of jobs among African American men in the postal service and urban transit, where immigrant growth was nominal (e.g., in the postal service, foreign-born men increased their share from 3% to 6%; in bus and transit services, from 7% to 9%). The decline of African American male employment in these industries was unrelated to immigration and more closely tied to factors specific either to African American men, including high incarceration rates (Western and Beckett, 1999) and targeted discrimination (Lim, 2004), and/or sector-specific trends such as privatization that disproportionately affected jobs held by African American men (Stein, 1994).

Significantly, African American women did not suffer similar declines in their public sector strongholds. Thus a new trend is evident among these traditionally Black, public-sector industries that cuts sharply by gender: while African American women continued to find an open door to employment in public sector work, the door began to shut for African American men. A pressing question that emerges from these findings is whether the legacy of public-sector employment will persist in the early 21st century as a safe haven for African American men.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Studies addressing the Black/immigrant competition debate largely focus on ethnic/racial and native employment patterns and pay little attention to the labor market's gendered contours. Yet the labor market segregates emphatically along gendered lines such that workers are more segregated by gender than by ethnicity and race (Reskin and Cassirer, 1996). If workers are sorted into jobs primarily on the basis of their gender rather than their race, ethnicity, or nativity (when gender trumps other ascribed statuses), then the question of how immigrants fit into the labor market in relation to African Americans must take gender into account. Because ethnic/racial segregation is more moderate among women than among men, I postulate that immigrant incursion into African American women's industries of employment may signal substitution without displacement if both groups are preferred as female workers. By contrast, competition may lead to the displacement of African American men from industries of increased immigrant incursion if job queues in male labor markets reflect more pronounced ethnic/racial rankings (Lim, 2004).

The findings of this study indicate that the effect of immigration on African American employment depends on gender; consequently, gender-blind analyses of Black/immigrant competition risk misspecification. Specifically, and most significantly, I find that patterns of coexistence rather than competition predominate between African

American and immigrant women. That is, African American women are increasingly sharing their industries of employment with immigrant women in the absence of displacement effects—industries identified as mixed niches. This outcome contrasts against the more readily visible patterns of competition and ethnic succession that exist between African American and immigrant men across several industries (e.g., taxi services, car washes, foundries, not specified metal industries).

Mixed-niche industries of employment between African American and immigrant women bear significantly on the Black/immigrant competition debate for several reasons. Mixed niches indicate that alternate labor market outcomes aside from competition and displacement are viable among labor market substitutes—a finding and an explanation that differs from most research on African American and immigrant employment. Although overlap, or decreased segregation, may bring groups into competition, the majority of mixed niche industries identified for women did not result in displacement and ethnic succession. Mixed niches further represent employment sites of decreased social distance and the increased likelihood of intergroup contact as equals—a viable, but unexplored, mode of social engagement different from that of conflict commonly accented in case studies of Black and immigrant employment (for exceptions, see Reskin, 1999, p. 200, and Gordon and Lenhardt, 2007).

The other side of equality, however, is shared disadvantage. By 2000, Black and immigrant women's mixed-niche employment primarily occurred in growth industries characterized by low-wage, female-dominated care-work jobs from which native-born Whites were exiting (e.g., in home health care, African American women earned, on average, 40% less than their counterparts in the hospital sector). These mixed niches reflect social processes of labor market sorting that pulled women historically relegated to the back of the hiring queue into the same downgraded jobs. Consequently, many African American and immigrant women increasingly came to share similar experiences of labor market inequality.

Additional research is necessary to establish what drives and sustains patterns of coexistence, or niche overlap. It is unclear whether overlap emerges and persists from integration at the workplace or whether other forms of segregation, such as occupational or spatial segregation, undergird industrial and metropolitan-level observations of employment overlap. If workplace integration obtains, then niche overlap without displacement—coexistence—may result from the operation of equally strong though mutually exclusive social networks within a context of employment segregation in which gender matters most, if not exclusively. These sites of overlap also may reflect processes of social organization other than ethnic solidarity that yield diversity, such as union organizing efforts that cross ethnic/racial lines (Wells, 2000; Parks, 2006; Gordon and Lenhardt, 2007), or employer diversity hiring efforts aimed to forestall solidaristic bargaining power that can arise from an ethnically homogenous workforce (Waldinger and Lichter, 2003). Such labor market situations pose a challenge to somewhat teleological accounts of ethnic social closure by sociologists (Waldinger, 1997, p. 370).

By contrast, economic integration may stem from occupational or geographic segregation. Immigrants and African Americans may work in the same industries but in different occupational capacities. Immigrants could be pushing African Americans up the occupational hierarchy within the same industry—a situation marked more by complementarity than coexistence (Rosenfeld and Tienda, 1999). Geographic segregation of

employment may play an instrumental role in producing overlap as well, especially in the context of a residentially segregated metropolis. Substantial geographic variation in employment-niche patterns occurs at the local, intraurban scale (Ellis et al., 2007), but this pattern of segregated work is occluded when employment niches are calculated at the metropolitan scale. Thus niche overlap may be an artifact of measurement that obscures an underlying spatial pattern of ethnic/racial employment segregation. Immigrant and African American women may move into similar lines of work, yet perform it at different locations within a metropolitan region. Competition, then, would be abated not as a result of economic segregation (i.e., Blacks and immigrants perform different kinds of work), but as a result of geographic segregation (i.e., they work in different places). Because these local segregated niche patterns are most pronounced for women (Wright et al., forthcoming), geography would likely condition metropolitan-level patterns of coexistence between immigrant and African American women to a greater extent than between men.

The analysis at hand cannot adjudicate between these possible mechanisms, but they are presented as conceptual arguments that specify the possibility of coexistence as an outcome among labor market substitutes, especially women. Documenting and explaining such a labor market outcome presents an important line of inquiry for future research that further expands our understanding of how labor markets work, how groups sort into jobs, and how experiences of inequality derive from such processes. Rather than emphasizing processes of competition, displacement, and segregation, this approach incorporates the other side of such processes—coexistence, overlap, and integration. Importantly, this represents an analytic rather than a normative approach. Coexistence and integration are not inherently “better” outcomes. Engaging a theoretical and methodological approach that can account for them, however, facilitates the identification of multiple dimensions of inequality and their commonalities (McCall, 2005).

Lastly, this study points to economic restructuring and racialized labor market regimes as more salient influences on African American employment than immigration. African American men suffered job losses due to the continuing decline of Chicago’s durable manufacturing sector, and their job losses in stable sectors such as the postal service reflect group-specific effects of deleterious labor market practices and regulatory regimes, such as severe discrimination and incarceration (Western and Beckett, 1999; Peck and Theodore, 2008). These trends call for policies and interventions that address these group-specific barriers, rather than staving off immigration. For African American women, employment downgrading that often attends economic restructuring describes one of their most striking employment trends of the 1990s: African American women gained jobs and increased their share of the workforce most dramatically in lower-paying de-professionalized, but expanding, health sectors (e.g., home health care) as growth in higher-paying, professionalized sectors (e.g., hospitals) stagnated.

Ironically, given heated public debates that pit African Americans and immigrants against one another, these trends describe those experienced by immigrant women as well. Both groups share an experience of inequality shaped by the devaluation of women’s work and the downgrading of care-work jobs best addressed by raising the wage floor in these low-wage industries. Thus, “bringing gender in” has significant consequences for how researchers conceptualize for whom a phenomenon—say,

Black/immigrant competition—is relevant, and helps to identify alternative, if not sometimes more potent, patterns of inequality.

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