

Inequalities across race, tribe and caste

Understanding Inequality in Brazil and India

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Introduction

- Do caste in India and race in Brazil play similar roles in inequality?
- Discrimination in the labour market principally occurs in three ways:
 - through barriers to entry in the labour market;
 - through restricted occupational mobility within the internal labour markets;
 - different returns to work for the same occupation.
- Social groups and race plays an important role in those three ways.

What is “race” in Brazil?

- Race is not defined by biological factors, but is it a “social construct”.
- Racial cleavages in Brazil are the product of ideological remnant of its slavery past and the historical transformation of racial relations and disparities during the industrialization and urbanization process on XX Century.
- Race is a self-identified information in Brazilian surveys. The racial differentiation has no legal or institutional basis.
- The perception of each individual on their own race may change depending on the social context in which he finds himself.

The caste system in India

- The caste system in India is based on the principle that each caste has a fixed hereditary occupation by birth, resulting in a well-defined pattern of inclusions and exclusions in society.
- Some disadvantaged sections of the population were categorised into distinct groups by The Constitution in 1950.
- Indian constitution prohibits caste-based discrimination, and over the years since Independence a variety of policies have attempted to overcome this form of inequality; but it persists.

Brazil: distribution of population by race (%)

		1995	2011
White	White	54,4%	47,8%
	Yellow	0,5%	0,6%
Non-white	Black	4,9%	8,2%
	Mixed-colour	40,1%	43,1%
	Indigenous	0,1%	0,4%

Source: PNAD

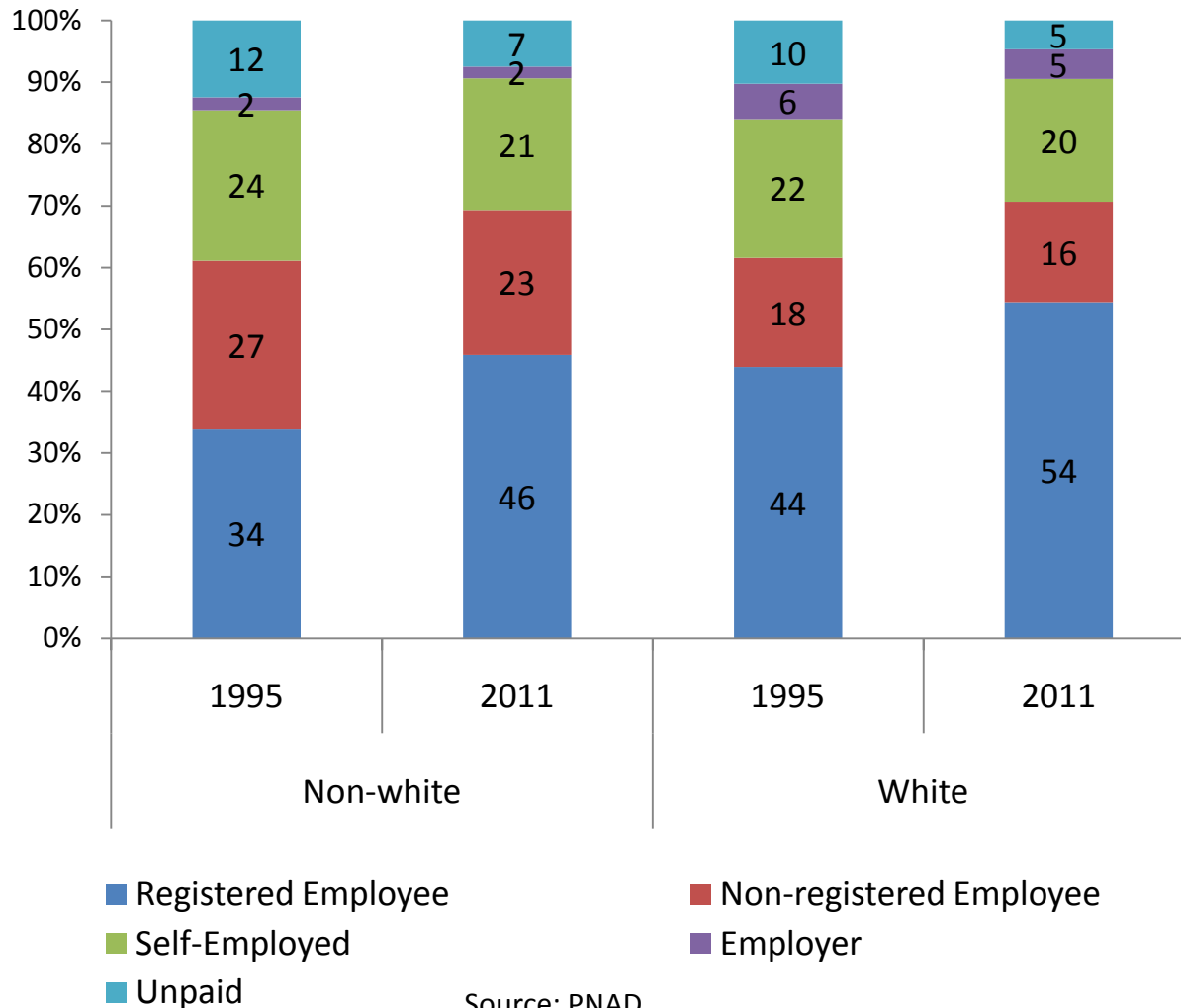
- Non-white is not a sociological category, but just a way of putting together “racial” groups that have in common a relative distance from the other group, the whites.
- In socioeconomic terms, mixed people are in between the blacks and the whites, but much closer to the former.

India: distribution of population by social groups (%)

social group	2011
STs	8,5%
SCs	19,7%
OBCs	41,1%
Others	30,8%
Total	100,0%

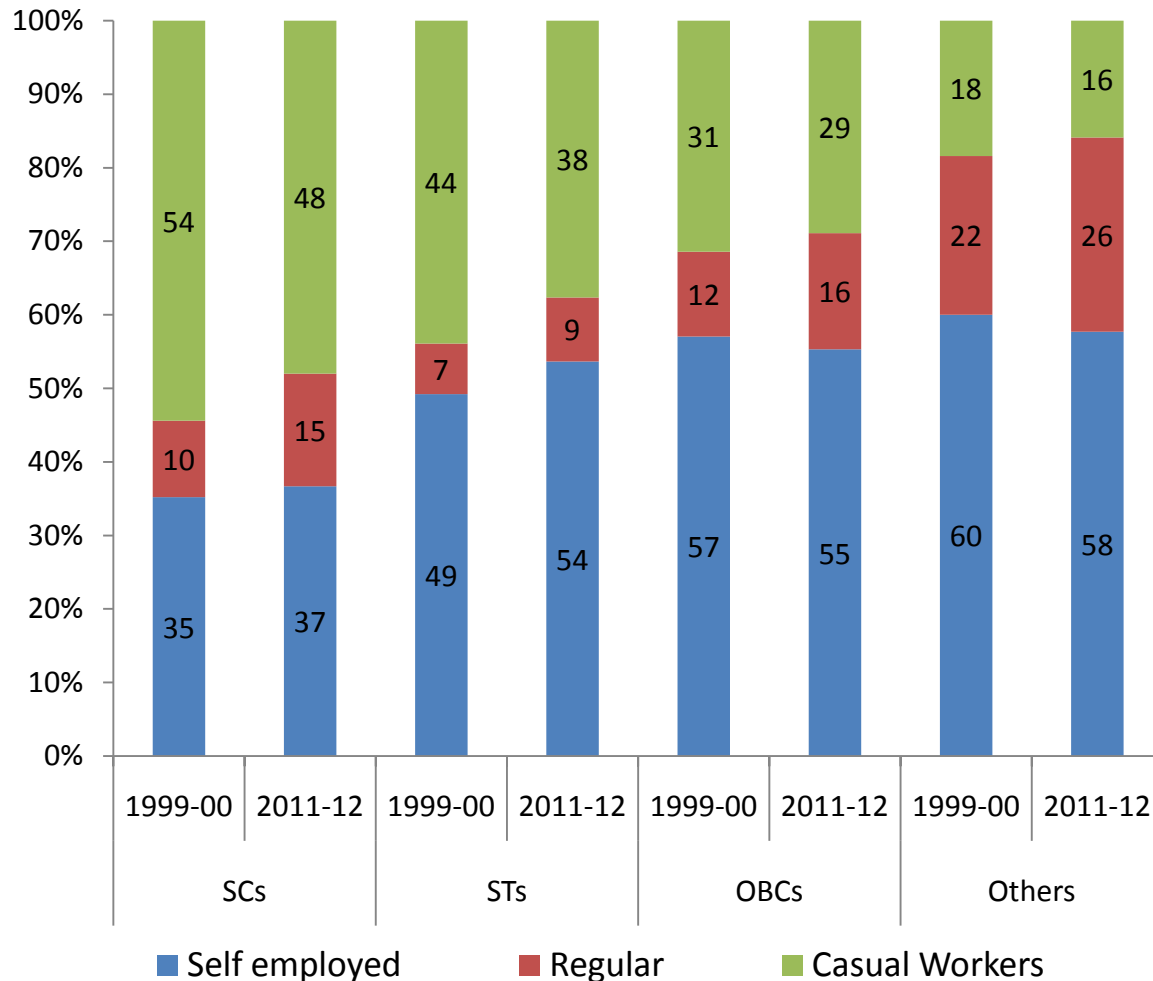
- Scheduled Castes (SCs)
- Scheduled Tribes (STs)
- Other Backward Classes (OBCs): Hindu caste groups located in the middle of the caste hierarchy
- Others: middle and upper caste.

Brazil: employment status across race (%)



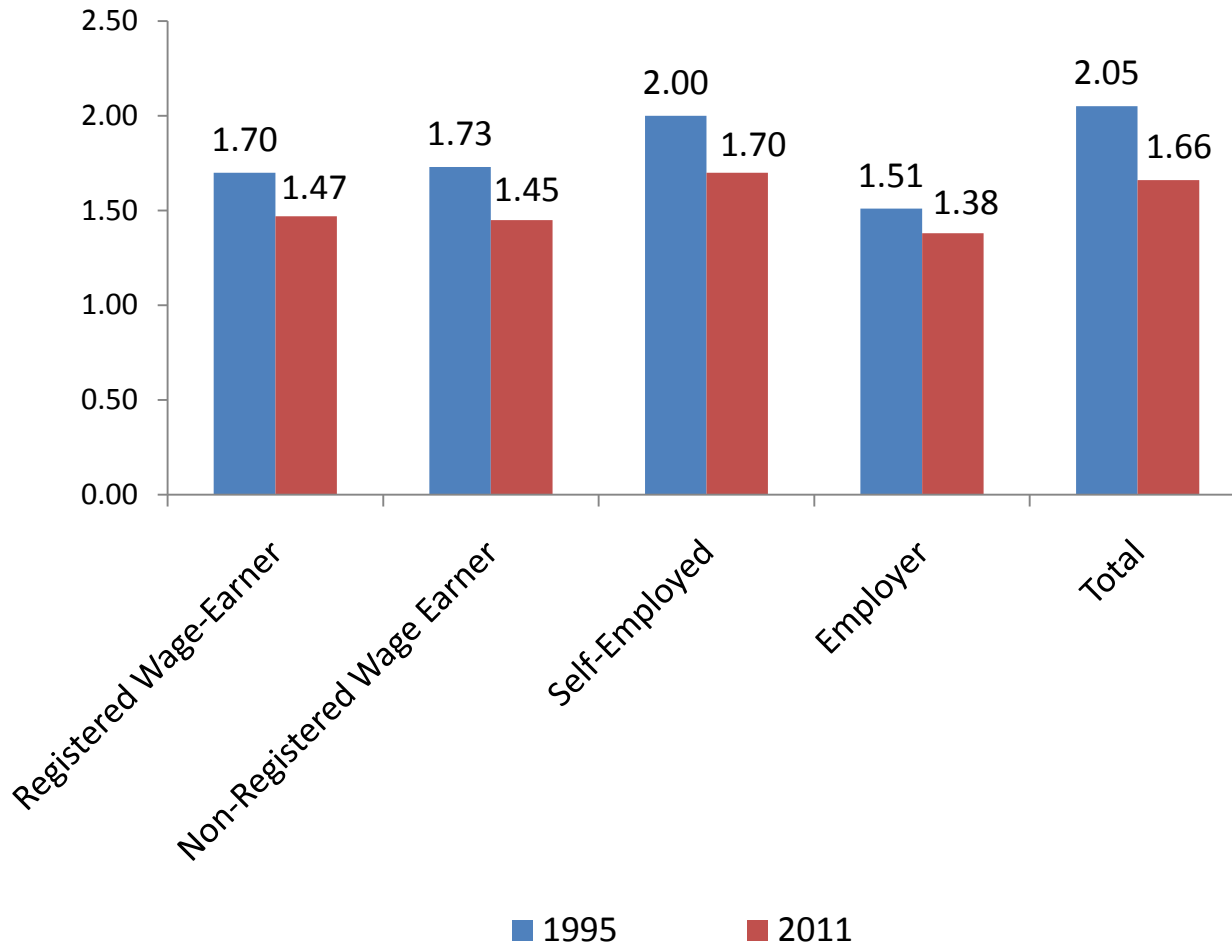
- The non-whites are over-represented among the unpaid workers and the self-employed
- But there is a large increase in the share of registered employment among blacks and mixed-colour workers
- Racial segmentation in the labour market still persists, but has been less intense.

India: employment status across social groups (%)



- Disadvantaged social groups are mainly engaged in sectors that are less productive with low levels of income.
- Casual wage earners, both in the rural and urban areas, come disproportionately from the SC and ST communities.
- Regular forms of employment in both public and private sectors are dominated by the upper castes.

Brazil: labour income ratios between white and non-white workers



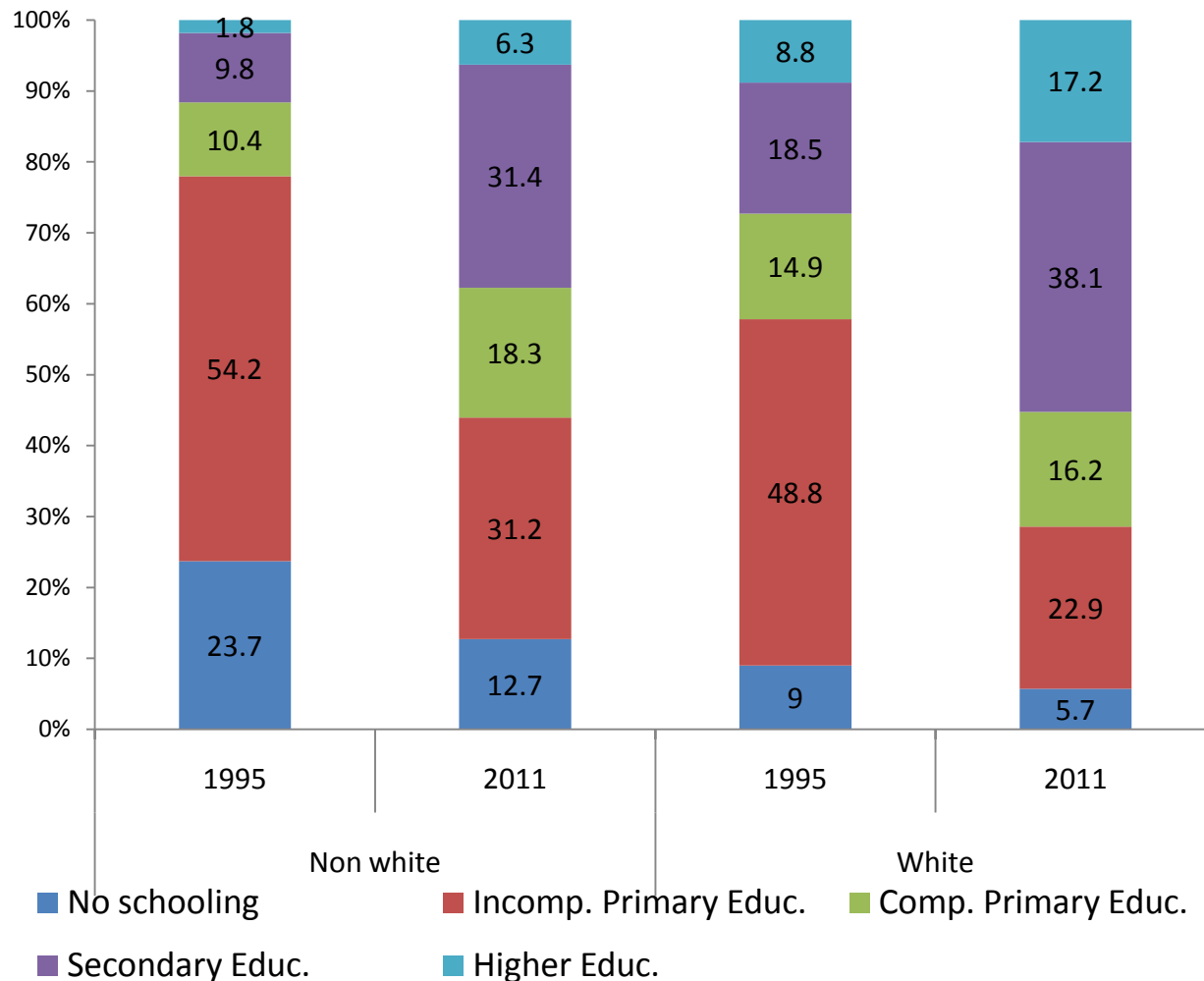
- Downward trend in labour income ratio across race.
- The fall in the ratio occurs in every employment status, but it remains higher among the informal workers.
- This helped to decrease the racial inequality in the distribution of labour income

India: wage ratios between social groups

		Rural		Urban	
		Regular	Casual	Regular	Casual
1999-2000	SC/ST	0,81	1,19	0,80	1,17
	OBC/SC	1,15	1,01	0,94	1,07
	Others/OBC	1,30	1,09	1,47	1,03
2011-2012	SC/ST	0,86	1,20	0,77	1,17
	OBC/SC	1,09	1,02	1,11	1,06
	Others/OBC	1,28	0,99	1,55	0,87

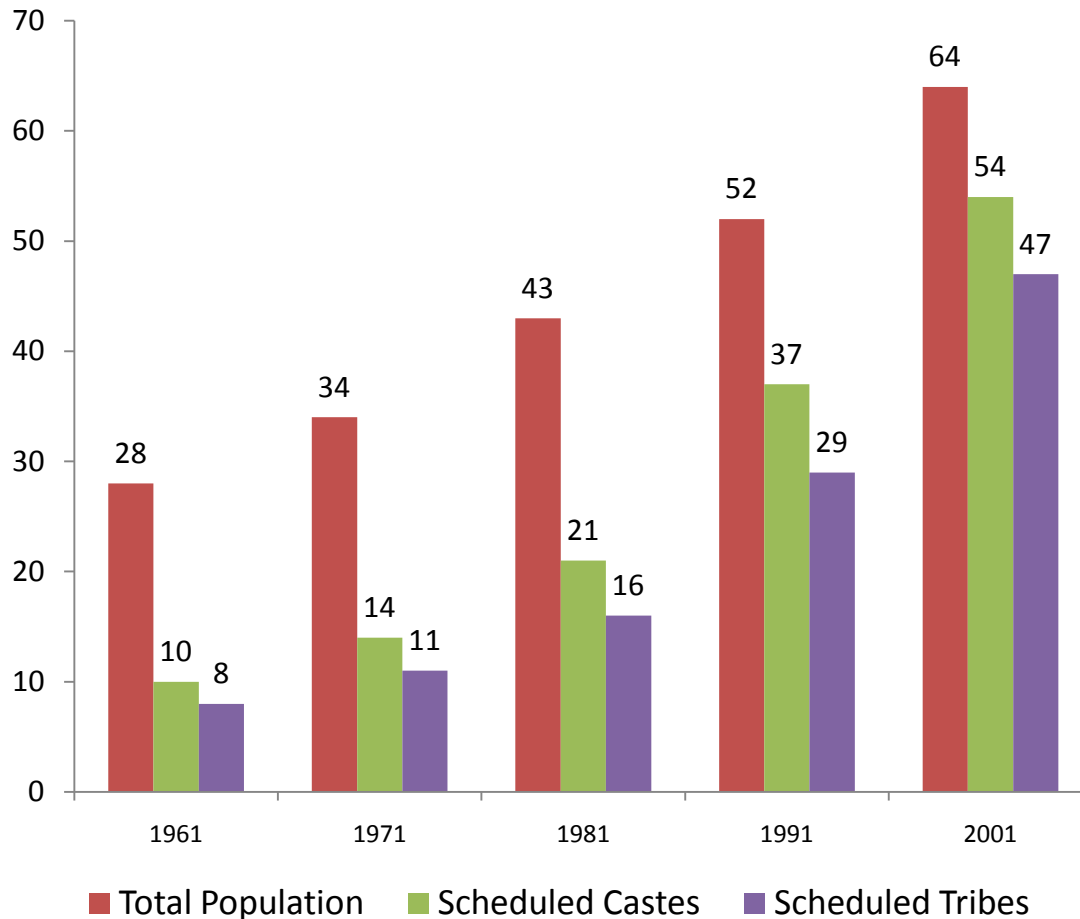
- Upper castes in regular, urban work had significantly higher earnings than other groups; and STs had significantly lower earnings in casual work than other groups.
- Overall there is some sign of wage differentials widening, with STs doing badly and upper castes doing well.

Brazil: distribution of white and non-white occupied workers by level of education (%)



- The shares of non-white workers with complete primary, secondary and higher education jumped, compared to the same shares of white workers.
- Reduction of the gap in the educational attainment between white and non-white workers, however, it still very uneven.

India: Literacy rates among SCs, STs and total population (%)



- The gaps in literacy rates between SCs, STs and others have declined substantially, especially after 1980.
- However, the caste inequalities persist in secondary and tertiary education, which are required for access to good jobs.

Summing up

- Historical inequalities among population groups, with different origins but with similar effects, give rise to unequal labour market opportunities, and these are reflected in labour market structures.
- In India the primary mechanism is one of exclusion of lower castes from good jobs. Whereas in Brazil there are more open job access, but larger wage differentials within labour market segments, which might for instance reflect more limited options for progression for non-whites.
- The results also point to the effect of pre-labour market inequality, which are reflected by the low educational attainment of non-whites in Brazil and the unequal access to education for lower castes in India.
- There are signs that at least some aspects of racial inequality are declining in Brazil; while in India, caste and community differences are very persistent. This is also reflected in an increased, but still limited, social mobility of the non-whites, while in India it would only happen for some groups.