



A street vendor in Salvadore, Brazil.
Photo: M. Chen



Informal Workers in Brazil: A Statistical Profile

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This brief examines data on employment in Brazil from 2012, 2019 and 2020, with a focus on five groups of workers who are mainly informal.

Background and Summary

Brazil experienced a period of economic growth at the beginning of the millennium, followed by a serious internal crisis in 2014.¹ After declines in 2015 and 2016, the country's GDP increased only slightly in the following years. A major effect of this economic crisis was an unprecedented increase in the unemployment rate, which reached almost 14 per cent in the first quarter of 2017. The crisis led to a change in government in 2016. The new transitional government adopted a major reversal in policy, with the freeze on public spending (2016) and deregulation of the labour market (2017). Then

Brazil's new government, elected in 2018, pursued an austerity policy following neoliberal principles. While the **numbers** of persons employed increased between 2012 and 2019 nationally, the **employment rate** during this period decreased. In 2020, when COVID-19 arrived, Brazil already had a lacklustre economy, which was reflected in employment. Fallout from the pandemic brought greater changes to employment. Total employment declined by over 8 million nationally between 2019 and 2020. Most of the jobs lost (70 per cent, or around 6 million) were informal jobs. The rate of informal employment declined between 2019

¹ The causes of this crisis are a combination of external factors (the end of the commodities boom) and internal factors (adoption of more restrictive policies to curb increasing public deficits), combined with a major political crisis (distrust in government, mass protests against corruption and public prices increase).

Table 1. Employment in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, urban Brazil and Brazil by sex, 2012, 2019 and 2020: Numbers (millions) and share (in parentheses)

	2012			2019			2020			Change in numbers 2019 – 2020		
	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total
São Paulo	4.38	(43.6)	10.05	4.91	(45.2)	10.85	4.27	(44.0)	9.72	-0.64	-0.49	-1.13
Rio de Janeiro	2.41	(43.2)	5.57	2.51	(44.2)	5.69	2.16	(43.2)	4.99	-0.36	-0.34	-0.69
Urban Brazil	33.46	(43.1)	77.75	37.11	(44.1)	84.11	32.93	(43.1)	76.48	-4.18	-3.45	-7.63
Brazil	37.29	(41.6)	89.70	40.61	(42.8)	94.96	36.18	(41.7)	86.67	-4.43	-3.86	-8.29

and 2020, not because the number of formal jobs increased but because informal rather than formal jobs were lost during the pandemic.

Five groups of workers (domestic workers, market traders, street vendors, home-based workers and waste pickers) accounted for almost 14 million workers nationally in 2019. These groups represented about 15 per cent of total employment and one in four workers in informal employment. In 2020, after COVID-19 hit, the number of workers in these groups dropped to nearly 12 million and 14 per cent of employment. Women working in these groups were especially hard hit as they lost around 1.5 million jobs; by contrast men lost around 370,000.

Total employment increased between 2012 and 2019 in all geographic areas of Brazil: in Brazil nationally from 89.7 million to almost 95 million; in urban Brazil from 77.8 million to 84.1 million; in Rio de Janeiro from 5.6 million

to 5.7 million and in São Paulo from 10.1 million to 10.9 million (**table 1**).² Nationally, women's share of employment increased by about 1 percentage point while men's share decreased a corresponding percentage point. The COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions, as well as the recession, had a significant impact on the labour market of Brazil. Between 2019 and 2020, total employment dropped by 8.3 million workers nationally, 7.6 million in urban Brazil, 700,000 in Rio de Janeiro and 1.1 million in São Paulo. In each geographic area, the change was greater for women than for men. Nationally, the decrease in employment was felt more by women, whose employment dropped by 4.4 million for women compared to 3.9 million for men.

While the **numbers** of persons who were employed increased between 2012 and 2019, the **employment rate** (the per cent of person employed among the population 14 and above) decreased in three of the geographic areas

(**table 2**). In Rio de Janeiro, urban Brazil and Brazil nationally, the employment rate was 56 to 59 per cent in 2012 and dropped to 54 to 58 per cent in 2019. Conversely, the employment rate in São Paulo increased from 60 to 61 per cent. During this period, the unemployment rate increased in all four areas, from around 7 per cent to 15 per cent in Rio de Janeiro, 13 per cent in São Paulo, and around 12 per cent in urban Brazil and Brazil nationally. A year later, as a result of COVID-19, there was a large drop in rates of employment and a substantial increase in unemployment in the four geographic areas. The effects were somewhat greater in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. In these two metropolitan areas, employment dropped by 7 percentage points and by a little above 5 percentage points in urban Brazil and Brazil nationally. Unemployment increased by around 4 percentage in Rio de Janeiro and around 3 percentage points in São Paulo. In urban Brazil and Brazil nationally, unemployment increased by 2 percentage points. The unemployment rate reached 19 per

² The data in this brief are based on the PNAD (Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios, or National Sample Survey of Households) Contínua, which since 2012 has been the Brazilian Labour Force Survey.

Table 2. Employment and Unemployment rates* in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, urban Brazil and Brazil by sex, 2012, 2019 and 2020 (per cent)

	2012						2019						2020						Absolute Change 2019 – 2020					
	Women		Men		Total		Women		Men		Total		Women		Men		Total		Women		Men		Total	
	ER	UR	ER	UR	ER	UR	ER	UR	ER	UR	ER	UR	ER	UR	ER	UR	ER	UR	ER	UR	ER	UR	ER	UR
São Paulo	50.4	8.5	70.3	6.9	60.0	7.6	53.0	15.6	70.5	11.6	61.3	13.4	45.8	17.7	64.2	14.6	54.6	16.0	-7.2	2.1	-6.3	3.0	-6.8	2.6
Rio de Janeiro	45.2	9.0	69.0	5.8	56.2	7.2	43.8	18.9	64.8	11.7	53.5	15.0	37.3	23.0	57.6	15.2	46.6	18.8	-6.5	4.2	-7.1	3.5	-6.8	3.8
Urban Brazil	48.5	9.5	70.1	6.3	58.8	7.7	48.7	14.7	67.5	10.1	57.7	12.2	42.9	16.6	62.1	12.1	52.1	14.1	-5.8	2.0	-5.4	2.0	-5.6	1.9
Brazil	46.8	9.3	70.1	6.0	58.1	7.4	46.7	14.5	66.8	9.7	56.4	11.8	41.2	16.5	61.4	11.7	51.0	13.8	-5.5	2.0	-5.4	2.0	-5.4	1.9

* **Employment rate (ER):** share of population employed among population ages 14 and older. **Unemployment rate (UR):** share of the economically active population ages 14 and older who, during the reference period, were without employment but available for work and seeking employment.

Box 1: Identifying Informal Employment

In Brazil informal employment includes:

- Employees without a working card (*carteira de trabalho assinada*)
- Employers and own-account persons not contributing to social security
- Contributing family members.

cent in Rio de Janeiro, 16 per cent in São Paulo and 14 per cent in urban Brazil and Brazil.

Both women and men suffered great losses in employment between 2019 and 2020 with the

COVID-19 pandemic. Except in Rio de Janeiro, the losses were slightly greater for women than for men. In Rio de Janeiro, men's employment dropped by a little more than 7 percentage points while women's dropped by a little less than 7 percentage points and women's unemployment increased by a little more than men's.

The rate of informal employment was around 40 per cent in 2019 nationally but lower in big cities. The COVID-19 pandemic affected both formal and informal employment in Brazil, with a greater effect on informal employment, especially outside of the major cities.

In 2019, 39.4 million workers were informally employed, representing 41 per cent of total employment nationally (**table 3** and **box 1**). Between 2012 and 2019, the **numbers** of informal workers increased by almost 1.5 million nationally while the **percentage** of informal employment in total employment did not change. In 2019 the percentage of informal employment was lowest in São Paulo at 33 per cent, followed by 37 per cent in Rio de Janeiro, 39 per cent in urban Brazil and 42 per cent in Brazil nationally. By 2020, the percentage of informal employment was slightly lower in all four regions, with a drop of three percentage points in each geographic

Table 3. Informal employment in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, urban Brazil and Brazil by sex, 2012, 2019 and 2020: Numbers (in million) and share of total employment (per cent in parentheses)

	2012						2019						2020					
	Women		Men		Total		Women		Men		Total		Women		Men		Total	
São Paulo	1.31	(30.0)	1.58	(27.9)	2.90	(28.8)	1.65	(33.6)	1.92	(32.3)	3.57	(32.9)	1.27	(29.7)	1.64	(30.2)	2.91	(30.0)
Rio de Janeiro	0.83	(34.7)	0.88	(27.9)	1.71	(30.8)	0.96	(38.1)	1.12	(35.4)	2.08	(36.6)	0.77	(35.5)	0.91	(32.1)	1.68	(33.6)
Urban Brazil	13.08	(39.1)	15.57	(35.2)	28.65	(36.9)	14.63	(39.4)	17.74	(37.7)	32.37	(38.5)	11.90	(36.1)	15.44	(35.5)	27.34	(35.7)
Brazil	15.89	(42.6)	21.12	(40.3)	37.01	(41.3)	16.98	(41.8)	22.43	(41.3)	39.42	(41.5)	13.96	(38.6)	19.71	(39.0)	33.67	(38.8)



A street vendor in Salvador, Brazil.
Photo: M. Chen

area. In numbers this reflects a decrease of around 5.8 million workers nationally.

The percentage of women's employment that is informal is slightly higher than men's at all three dates and in the four areas with the exception of São Paulo in 2020: both women's and men's rates of informal employment were 30 per cent.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected both formal and informal employment in Brazil; the effect was greater on informal employment (**table 4**). In Brazil nationally between 2019 and 2020, employment dropped by 8.3 million jobs with

Table 4. Absolute change (in million) and relative change (per cent)* in employment in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, urban Brazil and Brazil by sex, 2019 and 2020

Years 2019 and 2020	Women		Men		Total	
	Absolute change	Relative change	Absolute change	Relative change	Absolute change	Relative change
São Paulo	- 0.64	- 13.0	- 0.49	- 8.3	- 1.13	- 10.4
Formal	- 0.26	- 8.0	- 0.22	- 5.5	- 0.48	- 6.6
Informal	- 0.38	- 23.0	- 0.27	- 14.3	- 0.65	- 18.3
Rio de Janeiro	- 0.36	- 14.2	- 0.34	- 10.8	- 0.70	- 12.3
Formal	- 0.16	- 10.5	- 0.13	- 6.3	- 0.29	- 8.1
Informal	- 0.19	- 20.2	- 0.21	- 19.0	- 0.41	- 19.6
Urban Brazil	- 4.18	- 11.3	- 3.45	- 7.3	- 7.63	- 9.1
Formal	- 1.44	- 6.4	- 1.15	- 3.9	- 2.60	- 5.0
Informal	- 2.74	- 18.7	- 2.30	- 12.9	- 5.03	- 15.5
Brazil	- 4.43	- 10.9	- 3.85	- 7.1	- 8.28	- 8.7
Formal	- 1.40	- 5.9	- 1.13	- 3.5	- 2.53	- 4.6
Informal	- 3.02	- 17.8	- 2.73	- 12.2	- 5.75	- 14.6

* The absolute change refers to the difference in numbers of employed between 2019 and 2020. The relative change refers to the change in the number as a per cent of the number from the earlier period as shown in the formula:

$$\text{Relative change} = \frac{\text{Value of indicator in period 2} - \text{Value of indicator in period 1}}{\text{Value of indicators in period 1}} \times 100$$

a loss of 2.5 million in formal employment and 5.8 in informal employment. In terms of the percentage change from the earlier level of employment (relative change) the decline was 5 per cent in formal employment and 15 per cent in informal employment. The decline between 2019 and 2020 was greater for women than for men in both formal and informal employment in all geographic regions with a much larger difference for informal employment. Nationally, there was a drop of 18 percentage points for women and 12 percentage points for men in informal employment. This compares to a

decline of 6 per cent for women and 4 per cent for men in formal employment.

Among the industry sectors, agriculture, and trade together account for nearly one-third (30 per cent) of informal employment nationally and 22 per cent in urban Brazil in 2019 (**table 5**). In São Paulo with almost no employment in agriculture, a cluster of services (information, communication, financial, real estate, and professional) is a major industry category and with trade comprise around 30 per cent of informal employment. Between 2019 and 2020

Table 5. Informal employment by industry and sex in São Paulo, urban Brazil and Brazil: Per cent distribution, 2019 and 2020

	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Construction	Trade	Transport and related repair, storage, and mail	Accommodation and food	Information, communication financial real estate, and professional services	Education, human health and social services	Domestic services	Other services**
São Paulo 2019	0.3 *	11.3	11.3	15.2	10.1	8.9	13.7	6.0	11.7	11.5
Women	0.1 *	10.0	0.6 *	15.2	2.9 *	11.0	13.2	8.4	24.4	14.2
Men	0.5 *	12.4	20.5	15.3	16.2	7.0 *	14.2	3.9 *	0.9 *	9.1
São Paulo 2020	0.3 *	10.4	11.0	16.0	11.6	7.4	15.4	7.6	9.7	10.6
Women	0.2 *	9.2	0.5 *	17.3	2.5 *	7.7	15.1	12.2	21.4	13.9
Men	0.4 *	11.3	19.2	15.1	18.6	7.1 *	15.6	4.0 *	0.7 *	8.0
Urban Brazil 2019	5.0	9.2	12.5	16.6	8.6	8.7	7.9	7.4	12.1	12.0
Women	1.6	9.1	0.6	17.8	1.3	11.0	6.8	12.0	25.3	14.5
Men	7.7	9.4	22.4	15.6	14.5	6.8	8.9	3.6	1.2	9.9
Urban Brazil 2020	5.1	8.6	13.1	17.1	9.5	7.7	8.1	7.5	11.1	12.2
Women	1.7	8.8	0.6	18.7	1.3	9.9	7.1	12.9	24.1	14.9
Men	7.6	8.4	22.8	15.8	15.8	6.1	8.9	3.4	1.1	10.1
Brazil 2019	14.6	8.9	11.4	14.8	7.5	7.7	6.7	6.7	11.3	10.4
Women	7.2	9.1	0.6	16.6	1.2	10.3	6.0	11.5	24.4	13.1
Men	20.2	8.6	19.6	13.4	12.3	5.8	7.3	3.0	1.4	8.4
Brazil 2020	15.5	8.2	11.8	15.7	7.6	6.9	6.7	6.7	10.3	10.6
Women	8.0	8.8	0.6	18.2	1.1	9.1	6.1	12.0	22.8	13.3
Men	20.9	7.9	19.9	13.7	12.4	5.2	7.2	2.9	1.3	8.6

* There are fewer than 50 observations in the dataset.

** Personal services, other repair, public administration.

the distribution across the categories remained relatively stable. However, there was a small decline in the per cent of informal workers in manufacturing, food and accommodation and domestic services and an increase in the transport category as well as the information, communication category, especially in São Paulo.

In all geographic areas, one in four women informal workers was a domestic worker in 2019. The percentage decreased slightly in 2020 in all three areas, especially in São Paulo, where it dropped from 24 per cent of women informal workers to 21 per cent.

Among men, informal construction was the industry sector category with the largest percentage: 21 per cent in São Paulo, 22 per cent in urban Brazil and 20 per cent in Brazil nationally in 2019. In 2020 the percentage dropped in São Paulo to 19 but increased slightly in the other two areas.

Box 2. Identifying the groups of workers

Domestic workers provide services in the homes of others. In the occupational classification used in the PNAD Contínua, domestic workers (*Trabalhador doméstico*) are a major category. Another question asks unpaid workers if they aid workers in other status in employment categories, including domestic workers. The total number of domestic workers in Brazil is a sum of the responses to both questions. Domestic workers added through the second question increased the total by a little less than 1 per cent. This figure is similar to the estimate based on the industry classification (the *Classificação Nacional de Atividades Econômicas* – CNAE), with the code 97000–Domestic services (*Serviços domésticos*).

Market traders sell goods and offer services in public markets or built spaces in public markets. They were identified through the occupational classification (*Classificação de Ocupações para Pesquisas Domiciliares* – COD) with the code 5211–Stall and Market Salespersons (*Vendedores de quiosques e postos de mercados*).

Street vendors sell products or offer services in public spaces, such as streets, alleys, avenues, parks, or markets. Several steps were required to identify all street vendors. **First**, all workers with the following COD categories were identified: 5212–Street Food Salespersons (*Vendedores ambulantes de serviços de alimentação*), 9510–Street and Related Services Workers (*Trabalhadores ambulantes dos serviços e afins*), 9520–Street vendor – excluding food (*Vendedores ambulantes – exclusive de serviços de alimentação*) and 5243–Door-to-door salespersons (*Vendedores a domicilio*). **Second**, the workers identified through the COD categories were crossed with the place of work to consider workers who indicated working in a motor vehicle (taxi, bus, truck, car, boat, etc.) or on a public road or area (street, river, mangrove forest, public park, square, beach, etc.). This provides for the inclusion of workers such as travel guides, cooks, vehicle cleaners, handicraft workers in textiles, etc.; this group increased by 7 per cent. A **third step** is to do the same with the CNAE (the industry classification) in order to include persons working in the street in the following activities: processing industries; trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles, or ill-defined activities. Persons working in the streets or in a motor vehicle and involved in activities: Street trading and fairs; Food; Arts, culture, sports and recreation, or other personal service activities were also considered. To avoid the double identification of individuals in the third step, persons already identified as market traders (for example, many market traders identified as working in the street were removed from the street vendors group). Considering all steps, the total of workers added in steps 2 to 3 represent 13 per cent of the “initial” group identified in the first step.

Home-based workers produce goods or provide services from in or around their own homes, including a structure attached to their home. To identify this group, the variable place of work was used. Persons who indicated they work at home, whether in a place exclusively set aside for the performance of the activity or without an exclusive place in the home for the performance of the activity, were included. Individuals who had already been identified in the other groups (e.g., street vendors who prepare their products at home, waste pickers who sort materials at home, etc.) were removed from the home-based workers.

Waste pickers, called *catadores* in Brazil, are defined as those who collect, sort, and sell recyclable material such as paper, cardboard, glass, ferrous and non-ferrous and other reusable materials. Based on earlier statistical work,¹ these workers are identified through the classification of occupations. All workers in category 9612: Refuse Sorters (*Classificadores de resíduos*), whose definition corresponds to the mission of *catadores* are included. In Brazil, provision of all solid waste management services (street sweeping, waste collection, disposal, treatment, and processing) is the responsibility of the municipal government and thus is not included as waste picking. These activities are performed either directly by municipal workers and/or by contractors, all of whom are mainly formal workers. These tasks are captured by category 9611–Garbage and Recycling Collectors (*Coletores de lixo e material reciclável*). To identify the possibility that *catadores* were included in category 9611, the occupational category 9611 was crossed with that of the branch of economic activity sectors and informality. One of the CNAE categories – 38000–Waste collection, treatment and disposal; materials recovery (*Coleta, tratamento e disposição de resíduos; recuperação de materiais*) – had many informal workers, so these informal workers were added to the 9612 category to create a more complete measurement of the total group of *catadores*.

¹ See [WIEGO Statistical Brief no. 29: Waste Pickers in Brazil: A Statistical Profile](#).

Groups of workers

Five worker groups together comprise almost 14 million workers and 15 per cent of national employment. Between 2019 and 2020, after the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, employment in these groups decreased by over 1.9 million with a much greater loss in women's employment in these groups (1.6 million) in comparison to men's (370,000).

This brief focuses on five groups of workers who together comprised almost 15 per cent of employment in Brazil in 2019 – representing almost 14 million workers – and around the same share of total employment in the other geographic areas (**table 6** and **box 2**). Domestic

workers are the most numerous of the groups, with over 6 million workers nationally, or more than 6 per cent of employment in Brazil. Home-based workers represent nearly 4 million workers, or 4 per cent of the employed population. Next are street vendors, with nearly 3 million workers representing 3 per cent of employment. These vendors mainly trade goods other than food or beverages. There are almost 650,000 market traders who, like street vendors, trade mainly goods rather than food or beverages. More than a quarter of a million workers are waste pickers.

Between 2019 and 2020, these groups have been on the front lines of job destruction with the COVID-19 crisis. Their size, in terms of number of jobs, declined by over 1.9 million

workers nationally, which represents an absolute reduction of 14 per cent. The job loss for women in these groups was more than four times greater than for men (almost 1.6 million in comparison to about 370,000). Home-based workers are the only group whose numbers increased between 2019 and 2020. The increase is small at the national and urban levels and only among men, but in São Paulo the number of home-based workers increased by 25 per cent among both women and men. At the national level, net job loss in other categories of informal workers hovers around 20 per cent. The decline in the number of domestic workers is particularly significant in São Paulo compared to the rest of the country (a drop of 28 per cent in comparison to 20 per cent).

Table 6. Categories of workers by sex in São Paulo, urban Brazil and Brazil, 2012, 2019 and 2020: Numbers and per cent of total employment in parentheses

São Paulo	2019						2020						Relative Change 2019 / 2020**
	Women		Men		Total		Women		Men		Total		
Domestic workers	578,239	(11.8)	30,368	(0.5)	608,607	(5.6)	423,194	(9.9)	17,664 *	(0.3)	440,858	(4.5)	- 27.6
Home-based workers	297,498	(6.1)	195,095	(3.3)	492,593	(4.5)	348,653	(8.2)	267,708	(4.5)	616,361	(6.3)	25.1
Market traders	40,516 *	(0.8)	58,560 *	(1.0)	99,076	(0.9)	30,063 *	(0.7)	47,154 *	(0.8)	77,217	(0.8)	- 22.1 *
Food and beverages	1,386 *	(0.0)	1,386 *	(0.0)	2,772 *	(0.0)	2,162 *	(0.1)	3,621 *	(0.1)	5,783 *	(0.1)	108.6 *
Goods other than food and beverages	39,130 *	(0.8)	57,174 *	(1.0)	96,304	(0.9)	27,901 *	(0.7)	43,533 *	(0.7)	71,434	(0.7)	- 25.8 *
Street vendors	146,687	(3.0)	136,467	(2.3)	283,154	(2.6)	90,578	(2.1)	120,051	(2.0)	210,629	(2.2)	- 25.6
Food and beverages	23,571 *	(0.5)	33,089 *	(0.6)	56,660 *	(0.5)	7,110 *	(0.2)	25,746 *	(0.4)	32,856 *	(0.3)	- 42.0 *
Goods other than food and beverages	110,564	(2.3)	86,616	(1.5)	197,180	(1.8)	76,639	(1.8)	81,307 *	(1.4)	157,946	(1.6)	- 19.9 *
Services	12,552 *	(0.3)	16,762	(0.3)	29,314	(0.3)	6,829	(0.2)	12,998	(0.2)	19,827	(0.2)	- 32.4 *
Waste pickers***	6,707 *	(0.1)	26,711	(0.4)	33,418	(0.3)	5,315	(0.1)	12,440	(0.2)	17,755	(0.2)	- 46.9 *
Total	1,069,647	(21.8)	447,201	(7.5)	1,516,848	(14.0)	897,803	(21.0)	465,017	(7.8)	1,362,820	(14.0)	- 10.2

Table 6 (continued). Categories of workers by sex in São Paulo, urban Brazil and Brazil, 2012, 2019 and 2020: Numbers and per cent of total employment in parentheses

Urban Brazil	Women		Men		Total		Women		Men		Total		Relative Change 2019 / 2020**
Domestic workers	5,083,063	(13.7)	325,326	(0.7)	5,408,389	(6.4)	4,011,655	(12.2)	283,381	(0.7)	4,295,036	(5.6)	-20.6
Home-based workers	2,428,644	(6.5)	1,221,082	(2.6)	3,649,726	(4.3)	2,352,357	(7.1)	1,359,173	(3.1)	3,711,530	(4.9)	1.7
Market traders	224,914	(0.6)	348,007	(0.7)	572,921	(0.7)	175,191	(0.5)	279,987	(0.6)	455,178	(0.6)	-20.6
Food and beverages	19,554 *	(0.1)	24,056 *	(0.1)	43,610	(0.1)	15,866 *	(0.0)	14,704 *	(0.0)	30,570 *	(0.0)	-29.9 *
Goods other than food and beverages	205,360	(0.6)	323,951	(0.7)	529,311	(0.6)	159,325	(0.5)	265,283	(0.6)	424,608	(0.6)	-19.8
Street vendors	1,370,931	(3.7)	1,358,499	(2.9)	2,729,430	(3.2)	1,134,785	(3.4)	1,034,814	(2.4)	2,169,599	(2.8)	-20.5
Food and beverages	213,010	(0.6)	360,928	(0.8)	573,938	(0.7)	171,562	(0.5)	271,576	(0.6)	443,138	(0.6)	-22.8
Goods other than food and beverages	1,084,259	(2.9)	858,241	(1.8)	1,942,500	(2.3)	915,255	(2.8)	669,355	(1.5)	1,584,610	(2.1)	-18.4
Services	73,662	(0.2)	139,330	(0.3)	212,992	(0.3)	47,968	(0.1)	93,883	(0.2)	141,851	(0.2)	-33.4
Waste pickers***	74,993	(0.2)	185,938	(0.4)	260,931	(0.3)	68,178	(0.2)	149,756	(0.3)	217,934	(0.3)	-16.5
Total	9,182,545	(24.7)	3,438,852	(7.3)	12,621,397	(15.0)	7,742,166	(23.5)	3,107,111	(7.1)	10,849,277	(14.2)	-14.0
Brazil	Women		Men		Total		Women		Men		Total		Relative Change 2019 / 2020**
Domestic workers	5,620,561	(13.8)	502,791	(0.9)	6,123,352	(6.4)	4,476,544	(12.4)	444,442	(0.9)	4,920,986	(5.7)	-19.6
Home-based workers	2,624,726	(6.5)	1,304,591	(2.4)	3,929,317	(4.1)	2,539,407	(7.0)	1,445,108	(2.9)	3,984,515	(4.6)	1.4
Market traders	249,413	(0.6)	393,921	(0.7)	643,334	(0.7)	191,914	(0.5)	315,064	(0.6)	506,978	(0.6)	-21.2
Food and beverages	22,502	(0.1)	27,262	(0.1)	49,764	(0.1)	17,012 *	(0.0)	15,567 *	(0.0)	32,579	(0.0)	-34.5
Goods other than food and beverages	226,911	(0.6)	366,659	(0.7)	593,570	(0.6)	174,902	(0.5)	299,497	(0.6)	474,399	(0.5)	-20.1
Street vendors	1,473,383	(3.6)	1,428,888	(2.6)	2,902,271	(3.1)	1,216,893	(3.4)	1,092,456	(2.2)	2,309,349	(2.7)	-20.4
Food and beverages	225,369	(0.6)	374,605	(0.7)	599,974	(0.6)	183,991	(0.5)	285,353	(0.6)	469,344	(0.5)	-21.8
Goods other than food and beverages	1,173,028	(2.9)	907,801	(1.7)	2,080,829	(2.2)	983,714	(2.7)	710,854	(1.4)	1,694,568	(2.0)	-18.6
Services	74,986	(0.2)	146,482	(0.3)	221,468	(0.2)	49,188	(0.1)	96,249	(0.2)	145,437	(0.2)	-34.3
Waste pickers***	80,324	(0.2)	196,114	(0.4)	276,438	(0.3)	71,915	(0.2)	157,524	(0.3)	229,439	(0.3)	-17.0
Total	10,048,407	(24.7)	3,826,305	(7.0)	13,874,712	(14.6)	8,496,673	(23.5)	3,454,594	(6.8)	11,951,267	(13.8)	-13.9

Note: Due to rounding the sums of the percentages are not equal.

* There are fewer than 50 observations in the dataset.

** The relative change refers to the change in the total number as a per cent of the number from the earlier period as shown in the formula:

$$\text{Relative change} = \frac{\text{Value of indicator in period 2} - \text{Value of indicator in period 1}}{\text{Value of indicators in period 1}} \times 100$$

*** The absolute number of waste pickers reported here is slightly lower than in the WIEGO Statistical Brief no. 29: *Waste Pickers in Brazil: A Statistical Profile*, because the IBGE revised the PNAD-C data set to adjust for non-response due to the pandemic.

These five groups are a more important source of employment for women, accounting in 2019 for 25 per cent of women's employment in urban Brazil and nationally in comparison to 7 per cent for men. Nationally, in 2019 and in 2020 there were and still are more women than men in these jobs even with the substantial and greater recent losses for women: in 2019, 10 million women in comparison to around 3,8 million men and in 2020, 8.5 million women and 3.4 million men. Domestic workers comprise 14 per cent of women's employment in Brazil in 2019: more than 5.5 million jobs. Many women also earn their living by working from home (around 6 per cent), or by selling on the streets (3 to 4 per cent). Home-based workers and street vendors are the largest groups for men but there are fewer men in these groups than women in the urban Brazil and Brazil nationally.

Home-based workers by industry sector

Among women home-based workers, the loss of employment is concentrated in the manufacturing sector. By contrast, the trade, professional and technical and education sectors gained in importance, as work moved from offices and schools to the home. Among men, the number of home-based workers in manufacturing and trade fell between 2019 and 2020 but increased in all of the other industry categories.

Box 3. The new home-based workers

Traditionally, home-based workers engaged in manufacturing and provided repairs and other, largely non-professional, services from their home. However with the development and increased use of digital technology, workers in offices, schools and other institutions have been able to work in their homes. The COVID pandemic brought major increases in this trend in Brazil, especially in São Paulo. Of the six groups of workers featured in this brief, only the numbers of home-based workers increased between 2019 and 2020. The increase was small at the national and urban levels and only among men. In São Paulo, however, the number of both women and men home-based workers increased significantly, comprising a total increase of 25 per cent.

The increase in numbers of home-based workers was reflected in changes in the distribution across the industry sectors. Among women home-based workers, there was a decrease in the manufacturing sector and increases in trade, professional and technical, and education services. Among men, the number of home-based workers in manufacturing and trade fell between 2019 and 2020 while the financial, health and other services sector increased greatly, especially in São Paulo, from 37 per cent to 46 per cent. However, in the professional and technical sector, although there was a small increase in numbers among men home-based workers in São Paulo, the percentage decreased from 19 to 14 per cent; both the numbers and the percentages in this sector increased in the other two geographic areas.

Although in 2020 there were fewer women than men home-based workers in financial, health and other services, this sector continued to be the largest sector for women home-based workers, accounting for slightly more than 40 per cent of women home-based workers in urban Brazil and Brazil nationally and 38 per cent in São Paulo.

Change was also reflected in the degree of informality among home-based workers. Between 2019 and 2020, the rate of informality decreased greatly in São Paulo (from 73 to 55 per cent of women home-based workers and from 68 to 48 per cent of men). Informality also decreased among home-based workers in urban Brazil and in Brazil nationally by 6 percentage points for women and 8 for men.

Data on education and earnings point to two different sets of home-based workers, with the new home-based workers of greatest importance in São Paulo. Because of the new entrants, a substantial share of home-based workers have a tertiary level of education. However, another substantial share of home-based workers have only a primary level of education.

Similarly, the data on earnings suggest two different sets of home-based workers, especially in São Paulo. In 2019 in São Paulo, 38 per cent of home-based workers had wages of less than the minimum wage while 26 per cent had earnings of more than three times the minimum wage. The percentage of those earning three times the minimum wage increased in São Paulo in 2020, reflecting the movement of higher-earning workers from office to home. However in urban Brazil and in Brazil nationally, the data reveal a different situation. Over half of home-based workers earned less than the minimum wage in 2019 while far fewer (14 and 13 per cent, respectively) earned three or more times the minimum wage. In 2020 in these two geographic areas, the proportion earning the minimum wage or less increased to 60 per cent but the proportion earning three or more times the minimum wage was largely unchanged.

Table 7. Industry of home-based workers in São Paulo, urban Brazil. and Brazil, 2019 and 2020: Numbers and per cent distribution

Numbers, per cents, year and geographical area	Women								Men							
	Total	Manufacturing	Trade	Professional & technical services	Repair services**	Financial, health and other services***	Education	Others	Total	Manufacturing	Trade	Professional & technical services	Repair services**	Financial, health and other services***	Education	Others
Numbers																
Year 2019																
São Paulo	297,498	82,975	26,419 *	34,001 *	- *	148,085	4,952 *	1,066 *	195,094	39,893 *	29,453 *	37,233 *	13,861 *	71,339 *	1,261 *	2,054 *
Urban Brazil	2,428,644	832,706	333,486	144,140	16,258 *	1,025,854	67,693	8,507 *	1,221,082	258,336	223,567	194,826	150,387	363,221	15,011 *	15,734 *
Brazil	2,624,727	957,171	357,718	145,675	16,258 *	1,069,508	69,548	8,849 *	1,304,591	291,956	240,886	198,195	160,087	381,592	15,723 *	16,152 *
Year 2020																
São Paulo	348,654	76,589	54,530 *	65,064 *	- *	133,697	17,698 *	1,076 *	267,707	49,076 *	27,362 *	38,472 *	20,524 *	124,114 *	8,159 *	- *
Urban Brazil	2,352,357	707,560	341,470	202,752	18,771 *	964,572	106,586	10,646 *	1,359,173	236,838	208,047	219,798	181,520	445,487	38,538 *	28,945 *
Brazil	2,539,407	812,705	366,025	203,726	18,771 *	1,019,012	108,522	10,646 *	1,445,109	273,739	230,542	221,971	187,343	463,045	39,266 *	29,203 *
Per cent																
Year 2019																
São Paulo		27.8	8.9 *	11.4	0.0 *	49.8	1.7 *	0.4 *		20.4 *	15.1 *	19.1 *	7.1 *	36.6 *	0.6 *	1.1 *
Urban Brazil		34.3	13.7	5.9	0.7 *	42.2	2.8	0.4 *		21.2	18.3	16.0	12.3	29.7	1.2	1.3 *
Brazil		36.5	13.6	5.6	0.6 *	40.8	2.6	0.3 *		22.4	18.5	15.2	12.3	29.2	1.2	1.2 *
Year 2020																
São Paulo		22.0	15.6 *	18.7 *	0.0 *	38.3	5.1 *	0.3 *		18.3 *	10.2 *	14.4 *	7.7 *	46.4 *	3.0 *	0.0 *
Urban Brazil		30.1	14.5	8.6	0.8 *	41.0	4.5	0.5 *		17.4	15.3	16.2	13.4	32.8	2.8	2.1 *
Brazil		32.0	14.4	8.0	0.7 *	40.2	4.3	0.4 *		18.9	16.0	15.4	13.0	32.0	2.7	2.0 *

Note: the question asks for the habitual workplace, and not effectively in the context of the pandemic.

* There are fewer than 50 observations in the dataset.

** Electronic equipment and household goods and vehicles repair

*** Financial, information, real estate, health and other services

Home-based workers – those who declare own home or area adjacent to or near own home as their place of work – are found in several major industry sectors of the economy (**table 7**). In 2019, over 40 per cent of women and over 30

per cent of men home-based workers were in a cluster of services including finance, health, real estate and other services. This cluster was the largest industry category in all three geographic areas and accounted for 50 per cent of women

home-based workers and 37 per cent of men in São Paulo. The category next in importance for both women and men was manufacturing. It comprised 28 per cent of women home-based workers in São Paulo, 34 per cent in urban Brazil

and 37 per cent in Brazil nationally. Among men, 20 to 22 per cent of home-based workers were in manufacturing.

Between 2019 and 2020 the number of women home-based workers increased by around 50,000 in São Paulo but fell in urban Brazil and Brazil nationally. By contrast, the number of men home-based workers increased in all three geographic areas: by around 73,000 in São Paulo and around 140,000 in the other two geographic areas. However, the full extent of change in the number of home-based workers cannot be seen in these data because respondents were asked what their usual place of work is rather than where they are working in 2020. Among women the loss of employment is concentrated in the manufacturing sector. By contrast, the trade, professional and technical and education sectors gained in importance, as work moved from offices and schools to the home (see **box 3**). Among men, the number of home-based workers in manufacturing and trade fell between 2019 and 2020 but increased in all of the other industry categories. The largest increases for men were in financial, health and other services, especially in São Paulo, with an increase from 37 per cent to 46 per cent of home-based work. Although financial, health and other services had fewer women workers in 2020, it continued to be the largest sector and accounted for slightly more than 40 per cent of women home-based workers in urban Brazil and Brazil nationally and 38 per cent in São Paulo.

Informal Employment

In 2019 nearly 75 per cent of workers in these five groups nationally were informal; the level of informality in total employment in Brazil was 42 per cent. Workers in these groups represented one quarter of all informal workers.

Informality is very high among these groups of workers relative to the level of informality in total employment: nearly 75 per cent nationally compared to just under 42 per cent in 2019 (**table 8**). In Brazil nationally and urban Brazil, informality is highest among waste pickers (nearly 87 per cent), followed by market traders (84 per cent), home-based workers (77 per cent), street vendors (75 per cent) and domestic workers (nearly 73 per cent) (see **box 4**, Tracking the Impact of Legal Change on the Informality of Domestic Workers). The five groups taken together represent more than 10.5 million of Brazil's 39.4 million informal workers in 2019 and thus more than one in four informal workers.

The rates of informality in the groups are very similar in Brazil nationally and urban Brazil. In São Paulo, informality is lower than in the other two geographic areas among domestic workers, home-based workers and street vendors, but higher among market traders and waste pickers.

The general loss of informal employment between 2019 and 2020, shown in table 4, is reflected in each of these groups of workers

in the three geographic areas. The **numbers** informally employed in each group decreased. Moreover, the rate of informality decreased in four of the worker groups with street vendors as the only exception. The largest decrease in the rate was among home-based workers, from 77 per cent in 2019 to 70 per cent in 2020. This drop is due in part to the transfer of **formal** employment previously done in offices or institutions to the home (see table 7). This effect is especially strong in São Paulo. However, it is also due to the loss of **informal** home-based work, which fell from 3 million in 2019 to 2.8 million in 2020.

In 2019, women had a somewhat higher rate of informality in these groups, taken together, than men: 75–76 per cent for women in comparison to 73 per cent for men, both nationally and in urban Brazil. In São Paulo the rates of informality were lower than in the other two areas: 71 per cent for women and 72 per cent for men. The gap was greatest for domestic workers.

Between 2019 and 2020, although the rates of informality in the groups changed, there was little change in the gap between women's and men's rates.

Status in Employment

Almost half of the workers in these groups across the three geographic areas are own account workers, compared to only 22 to 25 per cent of the total employed in the geographic areas.

Table 8. Groups of informal workers in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, urban Brazil and Brazil by sex and whether informally employed: 2019 and 2020: Per cent share and numbers

	2019						2020					
	Women		Men		Total		Women		Men		Total	
São Paulo												
Domestic workers	69.4	401,468	55.0 *	16,699 *	68.7	418,167	64.2	271,532	68.5 *	12,096 *	64.3	283,628
Home-based workers	72.5	215,804	67.9	132,483	70.8	348,287	55.4	193,004	48.0	128,380	52.1	321,384
Market traders	86.3 *	34,948 *	86.7 *	50,743 *	86.5	85,691	74.1 *	22,285 *	60.6 *	28,573 *	65.9 *	50,858 *
Street vendors	67.2	98,570	70.2	95,798	68.6	194,368	83.2	75,404	72.4	86,893	77.1	162,297
Waste pickers	73.1 *	4,901 *	97.6 *	26,066 *	92.7 *	30,967 *	100.0 *	5,315 *	78.9 *	9,810 *	85.2 *	15,125 *
Total	70.6	755,691	72.0	321,789	71.0	1,077,480	63.2	567,540	57.1	265,752	61.1	833,292
<i>All employed</i>	33.6	1,648,175	32.3	1,917,630	32.9	3,565,805	29.7	1,269,642	30.2	1,643,713	30.0	2,913,355
Urban Brazil												
Domestic workers	72.8	3,698,651	64.6	210,106	72.3	3,908,757	71.3	2,861,119	60.2	170,469	70.6	3,031,588
Home-based workers	78.2	1,898,175	71.9	878,141	76.1	2,776,316	72.3	1,699,924	63.7	865,245	69.1	2,565,169
Market traders	84.9	191,044	82.7	287,965	83.6	479,009	79.1	138,577	80.6	225,800	80.1	364,377
Street vendors	78.0	1,068,938	70.9	962,814	74.4	2,031,752	81.0	919,284	70.7	731,504	76.1	1,650,788
Waste pickers	84.3	63,194	88.3	164,256	87.2	227,450	84.5	57,626	82.4	123,337	83.0	180,963
Total	75.4	6,920,002	72.8	2,503,282	74.7	9,423,284	73.3	5,676,530	68.1	2,116,355	71.8	7,792,885
<i>All employed</i>	39.4	14,631,431	37.7	17,738,376	38.5	32,369,807	36.1	11,895,757	35.5	15,442,673	35.7	27,338,430
Brazil												
Domestic workers	73.6	4,138,820	60.3	303,407	72.5	4,442,227	72.2	3,229,901	56.2	249,614	70.7	3,479,515
Home-based workers	79.0	2,072,583	73.0	952,246	77.0	3,024,829	73.5	1,865,678	65.1	940,467	70.4	2,806,145
Market traders	85.3	212,823	83.4	328,712	84.2	541,535	80.2	153,924	80.8	254,427	80.5	408,351
Street vendors	79.0	1,164,173	71.2	1,017,171	75.2	2,181,344	81.7	993,912	71.1	776,614	76.7	1,770,526
Waste pickers	84.4	67,803	87.8	172,112	86.8	239,915	83.9	60,334	82.3	129,711	82.8	190,045
Total	76.2	7,656,202	72.5	2,773,648	75.2	10,429,850	74.2	6,303,749	68.0	2,350,833	72.4	8,654,582
<i>All employed</i>	41.8	16,984,278	41.3	22,434,047	41.5	39,418,325	38.6	13,959,458	39.0	19,707,714	38.8	33,667,172

* There are fewer than 50 observations in the dataset.

Taking all groups together, almost half of the workers across the three geographic areas are own account workers, compared to 22 to 25

per cent of total employment (**table 9**). Men are more often own account workers than women in the five groups: 64 to 73 per cent in

comparison to 39 per cent for women across the geographic areas. This difference is in great part due to the compositional effect of the large

Table 9. Group of workers by status in employment and by sex in São Paulo, urban Brazil and Brazil by sex, 2019 (per cent distribution)

	Women				Men				Total			
São Paulo	Employee	Employer	Own account	Cont. family worker	Employee	Employer	Own account	Cont. family worker	Employee	Employer	Own account	Cont. family worker
Domestic workers	97.4	0.0 *	0.0 *	2.6	94.5	0.0 *	0.0 *	5.5 *	97.2	0.0 *	0.0 *	2.8 *
Home-based workers	10.5 *	1.1 *	87.2	1.2 *	2.5 *	5.8 *	85.4	6.3 *	7.3 *	3.0 *	86.5	3.2 *
Market traders	35.9 *	0.3 *	55.8 *	8.0 *	9.1 *	15.1 *	70.1 *	5.7 *	20.0 *	9.2 *	64.2 *	6.6 *
Street vendors	15.9 *	0.0 *	83.2	0.9 *	24.5 *	0.2 *	73.1	2.2 *	20.0 *	0.1 *	78.4	1.5 *
Waste pickers	46.0 *	0.0 *	37.0 *	17.0 *	26.3 *	5.3 *	68.4 *	0.0 *	30.3 *	4.2 *	62.1 *	3.4 *
Total	59.4	0.3 *	38.0	2.3 *	17.8	4.9 *	72.8	4.5 *	47.1	1.7 *	48.3	2.9 *
<i>All employed</i>	<i>78.1</i>	<i>2.8</i>	<i>18.2</i>	<i>0.9 *</i>	<i>67.7</i>	<i>6.5</i>	<i>25.2</i>	<i>0.6 *</i>	<i>72.4</i>	<i>4.9</i>	<i>22.0</i>	<i>0.7</i>
Urban Brazil	Employee	Employer	Own account	Cont. family worker	Employee	Employer	Own account	Cont. family worker	Employee	Employer	Own account	Cont. family worker
Domestic workers	99.3	0.0	0.0	0.7 *	96.7	0.0	0.0	3.3 *	99.2	0.0	0.0	0.8
Home-based workers	4.8	2.6	89.6	3.0	6.5	5.3	84.2	4.0	5.4	3.5	87.8	3.3
Market traders	21.7	4.1 *	64.3	9.9 *	15.7	8.2 *	72.8	3.3 *	18.0	6.6	69.5	5.9
Street vendors	9.0	0.5 *	88.7	1.8	31.2	1.2 *	65.9	1.7 *	20.1	0.8	77.3	1.8
Waste pickers	15.3 *	5.2 *	71.0	8.5 *	22.7	5.4 *	67.8	4.1 *	20.6	5.4 *	68.7	5.3 *
Total	58.3	0.9	39.0	1.8	26.6	3.5	66.9	3.0	49.6	1.6	46.7	2.1
<i>All employed</i>	<i>75.0</i>	<i>3.4</i>	<i>20.1</i>	<i>1.5</i>	<i>66.4</i>	<i>6.0</i>	<i>26.8</i>	<i>0.8</i>	<i>70.2</i>	<i>4.8</i>	<i>23.9</i>	<i>1.1</i>
Brazil	Employee	Employer	Own account	Cont. family worker	Employee	Employer	Own account	Cont. family worker	Employee	Employer	Own account	Cont. family worker
Domestic workers	99.2	0.0	0.0	0.8	97.1	0.0	0.0	2.9 *	99.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Home-based workers	4.9	2.5	89.2	3.4	6.4	5.2	84.2	4.2	5.3	3.4	87.6	3.7
Market traders	20.5	4.1 *	65.0	10.4	15.4	7.6	73.7	3.3 *	17.4	6.2	70.3	6.1
Street vendors	8.8	0.5 *	88.7	2.0	31.4	1.2 *	65.7	1.7 *	19.9	0.8 *	77.4	1.9 *
Waste pickers	16.4 *	4.9 *	70.4	8.3 *	22.9	5.7 *	67.4	4.0	21.0	5.4 *	68.3	5.3 *
Total	58.7	0.9	38.5	1.9	29.4	3.3	64.3	3.0	50.6	1.5	45.6	2.3
<i>All employed</i>	<i>73.1</i>	<i>3.2</i>	<i>20.6</i>	<i>3.1</i>	<i>64.2</i>	<i>5.5</i>	<i>28.9</i>	<i>1.4</i>	<i>67.9</i>	<i>4.5</i>	<i>25.4</i>	<i>2.2</i>

* There are fewer than 50 observations in the dataset.

proportion of women domestic workers, who are mainly employees.

Almost all domestic workers are employees. Among home-based workers, market traders, street vendors and waste-pickers – except in São Paulo – around two thirds or more are own account workers. In urban Brazil and Brazil nationally, around 70 per cent of women waste pickers and 67 per cent of men are own account workers; 5 per cent of women and men in the two geographic areas are employers. The data on waste pickers in São Paulo – although based on a small sample – show that far fewer women are own account workers (37 per cent); 17 per cent are contributing family workers and 46 per cent are employees. Among men, 68 per cent are own account workers, 26 per cent are employees, and 5 per cent employers.

Home-based workers represent the group with the highest proportion of own account workers: 89 per cent for women and 85 per cent for men across the geographic areas.³ The majority of street vendors (around 77 per cent in the three geographic areas) are also own account workers. Women home-based workers are much more likely to be own account workers than men: 83 per cent in comparison to 73 per cent in São Paulo and 89 per cent in comparison to 66 per cent in urban Brazil and Brazil nationally. In the latter two geographic

areas, 9 per cent of women are employees in comparison to 31 per cent of men; in São Paulo, 16 per cent of women and 25 per cent of men are employees.

The distribution of market traders across the employment status categories is the most diverse. The majority are own account workers: 56 per cent of women and 70 per cent of men in São Paulo and around 65 per cent of women and 74 per cent of men in the other two geographic areas. In São Paulo, 36 per cent of women are employees and 8 per cent are contributing family workers; among men, 9 per cent are employees, 15 per cent are employers and 6 per cent are contributing family workers. In the other two geographic areas, among women, 21 per cent are employees, 4 per cent are employers and around 10 per cent contributing family workers; among men, 16 per cent are employees, 8 per cent are employers and 3 per cent are contributing family workers.

Hours Worked

Among workers in the five groups, only around 38 per cent work 40–48 hours a week in comparison to almost two-thirds of the Brazilian employed. A higher percentage of workers in the five groups than in the total workforce have a shorter workweek. However, a substantial proportion of these workers work longer than a 48-hour week.

The standard work week for almost two-thirds of the total Brazilian workforce is 40–48 hours per week (**table 10**). Among workers in the five groups, only around 38 per cent work a 40 to 48-hour week. However, an additional and substantial proportion of these workers work longer than a 48-hour week – about 18 per cent of the groups taken together in São Paulo and 11 per cent in urban Brazil and Brazil nationally. This is comparable to the proportion of all employed in urban Brazil and in Brazil nationally and slightly higher than in São Paulo. A higher percentage of workers in the five groups than in the total workforce have a short workweek – 15 or fewer hours: around 14 per cent of workers in these groups work 15 hours or less per week in comparison to only 5 per cent of all workers. The difference in composition of the five workers groups (comprised by more than double the number of women than men) and the total workforce (with a higher proportion of men) may contribute to this difference in hours. As the following text shows, women tend to work fewer hours than men.

A smaller proportion of women in the groups than men work 40 hours or more a week: in São Paulo, 50 per cent of women in comparison to 64 per cent of men; in urban Brazil, 45 per cent of women in comparison to 62 per cent of men; and nationally, 43 per cent of women in comparison to 63 per cent of men nationally.

³ Many home-based workers are likely to be misclassified as own account self-employed since the data were collected using the categories of the International Classification of Status in Employment-93, which did not provide a category for working under arrangements that were both dependent and independent. This problem presented strong grounds for adopting the International Classification of Status in Employment 2018 (ICSE-18) with the category dependent contractor.

Table 10. Group of workers by hours worked and by sex in São Paulo, urban Brazil and Brazil by sex, 2019 (per cent distribution)

	Women				Men				Total			
	< 15	15 – 39	40 – 48	> 48	< 15	15 – 39	40 – 48	> 48	< 15	15 – 39	40 – 48	> 48
São Paulo												
Domestic workers	13.6	34.8	41.7	9.9 *	5.4 *	32.2 *	53.2 *	9.2 *	13.2	34.7	42.2	9.9 *
Home-based workers	18.3 *	34.4	27.3	20.0 *	8.4 *	37.2 *	33.9 *	20.5 *	14.4 *	35.5	29.9	20.2
Market traders	33.5 *	29.6 *	17.1 *	19.8 *	5.7 *	14.7 *	31.5 *	48.1 *	17.0 *	20.8 *	25.6 *	36.6 *
Street vendors	9.9 *	39.7 *	37.0 *	13.4 *	5.8 *	24.2 *	39.7 *	30.3 *	7.9 *	32.3	38.3	21.5 *
Waste pickers	17.0 *	37.0 *	46.0 *	0.0 *	3.1 *	32.7 *	33.0 *	31.2 *	5.9 *	33.5 *	35.7 *	24.9 *
Total	15.2	35.2	36.1	13.5	6.7 *	29.7	36.6	27.0	12.7	33.6	36.2	17.5
<i>All employed</i>	5.4	23.9	59.6	11.1	2.4	13.4	64.9	19.3	3.8	18.1	62.5	15.6
Urban Brazil												
Domestic workers	13.3	35.9	43.9	6.9	9.3	26.7	52.5	11.5	13.0	35.4	44.4	7.2
Home-based workers	19.1	42.4	26.3	12.2	9.1	32.3	41.1	17.5	15.8	39.0	31.2	14.0
Market traders	19.5	37.9	26.1	16.5	8.7	31.7	35.6	24.0	12.9	34.1	31.9	21.1
Street vendors	22.4	44.9	25.4	7.3	5.3	28.5	48.4	17.8	13.9	36.8	36.8	12.5
Waste pickers	14.9 *	41.2	35.6 *	8.3 *	7.9 *	30.3	45.9	15.9	9.9 *	33.5	42.9	13.7
Total	16.4	39.0	36.0	8.6	7.5	30.1	44.8	17.6	13.9	36.6	38.4	11.1
<i>All employed</i>	6.2	27.8	58.5	7.5	2.4	15.6	68.3	13.7	4.1	21.0	64.0	10.9
Brazil												
Domestic workers	14.0	36.5	42.8	6.7	7.4	22.5	55.9	14.2	13.5	35.4	43.8	7.3
Home-based workers	20.2	42.4	25.4	12.0	9.4	32.9	40.4	17.3	16.6	39.2	30.4	13.8
Market traders	21.2	38.7	24.7	15.4	8.8	34.0	34.5	22.7	13.6	35.8	30.7	19.9
Street vendors	24.0	44.9	24.1	7.0	5.6	28.4	48.4	17.6	15.0	36.7	36.1	12.2
Waste pickers	14.9 *	41.1	36.1	7.9 *	7.8 *	29.7	47.1	15.4	9.9 *	33.0	43.8	13.3
Total	17.3	39.4	35.0	8.3	7.6	29.7	45.2	17.5	14.6	36.7	37.8	10.9
<i>All employed</i>	6.8	28.8	56.8	7.6	2.7	17.2	66.2	13.9	4.5	22.2	62.1	11.2

* There are fewer than 50 observations in the dataset.

Correspondingly, a larger proportion of women work 15 hours or less per week than men: around 16 per cent of women in all three geographic regions in comparison to 8 per cent of men.

Many domestic workers work 40 hours or longer each week: around 50 per cent of women domestic workers in all three geographic areas and 64 to 70 per cent of men. Market traders, especially men, have a long workweek: 80 per cent of men work 40 or more hours in São Paulo, 60 per cent in urban Brazil and 57 per cent in Brazil nationally; this compares to 37 per cent, 43 per cent and 40 per cent respectively for women. Only 6 to 9 per cent of men in market trade work 15 hours or less a week across the three geographic areas in comparison to 34 per cent of women in São Paulo and around 20 per cent in urban Brazil and Brazil nationally.

More than half of women home-based workers have a work week of less than 40 hours: 53 per cent in São Paulo and around 62 per cent in urban Brazil and Brazil nationally, in contrast to around 40 per cent of men. Street vendors in urban Brazil and Brazil nationally have the largest difference in hours between women and men: around 68 per cent of women and 34 per cent of men work less than 40 hours a week. The difference is slightly smaller for street vendors in São Paulo, with 50 per cent of women and 30 per cent of men working less than 40 hours. A majority of men waste pickers also work 40 or more hours a week (62–64 per cent) in comparison to a smaller proportion of women (43–46 per cent) in the three geographic areas.

Earnings

These five groups are twice as likely as the total employed population to earn less than the minimum monthly wage and COVID-19 widened the gap for almost all types of workers. Earnings tend to be much lower for women than for men, and among the five groups, waste pickers tend to be the lowest earners.

The five groups taken together in the three geographic areas are twice as likely as the total employed population to earn less than the minimum monthly wage (**table 11**). Almost 60 per cent earned less than the minimum wage per month in 2019 (effective or gross earnings) in urban Brazil and Brazil nationally. Workers in São Paulo earn more but living there is more expensive, and these workers remain at least twice as likely (or even more) as the rest of the population to earn less than the minimum wage.

Disparities between women and men are very large: 63 to 64 per cent of women earn less than the minimum wage compared to 42 to 43 per cent of men in urban Brazil and Brazil nationally. The gender gap is somewhat smaller in São Paulo, where 41 per cent of women and 26 per cent of men in the five groups earn the minimum wage.

Inequalities also exist among the groups: waste pickers are largely the poorest, with 70 per cent earning less than the minimum wage in urban Brazil and Brazil nationally. In São Paulo, waste pickers have higher earnings than in the other

geographic areas as do all other worker groups; for waste pickers, 62 per cent of women and 37 per cent of men earn less than the minimum monthly wage. The earnings of the majority of market traders and street vendor in urban Brazil and nationally fall below minimum wage; in São Paulo a still significant but lower proportion of market vendors and street vendors earn less than minimum wage: 29 per cent and 37 per cent respectively.

In 2020, the distribution shifted towards the lower extreme for both groups and for the total employed. However, the earnings gap increased: the share of workers in the five groups, taken together, who were earning less than minimum wage after the onset of COVID-19 grew by 6 percentage points, compared to a rise of 4 percentage points for the total employed. The impact on earnings was particularly strong in the city of São Paulo for these worker groups, compared to the total employed. The gender gap remained relatively unchanged, as the vast majority of women in these groups were already in a very precarious situation before the COVID-19 crisis. Street vendors were hit the hardest in terms of a drop in earning. In São Paulo in 2020, over half of street vendors (53 per cent) earned less than the minimum wage; up from 36 per cent in 2019; in urban Brazil and Brazil nationally, 64–65 per cent in 2020 in comparison to 54–55 per cent in 2019.

Substantial proportions of home-based workers can be found at both ends of the wage distribution, especially in São Paulo;

Table 11. Group of workers by earning levels and by sex in São Paulo, urban Brazil and Brazil by sex, 2019 and 2020 (per cent distribution)

	Women				Men				Total			
São Paulo	< 1 MW	> 1 to 2 MW	> 2 to 3 MW	> 3 MW	< 1 MW	> 1 to 2 MW	> 2 to 3 MW	> 3 MW	< 1 MW	> 1 to 2 MW	> 2 to 3 MW	> 3 MW
Domestic workers – 2019	37.5	46.8	12.0	3.7 *	23.9 *	47.2 *	22.1 *	6.8 *	36.9	46.8	12.5	3.8 *
Domestic workers – 2020	48.5	39.8	10.3 *	1.4 *	34.2 *	44.1 *	21.7 *	0.0 *	48.1	40.0	10.6 *	1.3
Home-based workers – 2019	45.8	24.0 *	10.8 *	19.4 *	24.2 *	24.0 *	15.0 *	36.8 *	37.5	24.0	12.5 *	26.0
Home-based workers – 2020	43.1	18.2 *	13.2 *	25.5	28.2 *	17.5 *	16.0 *	38.3	36.6	17.9	14.4	31.1
Market traders – 2019	41.1 *	39.3 *	10.7 *	8.9 *	20.5 *	33.8 *	23.5 *	22.2 *	28.8 *	36.1 *	18.3 *	16.8 *
Market traders – 2020	43.1 *	29.6 *	11.2 *	16.1 *	23.3 *	43.4 *	21.3 *	12.0 *	31.0 *	38.0 *	17.4 *	13.6 *
Street vendors – 2019	42.6 *	30.3 *	13.0 *	14.1 *	29.8 *	36.8 *	13.3 *	20.1 *	36.5	33.4	13.1 *	17.0 *
Street vendors – 2020	58.9 *	15.7 *	15.4 *	10.0 *	48.0 *	24.5 *	8.0 *	19.5 *	52.6	20.8 *	11.2 *	15.4 *
Waste pickers – 2019	61.6 *	38.4 *	0.0 *	0.0 *	37.1 *	31.3 *	15.7 *	15.9 *	41.3 *	32.5 *	13.0 *	13.2 *
Waste pickers – 2020	100.0 *	0.0 *	0.0 *	0.0 *	68.0 *	32.0 *	0.0 *	0.0 *	77.6 *	22.4 *	0.0 *	0.0 *
Total – 2019	40.8	37.7	11.7	9.8	26.2	31.3	16.1	26.4	36.6	35.8	13.0	14.6
Total – 2020	47.5	28.4	11.9	12.2	34.0	23.0	14.2	28.8	42.9	26.6	12.7	17.8
<i>All employed – 2019</i>	<i>19.4</i>	<i>38.7</i>	<i>15.8</i>	<i>26.1</i>	<i>12.2</i>	<i>33.3</i>	<i>20.0</i>	<i>34.5</i>	<i>15.5</i>	<i>35.7</i>	<i>18.1</i>	<i>30.7</i>
<i>All employed – 2020</i>	<i>22.2</i>	<i>38.9</i>	<i>15.9</i>	<i>23.0</i>	<i>15.4</i>	<i>36.1</i>	<i>18.5</i>	<i>30.0</i>	<i>18.4</i>	<i>37.3</i>	<i>17.3</i>	<i>27.0</i>
Urban Brazil	< 1 MW	> 1 to 2 MW	> 2 to 3 MW	> 3 MW	< 1 MW	> 1 to 2 MW	> 2 to 3 MW	> 3 MW	< 1 MW	> 1 to 2 MW	> 2 to 3 MW	> 3 MW
Domestic workers – 2019	61.7	31.5	5.3	1.5	49.9	36.5	10.3 *	3.3 *	61.1	31.7	5.6	1.6
Domestic workers – 2020	68.3	26.8	3.9	1.0	51.8	39.4	6.8 *	2.0 *	67.3	27.6	4.0	1.1
Home-based workers – 2019	61.8	22.6	7.3	8.3	34.5	26.6	14.5	24.4	52.7	24.0	9.7	13.6
Home-based workers – 2020	67.8	17.3	6.4	8.5	41.1	24.8	11.5	22.6	58.0	20.0	8.3	13.7
Market traders – 2019	59.9	28.8	8.6 *	2.7 *	48.5	29.5	11.8	10.2 *	52.8	29.2	10.6	7.4
Market traders – 2020	69.1	19.7	5.5 *	5.7 *	56.7	27.6	9.6 *	6.1 *	61.4	24.6	8.0 *	6.0 *
Street vendors – 2019	66.4	21.3	7.3	5.0	41.1	32.1	13.0	13.8	53.8	26.7	10.1	9.4
Street vendors – 2020	78.1	14.2	4.6	3.1	49.5	30.3	10.3	9.9	64.3	21.9	7.4	6.4
Waste pickers – 2019	84.7	11.7 *	3.6 *	0.0 *	65.7	22.6	7.4 *	4.3 *	71.0	19.6	6.3 *	3.1 *
Waste pickers – 2020	87.1	9.8 *	1.8 *	1.3 *	73.0	19.3 *	5.3 *	2.4 *	77.1	16.5 *	4.3 *	2.1 *

Table 11 (continued). Group of workers by earning levels and by sex in São Paulo, urban Brazil and Brazil by sex, 2019 and 2020 (per cent distribution)

Total – 2019	62.6	27.4	6.2	3.8	41.7	29.8	12.8	15.7	56.9	28.1	8.0	7.0
Total – 2020	69.8	21.8	4.7	3.7	47.8	27.9	10.2	14.1	63.5	23.6	6.2	6.7
<i>All employed – 2019</i>	33.1	36.0	13.3	17.6	22.7	34.6	17.5	25.2	27.2	35.2	15.7	21.9
<i>All employed – 2020</i>	36.8	35.9	12.2	15.1	27.1	37.3	14.9	20.7	31.2	36.7	13.8	18.3
Brazil	< 1 MW	> 1 to 2 MW	> 2 to 3 MW	> 3 MW	< 1 MW	> 1 to 2 MW	> 2 to 3 MW	> 3 MW	< 1 MW	> 1 to 2 MW	> 2 to 3 MW	> 3 MW
Domestic workers – 2019	63.6	30.0	5.0	1.4	50.0	38.8	8.3	2.9	62.6	30.7	5.2	1.5
Domestic workers – 2020	69.9	25.6	3.6	0.9	51.9	41.0	5.5	1.6 *	68.4	26.9	3.7	1.0
Home-based workers – 2019	63.5	21.8	6.9	7.8	36.9	25.8	13.9	23.4	54.8	23.1	9.2	12.9
Home-based workers – 2020	69.3	16.6	6.1	8.0	43.0	24.1	11.3	21.6	59.8	19.3	8.0	12.9
Market traders – 2019	61.5	27.7	8.1 *	2.7 *	50.0	29.3	11.2	9.5	54.2	28.7	10.1	7.0
Market traders – 2020	70.5	19.1	5.1 *	5.3 *	58.6	26.7	8.9 *	5.8 *	62.9	23.9	7.5	5.7 *
Street vendors – 2019	68.1	20.3	6.9	4.7	42.0	31.8	12.6	13.6	55.2	26.0	9.7	9.1
Street vendors – 2020	79.0	13.6	4.5	2.9	50.2	30.1	10.0	9.7	65.3	21.4	7.1	6.2
Waste pickers – 2019	84.4	11.6 *	3.4 *	0.6 *	66.0	22.3	7.2 *	4.5 *	71.1	19.3	6.2 *	3.4 *
Waste pickers – 2020	86.3	10.2 *	2.3 *	1.2 *	73.2	19.4 *	5.1 *	2.3 *	77.1	16.7	4.2 *	2.0 *
Total – 2019	64.4	26.3	5.8	3.5	43.3	29.9	12.2	14.6	58.6	27.3	7.5	6.6
Total – 2020	71.1	21.0	4.5	3.4	49.2	28.1	9.7	13.0	64.9	23.0	6.0	6.1
<i>All employed – 2019</i>	35.2	35.3	12.8	16.7	26.9	33.7	16.4	23.0	30.4	34.4	14.9	20.3
<i>All employed – 2020</i>	38.7	35.2	11.8	14.3	31.2	36.1	14.0	18.7	34.3	35.7	13.1	16.9

Note: This table shows the monthly earnings (salaries and earnings from independent work) expressed in minimum wages, effectively received in money. Unpaid family workers have been excluded from this table.

* There are fewer than 50 observations in the dataset.

the diversity reflects the wide range of goods, services and industries that home-based workers are involved in. In urban Brazil and in Brazil nationally, over half of home-based workers (55 per cent) earned less than the minimum wage, but about 13 per cent of home-based workers in both geographic areas earned three or more times the minimum wage. This

was true for both 2019 and 2020. In São Paulo in 2019, 38 per cent of home-based worker had wages of less than the minimum wage, while 26 per cent had earnings of more than three times the minimum wage. However, in 2020 in São Paulo, the percentage of home-based workers earning three or more times the minimum wage jumped to over 31 per cent, reflecting that

higher earning workers had moved from office to home. In the other two geographic areas, the proportion earning the minimum wage or less increased to 60 per cent and the proportion earning three or more times the minimum wage remained at about 13–14 per cent.

Age

The proportion of workers aged 55 and older in the five groups across the geographic areas is higher (at 19 to 24 per cent) than among the total employed (at 13 per cent). The share of persons employed at younger ages (14–24) in the five groups is less than those at older ages and less than in total employment: around 11 per cent in the five groups in comparison to 15 per cent in total employed.

The proportion of workers aged 55 and older in the five groups is higher than in total employment (**table 12**). Employment at ages 55 and older among the five groups together is 19 per cent in Brazil nationally, 20 per cent in urban Brazil and 24 per cent in São Paulo, in comparison to 13 per cent in all three geographic areas. In São Paulo, around one-quarter of women and men employed in these groups are older in comparison to 13 per cent of women and 15 per cent of men in total employment. In the other geographic areas, the share of older women in the five groups is a little less than men (19 per cent of women and 21 per cent of men) but greater than in total employment in urban Brazil and Brazil nationally (12 per cent for women and around 15 per cent for men).

At younger ages (14–24) the share of persons employed in the five groups is less than at older ages and less than among the total employed: around 11 per cent in the five groups in comparison to 15 per cent in total employment. Women are underrepresented in the youngest



A young street vendor provides manicure and pedicure services. Photo: M. Chen

Table 12. Groups of workers by age and by sex in São Paulo, urban Brazil and Brazil by sex, 2019 (per cent distribution)

São Paulo - Age groups	Women					Men					Total				
	14-24	25-44	45-54	55-64	> 65	14-24	25-44	45-54	55-64	> 65	14-24	25-44	45-54	55-64	> 65
Domestic workers	4.5 *	36.0	34.2	19.9	5.4 *	5.8 *	41.9 *	25.1 *	20.4 *	6.8 *	4.6	36.3	33.7	19.9	5.5 *
Home-based workers	9.4 *	44.9	25.5 *	12.6 *	7.6 *	18.0 *	45.5	12.7 *	11.8 *	12.0 *	12.8 *	45.1	20.4	12.3 *	9.4 *
Market traders	20.4 *	33.5 *	15.0 *	10.5 *	20.6 *	18.3 *	28.9 *	20.0 *	21.7 *	11.1 *	19.1 *	30.8 *	18.0 *	17.1 *	15.0 *
Street vendors	7.0 *	43.4 *	24.8 *	18.9 *	5.9 *	16.7 *	49.2 *	15.7 *	13.7 *	4.7 *	11.7 *	46.2	20.4 *	16.4 *	5.3 *
Waste pickers	2.9 *	31.1 *	36.0 *	30.0 *	0.0 *	30.7 *	36.7 *	6.8 *	22.7 *	3.1 *	25.2	35.6	12.6	24.2	2.4
Total	6.8 *	39.5	29.7	17.4	6.6	17.5 *	43.9	15.0	14.9	8.7 *	10.0 *	40.6 *	25.4 *	16.7 *	7.3 *
<i>All employed</i>	14.1	52.9	20.4	9.9	2.7	14.0	51.5	19.2	11.5	3.8	14.0	52.1	19.8	10.8	3.3
Urban Brazil - Age groups	14-24	25-44	45-54	55-64	> 65	14-24	25-44	45-54	55-64	> 65	14-24	25-44	45-54	55-64	> 65
Domestic workers	7.7	45.1	29.2	14.8	3.2	12.5	38.7	24.4	15.9	8.5	8.0	44.6	28.9	14.9	3.6
Home-based workers	10.1	47.2	20.4	15.6	6.7	14.8	43.2	17.9	14.8	9.3	11.7	45.9	19.6	15.2	7.6
Market traders	13.8 *	41.4	23.8	12.4	8.6 *	15.2	39.7	21.5	15.6	8.0	14.7	40.4	22.4	14.3	8.2
Street vendors	12.8	48.8	20.6	13.1	4.7	16.6	48.4	18.5	12.4	4.1	14.7	48.6	19.5	12.8	4.4
Waste pickers	5.3 *	39.6 *	29.3 *	21.3 *	4.5 *	20.5 *	35.7	18.9	15.7	9.2 *	16.2 *	36.8	21.9	17.3	7.8 *
Total	9.3	46.0	25.4	14.8	4.5	15.5	44.7	19.0	13.8	7.0	11.0	45.5	23.7	14.6	5.2
<i>All employed</i>	14.1	53.7	20.1	9.7	2.4	15.5	51.5	18.7	10.8	3.5	14.9	52.5	19.2	10.3	3.1
Brazil - Age groups	14-24	25-44	45-54	55-64	> 65	14-24	25-44	45-54	55-64	> 65	14-24	25-44	45-54	55-64	> 65
Domestic workers	8.7	46.0	28.3	13.9	3.1	11.6	40.2	25.1	15.8	7.3	8.9	45.6	28.0	14.1	3.4
Home-based workers	10.4	47.3	20.4	15.4	6.5	14.8	42.8	18.3	14.9	9.2	11.9	45.8	19.7	15.2	7.4
Market traders	13.9	41.8	24.1	12.2	8.0 *	15.2	40.3	21.5	15.3	7.7	14.7	40.9	22.5	14.1	7.8
Street vendors	13.2	49.5	20.1	12.7	4.5	16.6	48.5	18.4	12.4	4.1	14.9	49.1	19.3	12.5	4.2
Waste pickers	5.6 *	39.5	29.1 *	21.7 *	4.1 *	20.5	35.8	19.5	15.4	8.8 *	16.1	36.9	22.3	17.3	7.4
Total	9.9	46.8	24.9	14.1	4.3	15.2	44.6	19.4	14.0	6.8	11.4	46.1	23.5	14.2	5.0
<i>All employed</i>	14.2	53.6	20.0	9.7	2.5	15.7	51.0	18.6	11.0	3.7	15.1	52.1	19.2	10.4	3.2

* There are fewer than 50 observations in the dataset.

age category compared to the total population, for example in the three geographic areas 14 per cent in contrast to around 9 per cent respectively. However, for men the percentage in this category is similar nationally and in urban Brazil while in São Paulo, it is higher.

Of the five groups, the age distribution of street vendors is closest to that of the employed population as a whole. The age distribution of men in these groups are concentrated in the older and younger ages to a greater extent than women. The incidence of over-55s is particularly high among: home-based workers, at 22 per cent for women and 24 per cent for men nationally; market traders, at 20 per cent for women and 23 per cent for men; and waste pickers, at 26 per cent for women and 24 per cent for men.

Education

Workers in the five groups have a much lower level of education than among the total employed. Moreover, the differences between women in these worker groups and all women employed are much greater than the differences among men.

In urban Brazil, 45 per cent of workers in the five groups have only a primary education in comparison to 27 per cent among all employed; in Brazil nationally, this disparity is similar at 46 per cent in comparison to 31 per cent (**table 13**). The education level reached by these workers is higher in São Paulo, as well as

in total employment (39 per cent in comparison to 20 per cent respectively). Moreover, the differences between women in these worker groups and all women employed is much greater than the differences among men. In Brazil nationally, 48 per cent of women in these groups and 24 per cent in total employment have only a primary education while among men the gap is much less (42 per cent in these groups and 35 per cent in total employment). The differences are also large in tertiary level of education. For women 10 per cent in the five groups and 33 per cent in total employment

have achieved tertiary level of education; among men the comparison is 17 per cent and 22 per cent respectively. This sharp difference is also reflected in the data for urban Brazil and São Paulo.

Of the groups, waste pickers have the lowest levels of education. In Brazil nationally, 10 per cent have no schooling and 70 per cent have only primary level schooling. Among women waste pickers in all geographic areas, 80 per cent or more have primary schooling as the highest education level. Among men, the comparable



A waste picker in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. Photo: J. Luckham |

Table 13. Group of workers by level of education in São Paulo, urban Brazil and Brazil by sex, 2019 (per cent distribution)

	Women				Men				Total			
São Paulo	None	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	None	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	None	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Domestic workers	1.1 *	56.1	38.7	4.1 *	2.3 *	51.6 *	38.3 *	7.8 *	1.2 *	55.9	38.7	4.2
Home-based workers	0.4 *	22.9 *	40.8	35.9	0.5 *	17.8 *	38.2 *	43.5	0.4 *	20.9	39.8	38.9
Market traders	8.0 *	46.5 *	34.0 *	11.5 *	5.5 *	39.8 *	48.5 *	6.2 *	6.5 *	42.5 *	42.6 *	8.4 *
Street vendors	0.8 *	31.5 *	45.3 *	22.4 *	0.0 *	33.6 *	42.3 *	24.1 *	0.4 *	32.5	43.9	23.2 *
Waste pickers	0.0 *	89.2 *	0.0 *	10.8 *	16.5 *	40.4 *	43.1 *	0.0 *	13.2 *	50.1 *	34.5 *	2.2 *
Total	1.1 *	43.3	39.8	15.8	2.1 *	29.1	41.1	27.7 *	1.4 *	39.1	40.2	19.3
<i>All employed</i>	<i>0.5 *</i>	<i>18.0</i>	<i>42.1</i>	<i>39.4</i>	<i>1.0 *</i>	<i>22.2</i>	<i>45.3</i>	<i>31.5</i>	<i>0.8</i>	<i>20.2</i>	<i>43.9</i>	<i>35.1</i>
Urban Brazil	None	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	None	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	None	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Domestic workers	3.0	58.1	36.1	2.8	6.3 *	59.8	30.8	3.1 *	3.2	58.2	35.8	2.8
Home-based workers	1.5	31.3	43.8	23.4	1.6 *	27.2	36.1	35.1	1.5	29.9	41.2	27.4
Market traders	4.0 *	43.9	43.6	8.5 *	5.6 *	51.2	35.6	7.6 *	5.0	48.3	38.7	8.0
Street vendors	1.5 *	32.8	49.1	16.6	3.1	40.2	44.2	12.5	2.2	36.6	46.6	14.6
Waste pickers	8.8 *	82.6	6.4 *	2.2 *	10.8 *	65.3	23.2	0.7 *	10.3 *	70.3	18.3	1.1 *
Total	2.4	47.1	40.0	10.5	3.5	39.9	38.1	18.5	2.7	45.1	39.5	12.7
<i>All employed</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>21.9</i>	<i>42.1</i>	<i>35.0</i>	<i>1.8</i>	<i>31.1</i>	<i>42.7</i>	<i>24.4</i>	<i>1.5</i>	<i>27.0</i>	<i>42.4</i>	<i>29.1</i>
Brazil	None	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	None	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	None	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Domestic workers	3.1	58.3	35.9	2.7	8.5	63.6	25.7	2.2 *	3.5	58.7	35.1	2.7
Home-based workers	1.7	32.8	43.2	22.3	2.0	29.1	35.6	33.3	1.8	31.6	40.7	25.9
Market traders	3.8 *	45.9	42.0	8.2 *	5.9	52.3	34.9	6.9	5.1	49.8	37.7	7.4
Street vendors	1.5	33.8	48.8	16.0	3.3	41.1	43.5	12.1	2.4	37.4	46.1	14.1
Waste pickers	9.8 *	81.8	6.1 *	2.3 *	10.9 *	65.5	22.9	0.7 *	10.5	70.3	18.0	1.2 *
Total	2.6	47.9	39.6	9.9	4.2	42.4	36.5	16.9	3.0	46.4	38.8	11.8
<i>All employed</i>	<i>1.3</i>	<i>24.1</i>	<i>41.4</i>	<i>33.2</i>	<i>2.6</i>	<i>35.3</i>	<i>40.5</i>	<i>21.6</i>	<i>2.1</i>	<i>30.5</i>	<i>40.9</i>	<i>26.5</i>

* There are fewer than 50 observations in the dataset.

statistic is around 40 per cent in São Paulo and 65 per cent in the other two geographic areas.

Home-based workers represent the most educated of the five groups, although they are less educated than the total employed. A substantial number of home-based workers have a tertiary level of education: 36 per cent of women and 44 per cent of men in São Paulo; 23 per cent of women and 35 per cent of men in urban Brazil; and 22 per cent of women and 33 per cent of men in Brazil nationally. However, a substantial share of home-based workers have only a primary level of education: 23 per cent of women and 18 per cent of men in São Paulo; 31 per cent of women and 27 per cent of men in urban Brazil; and 33 per cent of women and 29 per cent of men in Brazil nationally.

After home-based workers, street vendors are the group with the highest proportions with tertiary education. Among women 16 to 22 per cent of street vendors have a tertiary education across the geographic areas; among men, 12 to 24 per cent. Additional tabulations show that the majority (78 per cent) of street vendors with a tertiary education are door-to-door salespersons. Although highly educated, more than half are informal.



Street performers in Salvador, Brazil. Photo: M. Chen

Racial groups

The five worker groups taken together have a much larger representation of black and mixed-race women compared to the total employed. However, among men the racial composition of the five groups is very similar to that of the total employed.

Among women, there is a much larger representation of black and mixed-race women (63 per cent in Brazil nationally) in the five worker groups taken together than in the total employed (53 per cent). Among men, however, the racial composition of the five groups is very similar to that of the total employed (**table 14**); the comparable statistics for men are 59 per cent in the five groups compared to 57 per cent among the total employed.

Waste pickers are the group of workers where the black and mixed-race population is the highest: 72 per cent nationally, 73 per cent in urban Brazil and 64 per cent in São Paulo. Black and mixed-race waste pickers are 80 per cent of women waste pickers nationally and 69 per cent of men. Home-based workers have the highest share of white workers and more so for men: in São Paulo, 59 per cent of women and 62 per cent of men; in urban Brazil, 46 per cent of women and 51 per cent of men; and in Brazil nationally, 45 per cent of women and 50 per cent of men. The distribution of home-based workers by race is similar to the distribution of the total employed. Domestic workers are predominantly black or mixed-race persons – around 67 per cent

Table 14. Group of workers by racial group and by sex in São Paulo, urban Brazil and Brazil by sex, 2019 (per cent distribution)

	Women		Men		Total	
	Non-white	White	Non-white	White	Non-white	White
São Paulo						
Domestic workers	59.3	40.7	69.1 *	30.9 *	59.8	40.2
Home-based workers	40.6	59.4	38.0 *	62.0	39.5	60.5
Market traders	61.1 *	38.9 *	48.1 *	51.9 *	53.4 *	46.6 *
Street vendors	51.4 *	48.6 *	45.5 *	54.5	48.6	51.4
Waste pickers	64.2 *	35.8 *	64.5 *	35.5 *	64.5 *	35.5 *
Total	53.1	46.9	45.3	54.7	50.8	49.2
<i>All employed</i>	43.3	56.7	46.1	53.9	44.8	55.2
Urban Brazil						
Domestic workers	66.5	33.5	69.2	30.8	66.7	33.3
Home-based workers	53.8	46.2	48.9	51.1	52.2	47.8
Market traders	70.3	29.7	65.9	34.1	67.6	32.4
Street vendors	62.5	37.5	58.4	41.6	60.5	39.5
Waste pickers	81.3	18.7 *	69.3	30.7	72.8	27.2
Total	62.8	37.2	57.4	42.6	61.3	38.7
<i>All employed</i>	52.2	47.8	55.2	44.8	53.9	46.1
Brazil						
Domestic workers	66.7	33.3	68.6	31.4	66.9	33.1
Home-based workers	54.9	45.1	50.3	49.7	53.4	46.6
Market traders	70.5	29.5	66.3	33.7	67.9	32.1
Street vendors	63.5	36.5	58.8	41.2	61.2	38.8
Waste pickers	80.2	19.8 *	68.5	31.5	71.9	28.1
Total	63.4	36.6	58.5	41.5	62.0	38.0
<i>All employed</i>	52.9	47.1	56.5	43.5	54.9	45.1

* There are fewer than 50 observations in the dataset.

Note: The "non-white" category includes blacks (preta), mixed-race (parda) and indigenous people; the "white" category includes whites (branca) and Asians (amarela).

nationally and in urban Brazil, with a fairly similar level for women and men. In São Paulo, this incidence decreases for women to 59 per cent, but is 69 per cent for men. Among market traders, 68 per cent are black or mixed race at the national and urban levels, and 53 per cent in São Paulo. This figure is higher for women, reaching 70 per cent nationally and 66 per cent for men. Among street vendors, 61 per cent are black or mixed-race nationally and in urban Brazil, compared with 49 per cent in São Paulo. A higher proportion of women street vendors are black or mixed race than men.



Self-portrait of a home-based worker in Osasco, Brazil.
Photo: Edileuza Guimarães, ATEMDO

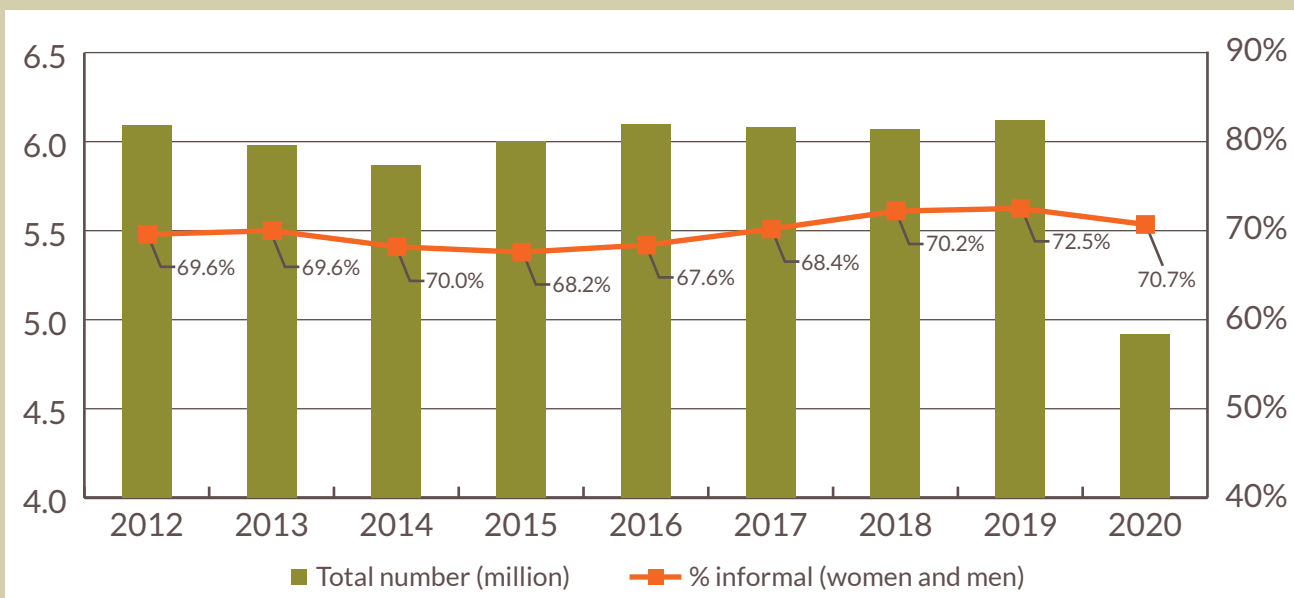


A food basket distribution by the Union of Recife helped support domestic workers who lost work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Photo courtesy of Fenatrad.

Box 4. Tracking the impact of legal change on the informality of domestic workers

In April 2013, the *PEC das domésticas*, an amendment to the Federal Constitution, gave domestic workers rights that are afforded to other employees. In 2015, a Complementary Law set specific regulations for the work of domestic workers who “provide services on a continuous, subordinate, and personal basis and for purposes that are not profitable to the individual or to the family, within the family’s home, for more than two (2) days a week. [...] The normal duration of domestic work shall not exceed eight (8) hours.”¹

Figure 1. Domestic workers in Brazil (numbers) and informality rate (per cent), 2012-2020



These laws appear to have had little effect on formalizing domestic workers. The level of informality of these workers has remained at around 70 per cent over the entire period (**figure 1** and **table A**). The level of informality declined slightly between 2012 and 2015. However, the total number of domestic workers also dropped between 2012 and 2014 (225,000 in absolute numbers or 3.7 per cent) and this contributed to the somewhat lower percentage of informality among domestic workers. Between 2016 and 2019, the total number of domestic workers remained stable, and the informality rate rose slightly. Between 2019 and 2020, as the pandemic took hold, many domestic workers were laid off; their numbers fell from 6 to 5 million. Domestic workers who were informal were the most affected. Additional tabulations show that 960,000 or 80 per cent of the total 1.2 million decline in the number of domestic workers was among those informally employed.

Over 90 per cent of domestic workers are women. However, in recent years their share has declined slightly, from 93 per cent in 2012 to 91 per cent in 2020 (table A). The level of informality among domestic workers was higher for women than for men: 71 per cent vs. 55 per cent respectively in 2012. The incidence varies over time more sharply among men, from 55 per cent in 2012 to 48 per cent in 2015, then to 60 per cent in 2019 and finally 56 per cent in 2020 – while it remains around 70 per cent among women.

Additional calculations show that domestic workers are increasingly serving multiple households, though the majority are still attached to one household (75 per cent in 2012 versus 68 per cent in 2019).

It is likely that the effectiveness of the laws regulating domestic work was limited by the economic crisis of 2014-2016 as well as by non-compliance with the legislation by employer households, including strategies to avoid exceeding the time worked beyond which they must formalize their employee. Additional tabulations suggest that the laws may have affected the hours worked by domestic workers. Formal domestic workers were more likely to work between 41 and 48 hours a week than informal domestic workers in 2019: 38 per cent for formal workers compared to 13 per cent for informal workers. This may also reflect efforts by households to maximize the domestic worker's labour once the household is bearing the cost of formalization. Conversely, formal domestic workers are less likely than informal domestic workers to work fewer than 16 hours: in 2019 only 1 per cent of formal domestic workers worked this short workweek, in comparison to 27 per cent of informal domestic workers.

Table A. Domestic workers in Brazil by sex and whether informally employed: 2012, 2015, 2019 and 2020: Numbers and share (percentage)

	Women		Men		Total	
	Number	Share informal	Number	Share informal	Number	Share informal
2012	5,649,267	70.7	443,615	54.8	6,092,882	69.6
2015	5,587,739	69.0	413,316	48.0	6,001,055	67.6
2019	5,620,561	73.6	502,791	60.3	6,123,352	72.5
2020	4,476,544	72.2	444,442	56.2	4,920,986	70.7

¹ COMPLEMENTARY LAW NO. 150, OF JUNE 1, 2015 (LC 150/15) - On the domestic labor contract. Source : http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/lcp/lcp150.htm.



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Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) is a global network focused on empowering the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy to secure their livelihoods. We believe all workers should have equal economic opportunities, rights, protection and voice. WIEGO promotes change by improving statistics and expanding knowledge on the informal economy, building networks and capacity among informal worker organizations and, jointly with the networks and organizations, influencing local, national and international policies. Visit www.wiego.org
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