Race and Independent Living among Elderly Brazilians Since 1980

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and

FLAVIA ANDRADE

INTRODUCTION

This paper describes independent living among elderly Brazilians 65+ since 1980. Elderly people constituted a small part of Brazil's populations initially, only 4 percent in 1975, but will constitute a significant proportion of the population by 2050, fully 18 percent (United Nations, 2002:152). It is thus of importance to observe that elderly Brazilians are increasingly likely to live by themselves, either totally alone, if not married, or with their spouse only, rather than with other family members. Overall increase in independent living among Brazilians 65+ in the last couple of decades rose from almost 27 percent in 1980 to 32 percent in 2000. Table 1. Such increase is consistent with what has occurred elsewhere and with theoretical ideas about family modernization: that the traditional extended family weakens while the nuclear family household becomes more common (e.g. Cowgill, 1986; Goode, 1963; Ruggles, 2001).

However, the overall increase in independently living mainly reflects change among White Brazilians who constitute a little over half the population. Black and Brown elderly Brazilians experienced little overall change. Among White elderly Brazilians, an estimated 28 percent lived either alone or as a couple in 1980 compared with 36 percent in 2000. Among Black elders, less than 29 percent lived independently in both 1980 and 2000, and among Browns there were almost no changes over time. Table 1. Yet similar statistics could, be used to describe change among educational or income groups (with little change among people with little income and/or no education and substantial change among people with more income and/or education). Thus it is reasonable to ask whether the racial difference is really due to other, demographic, geographical and/or socioeconomic factors, or whether there might also be something else tied more directly to race itself causing a difference.

* The Authors gratefully acknowledge use of the facilities of the Center for Demography and Ecology funded in part by NICHD Center Grant HD05876 and facilities of the Center for the Demography of Health and Aging funded by NIA Center Grant P30 AG 17266. The second author was supported by a Fogarty doctoral fellowship from the National Institutes of Health. Earlier versions of this study were presented as a Poster at the 2002 Population of Association of America meetings, as a seminar at the University of Wisconsin's Center for Demography of Health and Aging seminar series and as a University of Wisconsin's Center for Demography and Ecology working paper (2003-08).

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Table 1

PERCENT ELDERLY AGE 65+ LIVING INDEPENDENTLY BY RACE AND UNION STATUS/SEX BRAZIL, 1980 AND 2000

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<td>35</td>
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<tr>
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<td>45</td>
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<td>32</td>
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<td>34</td>
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<tr>
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<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>3,260</td>
<td>16,080</td>
<td>14,126</td>
<td>37,465</td>
<td>45,441</td>
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</table>

Note: Figures are weighted to make them nationally representative.

There are thus two interrelated questions. One has to do with the existence of racial differences in independent living at any one time. The question might be for instance: “Does the fact that Black and Brown people in Brazil generally have lower incomes than White explain the fact that they have differential coresidence patterns when old?” The second has to do with differential change. A question could be: “Can differential change in geographical or socioeconomic factors account for the differential change among racial groups?”

We focus on racial differences in Brazil because, similar to the United States, Brazil may be one of the most racially diverse countries in the world, and because racial differences are still a major source of social inequality. Despite the fact that slavery was legally abolished in 1888 in Brazil, there continue to be significant racial differences in infant mortality, educational opportunity, employment and wages (e.g., Cunha, 1994; Henriques, 2000; Reichmann, 1999; Silva, 1999; Silva & Hasenbalg, 1999; Wood & Lovell, 1992). And Brazilians in general acknowledge the existence of racial discrimination (Bailey, 2002). However, while some studies find that differences in life expectancy persist in Brazil after socioeconomic indicators are controlled (e.g. Wood & Lovell, 1992), other researchers investigating health issues such as childhood stunting or differential self-rated health have found race differences to disappear after controlling for other factors (e.g. Burgard, 2002; Dachs, 2002), suggesting that such factors do explain racial differences in Brazil. Our study tries to ask what the situation is there with independent living among elderly people. Can the racial difference in living arrangements among elderly people there be explained by socioeconomic factors alone or does race matter as well?

Race in Brazil

Brazil may be one of the most racially diverse countries in the world although its concept of race is different from elsewhere. For example, race in Brazil is assessed through looks rather than ancestry, there is a whole host of color shades between white and black, and most censuses and surveys in Brazil rely on a person’s own definition of his/her race. Reports are notoriously inconsistent (Carvalho et al., forthcoming; Telles, 2002), and one’s color assessment can depend as much on how much money one has as on the color of one’s skin. What is known is that about 3.6 million African slaves were brought to Brazil (Oliveira, 1996;
9 times as many as in the more populous U.S.) and that the mixing of Black and White blood has resulted in a large mixed or what the Census calls ‘Brown’ (or *pardo* but more popularly called *moreno*) population. The Brown population is estimated to have constituted 41 percent of Brazil’s total population by the end of the 19th century, and although that proportion declined in the early part of the 20th century because of massive European immigration, it had become about 40 percent again by 1990 (Henriques, 2001). Blacks, on the other hand, now constitute a relatively minor proportion of the overall population, although in some regions such as the Northeast the Black population is still substantial.

The Brazilian family and race

In contrast to discourses on many other sociological topics, sociological discussion of the family in Brazil is sparse. A rare discussion that considered relatively recent legal changes in the nature of marriage and the family described the early post-War concept of the Brazilian family to fallaciously assume that “1) family is synonymous with legal marriage, 2) marriage lasts until a spouse dies; 3) the husband is the breadwinner and the sole earner; 4) the wife is a full-time home-maker and her work has no economic value; and 5) the husband is the legal head of the family” (Goldani, 1990, p. 525). It continued to report that subsequently however, the Divorce Law of 1977 altered the character of marriage (including legalizing divorce) and the 1988 Brazilian Constitution considered the family to be a stable union between a man and a woman and/or a parent and child. The new Constitution made no legal distinction between children born inside or outside a traditional marriage (Goldani, 1990).

Classic descriptions of the “Brazilian family” were limited to the White upper class in “old” (plantation) Brazil, and did not describe the situation of more recent immigrants from Europe, lower-class Whites or non-Whites of any class. For instance, we read that the “traditional” Brazilian family was based on the extended, patriarchal, Catholic family of the Portuguese, and that *casa grandes* (plantation mansions) were often lived in by an older couple, their married sons and grandchildren (e.g. de Azevedo, 1965). We read that marriage was endogamous; divorce was non-existent; and that males were often active extra-maritally. Curiously, little is said about the females to whom those males were married or with whom they had extra-marital affairs, about their children, or about people who did not own plantations.

Whites who came to Brazil during its major European immigration period from the end of the 19th to the beginning of the 20th centuries brought with them a kind of family that wall not particularly suited to overseeing a large plantation. Numbering perhaps four million people, immigrants from such European countries as Italy and Germany were often small family farmers who settled in Brazil’s southern region, in a country whose total population in 1900 may have been around 18 million (Mortara, 1954). We do not hear much of them and they are statistically difficult to delineate except by examining regional patterns (since they predominate in the South).

As for Blacks, it would appear that the nature of the family during slavery depended both on the size of the landholding on which they worked, and on the nature of the individual Master. Since it could be much easier for a slave owner to sell or trade an individual rather than a whole family unit, marriage among slaves was often discouraged while the children of
slaves became the property of Masters (e.g. Slenes, 1984). Consequently, it may have been easier for slave families to stay intact on large plantations compared to small holdings. Since family stability was not encouraged, free Blacks inherited a legacy of instability, not an African family type. According to an article that is already over six decades old, the free Black family tends to assume the character of a natural organization (Frazier, 1942) in which common-law relationships rather than formal marriage prevails. That article concludes that whatever has been preserved of African culture in the Candomble has become a part of folklore and, so far as family relationships are concerned, there are no rigid, consistent patterns of behavior that can be traced to African culture. The position of an older person in such a family goes unaddressed.

But it is worth paying particular attention to the tenuous family position of Black males because when a couple splits, children almost always stay with the mother. In fact, some people have come to observe a “queen bee” family structure in which a grandmother will live with a daughter who in turn is the single parent of multiple children (e.g. Winch, 1975). Older and intermediate males are not part of this picture. Either they are living with other women, whether formally married or not, or they live alone. In our data, we find a large proportion of unmarried Black elderly men living alone (Table 1).

As Browns are neither White nor Black, nor a homogenous group, their family situation is likewise diverse and impossible to summarize. Nor does it simplify the matter to know that a dark-skinned parent can have a light-skinned child, or vice versa. Although often not applicable, the most relevant family issue might be that children born out of legal wedlock used to lack the same legal standing as children born in legal wedlock. This could be relevant to all the children or, if a White man fathered a child by a Brown or Black mistress rather than a White wife, that child did not have the same rights to his father’s property as did his legal half-siblings. For a father to provide for such children depended on the individual, not on any legal standing, and many children were left destitute. If that occurred, what could be expected of filial responsibility in return?

In the U.S. there are glaring differences in the propensity of elders in different racial/ethnic groups to reside with relatives, non-Whites and those of Hispanic origin being more likely to live in extended households than non-Hispanic Whites (e.g. Burr and Mutchler, 1999; Himes et al., 1996; Wilmoth et al., 1997); and there are numerous ideas for why this may be so. Often, the literature offers one, another, or a combination of two main explanations, economic or cultural. For instance, Rendall and Speare (1995) argue that older people can alleviate poverty through living with family. Since minorities tend to have less income, they may naturally be more likely to live with others. Others argue that minorities have stronger family ties and are more strongly committed to norms governing filial responsibility, family solidarity and coresidence (e.g., Burr and Mutchler, 1999; Goldscheider and Lawton, 1998). An idea that may have greatest applicability to Brazil is neither economic nor cultural per se: it is that a “minority status” mentality on the part of Blacks or Browns fosters closer family ties between elders and their offspring, as those ties, sometimes involving coresidence, may help people survive in a hostile world, may help transmit survival skills to the next generation (see Markides et al., 1990). Thus there was nothing in our review of the very sparse literature on racial differences in family structure in Brazil to suggest that there might be a cultural reason for more coresidence among Black and Brown compared with White elderly Brazilians.
But if minority status does make a difference, we could expect Black and Brown elders to be more likely to live with others than White elders regardless of factors such as income.

Theoretical ideas about social change and the family of elderly people

A general idea of family change during modernization is that the conjugal bond strengthens at the expense of the intergenerational one, resulting in more independent living among old and young alike (Cowgill, 1986; Goode, 1963). In part, so the argument goes, the intergenerational bond weakens because the traditional family loses functions to other institutions such as schools, police, courts, banks, pension programs, and hospitals (e.g. Bell and Vogel, 1960) and in part because the traditional extended family becomes separated through geographic and social mobility (but see Chattopadhyay and Marsh 1999; Litwak, 1965). The separation could be more geographic than emotional (Bengston, 2001) but changes toward more individualistic values may also occur (Cowgill, 1986; see also Crimmins and Ingegneri, 1990). One could also argue that the traditional intergenerational bond weakens because older people acquire more resources with which to live independently, younger people have more resources with which to be independent from their elders, or both (e.g. McGarry and Schoeni, 2000; Ruggles, 2001). There is no agreed-upon cause as researchers tracing the historical situation in the United States have come up with conflicting notions while historians in Europe talk about the “golden age that never was” (Laslett, 1976). For instance, most of the occupants of English Poor Houses were destitute elderly people who were left to fend for themselves, and European scholars generally speculate about the importance of economic resources interacting with preference in explaining the household position of elders in the past (see also Kertzer and Laslett, 1995).

It might seem reasonable to expect that a trend toward family nuclearization would mostly involve elderly people who were still married since such people could live independently in couple-only households while still having someone near to rely on. But the curious fact is that independent living has been increasing substantially among unmarried as well as married people. A primary cause in the United States might be Social Security (McGarry and Schoeni, 2000; but see Ruggles, 2001).

In contrast to the situation in many countries including the United States, Brazil’s 1988 Constitution made pension coverage universal, including covering people, such as unmarried women and rural workers, who had not contributed into the system because they had not participated in the formal economy (there have been major changes since then too but they cannot be covered here). Coverage has been a big issue throughout Latin America because the informal economy may be as big as or bigger than the formal economy (Bertranou and Rofman, 2002). And although the benefit for many in rural areas especially is meager indeed (at about one minimum wage — currently, about 90 US dollars) it is still much more than many would have otherwise (see also Bonturi, 2002). With our data for instance, we estimate that in 1980, 55 percent of elderly unmarried men had less than one minimum wage worth of income but by 2000 this had declined to about 10 percent. We estimate that among unmarried elderly women, 73 percent had less than one minimum wage worth of income in 1980 but that this had declined to about 9 percent by 2000.
However, the common picture of modernization may be too simple because a “modern” innovation such as a pension might actually encourage intergenerational co-residence, not discourage it. In Brazil and elsewhere, rather than using their pensions to live independently, many elders use them to facilitate residence with other family members. Barros et al. (1999) illustrate how elderly parents transfer resources from pensions to their adult children in Brazil, how household well-being often depends on the income of elderly members (see also HelpAge International, 2003). Brandes (1996) describes a situation in rural Spain in the 1960s in which elderly people started to receive government pensions, were able to contribute financially to the household, and were actually welcomed into the homes of children who otherwise might not have been able or willing to reside with them. Furthermore, Bengtson and others argue (2001; see also Jani-Le Bris, 1993) that there can be high levels of intergenerational affinity and emotional support without also sharing a household; that coresidence can sometimes be an unexpressed (latent) part of intergenerational ties.

THE STUDY

Data

Study data come from national micro-level samples of the 1980 and 2000 censuses capturing nicely effects of 1988 Constitution changes in family and pension, law. There were 37,465 cases in 1980 and 45,441 cases in 2000 that resulted from a similar use of probability sampling and that, when weighted, are nationally representative. Data cover people living in private (non-institutional) households, currently most elderly Brazilians, and exclude the small number of people listed as Yellow (of Asian background). The two data sets can reasonably be combined into one data set, enabling us to statistically test for the significance of an interaction between time and race after controlling for other factors (discussed again further on).

Comparability is always an issue when using more than one data set but we feel confident in the equivalence of our measures. Coding of items such as age and sex might seem straightforward, but even race, marital status urban/rural residence and education are not, while region and the monetary unit changed blatanty between 1980 and 2000. That coding and percentile distributions (using weighted scores) is summarized in Table 2. For instance, we coded age in quinquennial groups up to age 80 (65-69, 70-74, 75-79, 80+) to increase robustness (as some people round age to the nearest 5-year mark and/or exaggerate old age) and to reflect possible differences in the stage of life in old age. Since indigenous people were coded as Brown in 1980, we included the small number of them in the Brown category in 2000 as well.

Marital status, actually union status, was assessed with one question in 1980 and three questions in 2000. For 1980, marital status had been checked in-house so that people who were purported to be in a union were in fact in a union (De Vos, 1994). In 2000, the census asked about people's (a) living situation explicitly (currently in union, was in union in the past, has never been in a union), (b) type of union (both religious and civil marriage, religious only marriage, civil only marriage, consensual union, not in a union) and finally (c) what their official marital status was (married, annulled/separated, divorced, widowed, single). Since
Table 2

PERCENTILE DISTRIBUTION OF CHARACTERISTICS IN STUDY SAMPLE
(weights used to make estimates nationally representative)

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<td>10.3</td>
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\[ n \begin{array}{cccccc} 13600 & 15244 & 4342 & 4848 & 6553 & 8912 & 12970 & 16437 \end{array} \]

Note. For married women intervals of per adult household income are: up to \( \frac{1}{2} \), \( \frac{1}{2} \) to 1, 1 to 2, 2 to 4, 4 to 6 and more than 6 minimum wages.

there was such disparity between people's actual living situation and their official marital status, we created a comparable variable of married and unmarried. Our definition of marriage included both formal and informal unions in which spouses/companions actually lived together in the same household.

The urban/rural residence variable that we use is also comparable. Urban areas in Brazil are defined by municipal law and usually focus on the core of that municipality. The Census Bureau considered more refined measures, four in 1980 and eight in 2000. However, we use the simpler urban/rural base to make the variable comparable. Even so, it should be noted
that urbanization in Brazil (according to the figures) was particularly fast after the 1960s. In 1960 less than half of the population inhabited urban areas, but by 1980 67.6 percent did, and by 2000 81.2 percent lived in urban areas. The 1980 region scheme was used for both times because the state of Tocantins was created in 1988 and removed from Goia's. It may be noted that the Northeast and Southeast together contain most of Brazil's population, the proportions japing so basically being the same in both 1980 and 2000 (Table 2).

Finally, out of the many different ways to assess education, we settled on a three-category variable that is comparable for both times: illiterate, elementary (1-4 yrs. of school), and more than elementary (5 or more years of school). This scheme is more comparable than trying to use years of education because of the high repetition rates. We also transformed the 1980 monetary unit called the Cruzeiro by a factor of .055604 in light of economic time-trend information to make it comparable with the 2000 monetary unit the Real. Income was furthermore defined in terms of minimum wages (where 1 minimum wage was 150 Reais) earned monthly. Individual income was categorized as: none, up to 1, 1 to 2, 2 to 4, 4 to 6, and more than 6 minimum wages. This categorization was preferred to the use the log of income, which did not seem to be as predictive because so many people had virtually no income. For married women, we used per adult (18+) household income, categorized as up to ½, ½ to 1, 1 to 2, 2 to 4, 4 to 6, and more than 6 minimum wages because many listed no income of their own but depended on their husband's income (Table 2). Income included income from jobs (sometimes from more than one job), pensions, assets and other sources. Finally, a dummy for time was included (1980=0 and 2000=1) for a pooled model (results not shown).

**Model and Method**

Our models reflect the fact that we wonder whether the likelihood of living independently vs. not independently (yes/no) differs among different racial groups after controlling for various demographic (age, sex and marital status), socioeconomic (education, income) and geographical (urban/rural residence, region) factors among elderly Brazilians in 1980 and 2000. We also test for the statistical significance of a difference in the effect of race on independent living between 1980 and 2000 but discuss those results rather than showing them in a table, since we only found significance among unmarried men of the four marital status/gender groups.

As independent living is bivariate (1=independent, 0=not independent), it is suited for multivariate logistic modeling. As such, our approach is based on the previous examination of the living arrangements among elderly Brazilians of Agree (1993) and Saad (1998) and of living alone among elderly people over time in the United States of Kramarow (1995). For instance, we run separate models for unmarried men, unmarried women, married men and married women because living totally alone and living with a spouse are qualitatively very different situations, men and women have very different roles within the family and, when married, consider income differently (married women of all classes often report having no income). To assess the importance of time, we combined the data into one file and entered time in additively and as an interaction with the other factors.
We used SPSS to ascertain the overall significance of multi-category independent variables (in addition to ascertaining the significance of individual contrasts involving dummy variables). Otherwise, we would have had to perform myriad tests separately (similar to the F-test in OLS; see Menard, 1995). Given our sample size, we used $p < .05$ as the maximum value for significance, also reporting significance in terms of $p < .01$ and $p < .001$. We used weights to make the samples nationally representative and of equal sizes at the two times for the purpose of testing time differences. Results using pooled data are available upon request.

Results

Multivariate results are shown in Table 3. Since the racial differences were similar for married men and married women, we can report those results together. But our findings for unmarried men and unmarried women were both different from those of married counterparts and different from each other. This confirms both the idea that independent living is qualitatively very different for married and unmarried people, and that the family roles of males and females are very different. Findings are also consistent with the idea that independent living became much more common for White elders but not for Black or Brown elders, and that the situation among unmarried men especially is headed for a cross-over (Black and Brown unmarried men used to be more likely to live alone but the opposite may be true in the future).

First, consider the results for married people in Table 3. Differences between Whites and both Browns and Blacks strengthened between 1980 and 2000. Among married men, Brown men were less likely than White men to live independently in both periods. In 1980, the odds of living as a couple only as opposed to living with other people were 26% lower for Brown men compared to White men (exp[-0.296]). By 2000, those odds were 31% lower (exp[-0.370]). Similar results are found for Brown-White contrast of married women. The disparity is even more dramatic among Blacks and Whites. In 1980, there were no statistically significant differences between Black and White elderly married men or married women in the likelihood of living as a couple only. By 2000, the odds were about 30% lower.

The situation for unmarried women was weaker than for married men and women but was similar. The Brown-White contrast was negative and weakly significant in both 1980 and 2000. The Black-White contrast was not significant in 1980 but was significant in 2000.

The most complicated result was for unmarried elderly men because, not only was there a net racial difference in independent living, but that difference changed between 1980 and 2000 in a statistically significant fashion (results not shown). Unlike married men, Brown and Black unmarried men were more likely to live alone than their White counterparts in 1980 but not in 2000. Change is particularly impressive for the Black-White differential: In 1980, unmarried Black men were twice as likely as White unmarried men to live alone (exp[.724] or an odds ratio of 2.06) but in 2000 there were no statistical differences (exp[.009] or odds ratio of 1). In 1980 unmarried Brown men were 20% more likely than their White counterparts to live independently (exp[.170] or odds ratio of 1.2) but were not significantly more likely to do so in 2000 (had an insignificant odds ratio of 1.1). Although one could interpret this as a racial merging in the likelihood of independent living in the short term, we could be seeing
### Table 3

**LOGITS FOR REGRESSION OF INDEPENDENT LIVING (1=YES, 0=NO) ON RACE AND CONTROLS AMONG ELDERLY BRAZILIANS (65+) IN 1980 AND 2000**

*(weights used to make estimates nationally representative)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Married Men</th>
<th>Married Women</th>
<th>Unmarried Men</th>
<th>Unmarried Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>-0.296</td>
<td>-0.370***</td>
<td>0.170*</td>
<td>-0.243***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>-0.162</td>
<td>-0.349***</td>
<td>0.724***</td>
<td>-0.337***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>-0.555***</td>
<td>-0.596***</td>
<td>0.649***</td>
<td>-0.512***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>-0.247***</td>
<td>-0.303***</td>
<td>0.690***</td>
<td>-0.282*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-79</td>
<td>-0.191*</td>
<td>-0.027</td>
<td>0.536***</td>
<td>-0.344*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>-0.084*</td>
<td>0.044</td>
<td>-0.360***</td>
<td>-0.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>-0.626***</td>
<td>-1.007***</td>
<td>0.030</td>
<td>-0.687***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>-0.483***</td>
<td>-0.575***</td>
<td>0.146</td>
<td>-0.776***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central-West</td>
<td>-0.084</td>
<td>0.183***</td>
<td>-0.036</td>
<td>-0.261***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>-0.428***</td>
<td>-0.226**</td>
<td>0.169</td>
<td>-0.412*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>-0.042</td>
<td>-0.005</td>
<td>0.140</td>
<td>-0.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>-0.142</td>
<td>-0.021</td>
<td>-0.108</td>
<td>-0.289***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>-0.756***</td>
<td>-0.505***</td>
<td>-1.648***</td>
<td>-0.959***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 1</td>
<td>0.118</td>
<td>-0.254*</td>
<td>-0.280</td>
<td>-0.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>-0.082</td>
<td>-0.192**</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>-0.240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>-0.010</td>
<td>-0.150*</td>
<td>-0.119</td>
<td>-0.078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>-0.088</td>
<td>-0.079</td>
<td>-0.305</td>
<td>-0.114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.084</td>
<td>0.136</td>
<td>-1.211***</td>
<td>-0.882***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi-square</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.f.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>13,600</td>
<td>15,244</td>
<td>4,342</td>
<td>4,848</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** *The contrasts are: Race: White; Age: 80+; Urban vs. Rural; Region: Northeast; Education: More than elementary; Income: more than 6 minimum wages.

*For married women intervals of per adult household income are: up to 1/2, 1/2 to 1, 1 to 2, 2 to 4, 4 to 6 and more than 6 minimum wages.

*p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001.

the beginning of a crossover.

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Independent living among elderly Brazilians is on the increase, but the increase has occurred predominantly among Whites whereas Blacks and Browns have experienced little overall change. This prompted us to ask two related questions: (a) can the racial difference at any one time be explained away by such geographic or socioeconomic factors as urban residence, region, education or income? If not, might there be an additional cause related to a factor such as minority group status, discrimination, culture or preference? And (b) was the
racial difference basically the same in 1980 and 2000 (our two data points) or was there change in the difference? Borrowing from speculations about the effect of minority group status on racial and ethnic differences in the United States along with what little information we could gather about the family structure of different racial groups in Brazil, we hypothesized more coresidence among , Blacks and Browns in general, but noticeably weak ties among unmarried elderly Black men.

Using microsamples from 1980 and 2000 censuses, and estimating separate models for married men, married women, unmarried men and unmarried women because of qualitative differences between living with a spouse only or living totally alone, as well as the gender difference in family relations, we found statistically significant racial differences in the likelihood of independent living among all the groups. This is consistent with the effect of minority group status on racial and ethnic differences in the independent living of elders in the United States. However, in contrast to a generally greater likelihood that Whites lived independently compared to either Blacks or Browns among married men, married women, and unmarried women, we found that Black and Brown unmarried men were actually more likely to live alone than White men in 1980 but not in 2000. We speculate that we may be seeing part of a cross-over in the likelihood of living alone among Black, Brown and White unmarried elderly men and that in the future, we may find that Black and Brown unmarried elderly men similar to the other groups.

Many gerontologists now believe that privacy is a normal good everywhere, not just in Europe or North America (e.g. DaVanzo and Chan, 1994). In the specific case of Brazil, Agree (1993, p.: 196) found that... “economic resources are associated with a higher probability of living alone in Brazil, and a lower probability of living with kin.” Our findings confirm that those at the bottom of the income distribution are less likely to live independently. The logical extension of such reasoning might be that providing more resources to elderly people, such as pensions, will result in more independent living. That is certainly what has happened in countries such as the United States (Dahlin, 1993; McGarry and Schoeni, 2000). However in Brazil, since 1988, the pension program has covered everyone, not just those who have contributed into the system. These changes benefited all racial groups, but particularly Blacks and Browns because they were less likely to have worked in the formal sector, and studies have found that most recipients of this largesse share their pensions with coresident family members (HelpAge International, 2003). Rather than promoting independent living, the modern policy of universal coverage may actually be helping maintain multi-generational residence among many minority elderly people. Elders in the working class may actually prefer to exchange in-kind support involving coresidence, than to use extra resources to live independently.

A major weakness in our model is that living with or not with other people is a function of both the elders themselves and the people with whom they might reside, but we could only look at the characteristics of the elders themselves. Controlling for a characteristic such as the income of an elder could be of limited value, if the factor of more importance is what that income is relative to the income of potential cohabitators who went unmeasured. That is, relative to the income of some children, the pension income of an unmarried mother of one minimum wage might be seen as a major asset to a household comprised of herself and some of her children. On the other hand, that same income may seem trivial relative to the income of others.
If there is a racial difference in the income of children that is a major influence on the likelihood of independent living among elders, and we are not taking that income into account in our models, then structural factors could still be at the root of the differences we are seeing and our study has failed to test the structural hypothesis correctly. Also, since our data are two cross-sections rather than longitudinal, they limit our ability to examine individual-level transitions, nor do the data allow us to explore the role of such factors as health or cultural norms that could help explain some of our findings.

The fact that a growing percentage elderly people are living independently indicates that social changes are underway in Brazil. At the same time, changes seem to be concentrated among White elders, indicating vivid heterogeneity in the social, economic and cultural underpinnings of elderly living arrangements. Thus, as is frustratingly common in social research, we end our study by pointing to the need for additional research. Still, our hope is that the present study at least laid firmer ground upon which we can wonder.

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Medically Assisted Conception: Revolutionizing Family or Perpetuating a Nuclear and Gendered Model?

New reproductive technologies have the potential to radicalize family life, as they could blur kinship lines, separate biological and social parenthood, and encourage couples to create 'designer babies'. On the other hand, these technologies could help more married couples create socially-acceptable nuclear families and reduce unwanted childless marriages. This article uses the 'stories' from qualitative interviews with couples seeking fertility treatments in New Zealand to interrogate motives for treatment, gendered experiences with procedures, and views about the future of marriage without children. The interviews show that, despite the potential of medically assisted conception, these participants use reproductive technologies as a vehicle to normality and social acceptance. The results of this study, combined with overseas research, suggest that medically assisted conception could reinforce pronatalism and patriarchal families rather than lead to a future revolution in family life.

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Gender Differences in Gender-Role Attitudes: A Comparative Analysis of Taiwan and Coastal China

This article investigates gender differences in gender-role attitudes in two societies with the same cultural heritage and identifies factors differentiating patterns of women's and men's attitudes. The data were collected from two surveys conducted in Taiwan and coastal China during 1996-97, with a total of 2,801 and 2,907 completed interviews, respectively, used in the analysis.

Latent Class Analysis revealed two similar latent forms of gender-role attitudes for both genders in the two societies. Most of the respondents, with more males than females and more coastal Chinese than Taiwanese, were classified as holding "traditional type" attitudes. The gender gap in traditional attitudes was larger in Taiwan than in coastal China.

The factors differentiating women's patterns of attitudes from men's found in Taiwan support the perspectives of gendered self-interest and paternal role-model. Urbanization and cohort effects were more significant in coastal China, showing that political ideology and policy implementation in different stages and regions shape gender-role attitudes in different societies. This study supports the importance of incorporating gender analysis into interpretations of societal differences in the ways gender-role attitudes are structured.

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Race and Independent Living among Elderly Brazilians Since 1980

This paper examines independent living among elderly Brazilians age 65+ of different racial groups using 1980 and 2000 census microsamples. Although there was an overall increase in independent living among Brazilian elders, that increase mainly reflects change among Whites whereas there was little change among Browns or Blacks. Since Whites tend to have higher socioeconomic status than Browns or Blacks in Brazil, one might suppose that a racial disparity merely reflects socioeconomic differences. That is a common argument anyway. But if that were so, then after controlling for socioeconomic factors
there should be 1) no racial difference in the likelihood of independent living, and 2) no racial difference in the change in that likelihood. However, we find 1) net racial differences in independent living in both 1980 and 2000, and 2) a net racial difference in change among unmarried men. Our findings suggest that social, cultural or minority status factors not captured in our statistical models may explain these differences. Additional study is needed to confirm or negate this that will ideally include information about non-coreident as well as coreident kin.

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Post-Familial Families and the Domestic Division of Labour

This paper takes as its starting point recent claims by Beck-Gernsheim (2002) that we are living in an era of “post-familial families.” Beck-Gernsheim (2002) argues that our lives are no longer structured as they once were by tradition, class, religion and kin. Instead the family has become a transitional phase as individuals strive for fulfillment of personal goals and personal life projects. The demographic evidence to support these claims is clearly evident in relation to changing patterns of family formation and dissolution, as well as the movement of married women into paid employment. But what is less evident is a decline in traditional patterns of gender stratification within families. This paper uses recent national data from Australia to examine the relationship between post-familial status, as indicated by marital status and employment, and time spent on housework. The results show that gender is still a clear predictor of time spent on housework, but that within gender there is evidence that gender inequality may be declining in non-traditional households.

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Beyond Resources and Patriarchy: Marital Construction of Family Decision-Making Power in Post-Mao Urban China

Resource theory and the patriarchy perspective maintain that wives have less family decision-making power either due to their lack of valuable resources or the persistence of male dominance culture. We examine a somewhat different pattern in post-Mao urban China, where wives have fewer resources and do more housework but nonetheless have greater family decision-making power than their husbands. Our in-depth interviews of 43 couples in Beijing show that resource-based power use is common among individualized or incompatible families. However, the dominant family organization is collectivized, in which the couple shares family resources, denounces equity-oriented exchange, and is guided by relational harmony. Among the couples from collectivized families, household responsibilities are recognized as a vital contribution to the family’s well-being and thus are a primary source of family decision-making power. Male dominance culture is found more evident among collectivized than individualized or incompatible couples, but its presence does not seem as strong as that of household responsibilities regarding family decision-making.

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YANJE BIAN, Division of Social Science, Hong Kong University of Science & Technology, Kowloon, Hong Kong.

A Socio-Demographic Analysis of the Size and Structure of the Family in India

This paper is an attempt to study the current size and structure of family according to different socio-demographic and economic characteristics of the households in India and its states. Data are obtained from the National Family Health Survey conducted in 1998-99 which covered a representative sample from 26 states in the country. Results suggest that the proportion of