

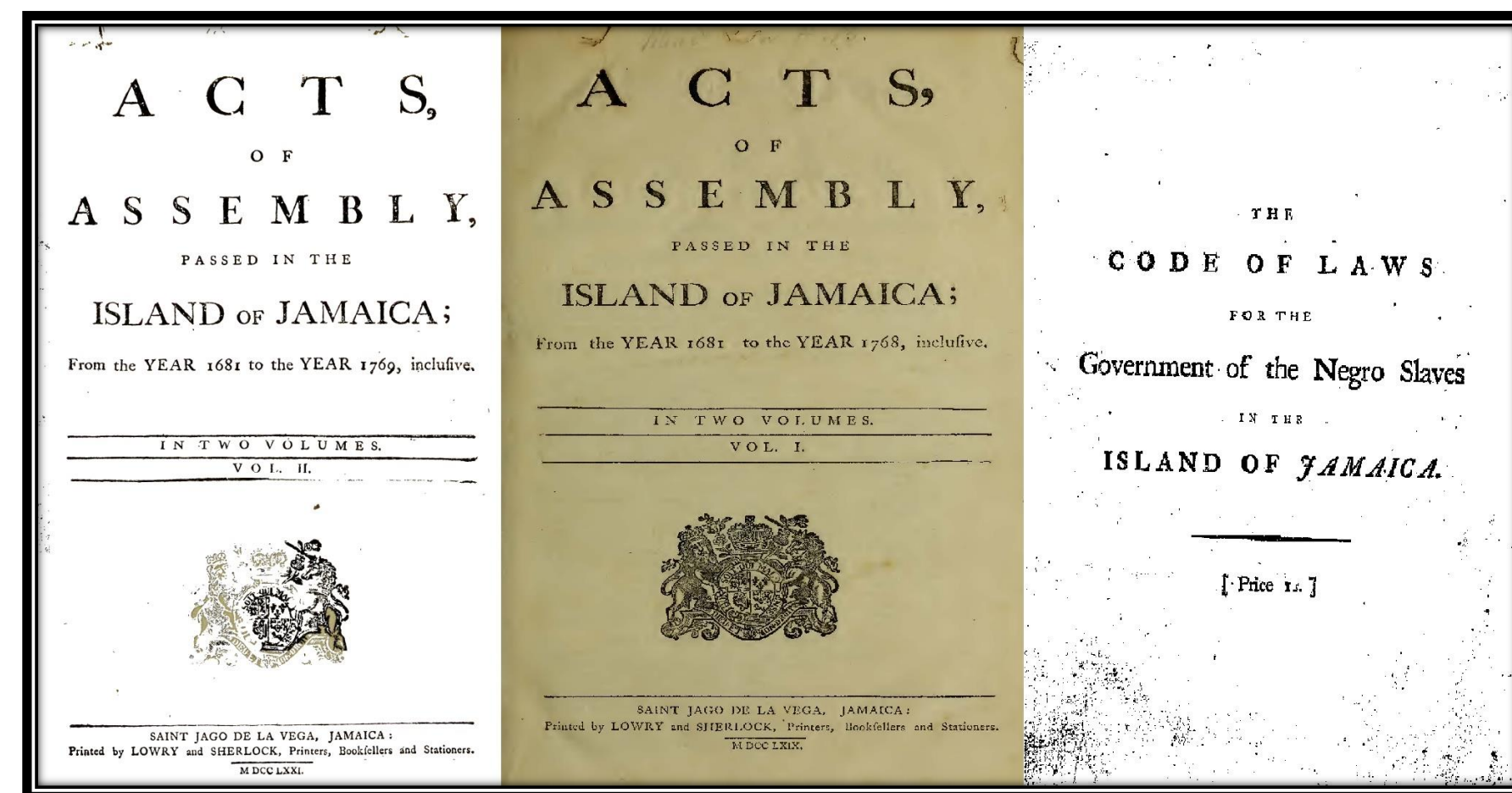
MINING DATA FROM NEWSPAPERS

Domestic Service in Twentieth Century Jamaica

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Research Question

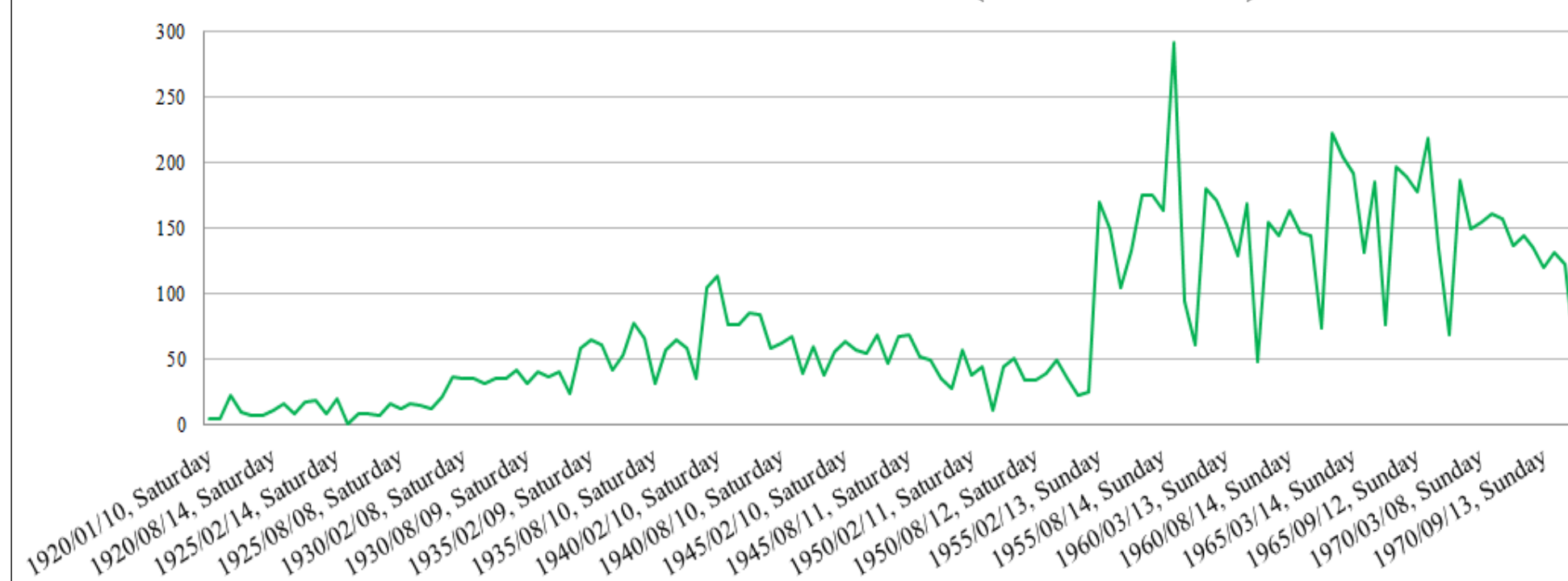
What do 18th/19th century Jamaican slave laws and 20th century Jamaica newspaper classifieds posted by domestic service workers show about the historical experiences of domestic service workers in Jamaica from 1920 to 1970?



Abstract

Our project evaluates data from newspaper advertisements for domestic workers from 1920 to 1970. In order to reconstruct the historical experiences, we extracted, codified, compiled, and analysed data related to the domestic work sector from more than ten thousand classified advertisements in the Jamaican *Daily Gleaner*. We “mined” the data for particular terms used in the advertisements, which we connected back to the 18th/19th century slaves laws. The importance of this research is the word choice and its relation to the colonial discourse of enslavement.

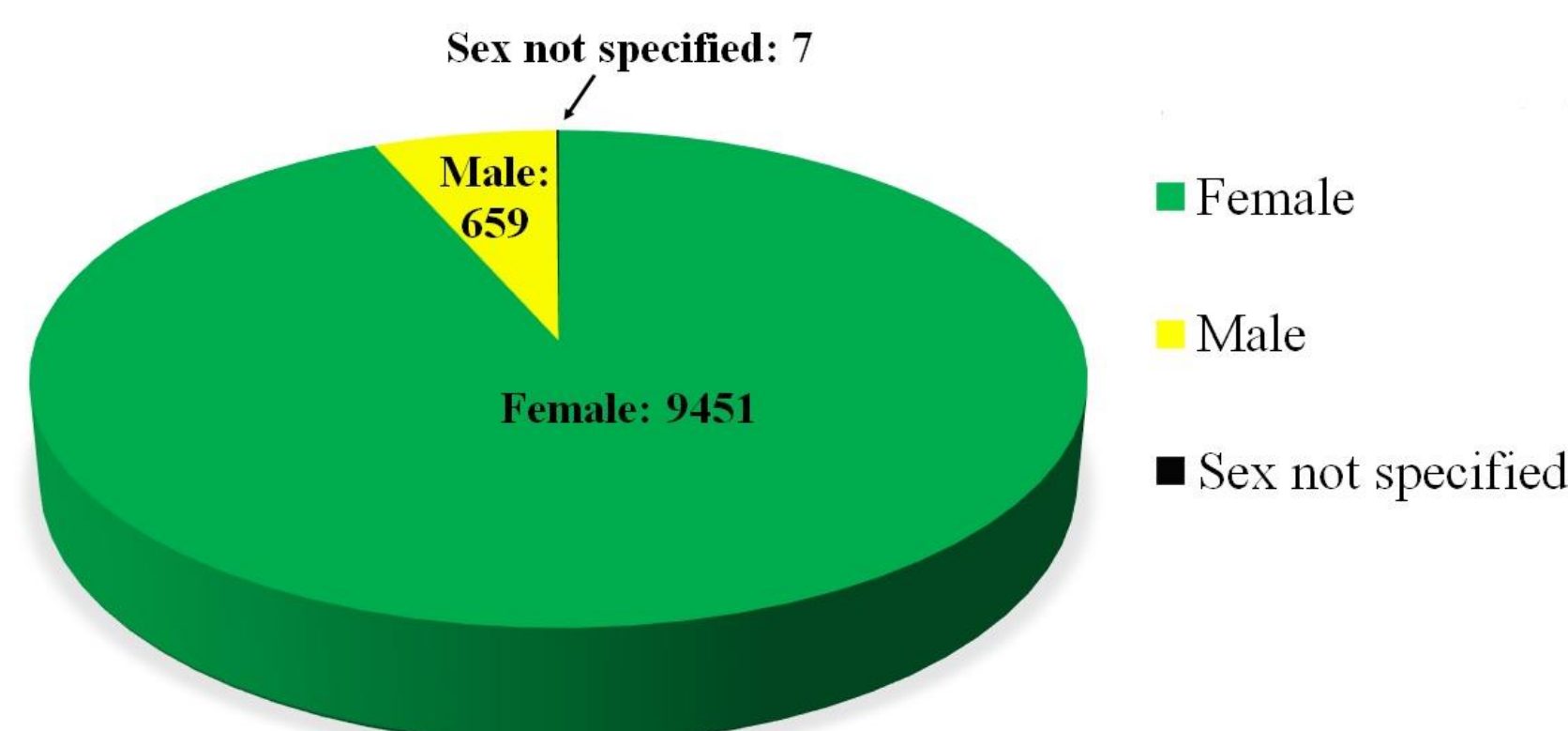
TREND OF NUMBER OF ADVERTISEMENTS PER PUBLICATION (1920-1970)



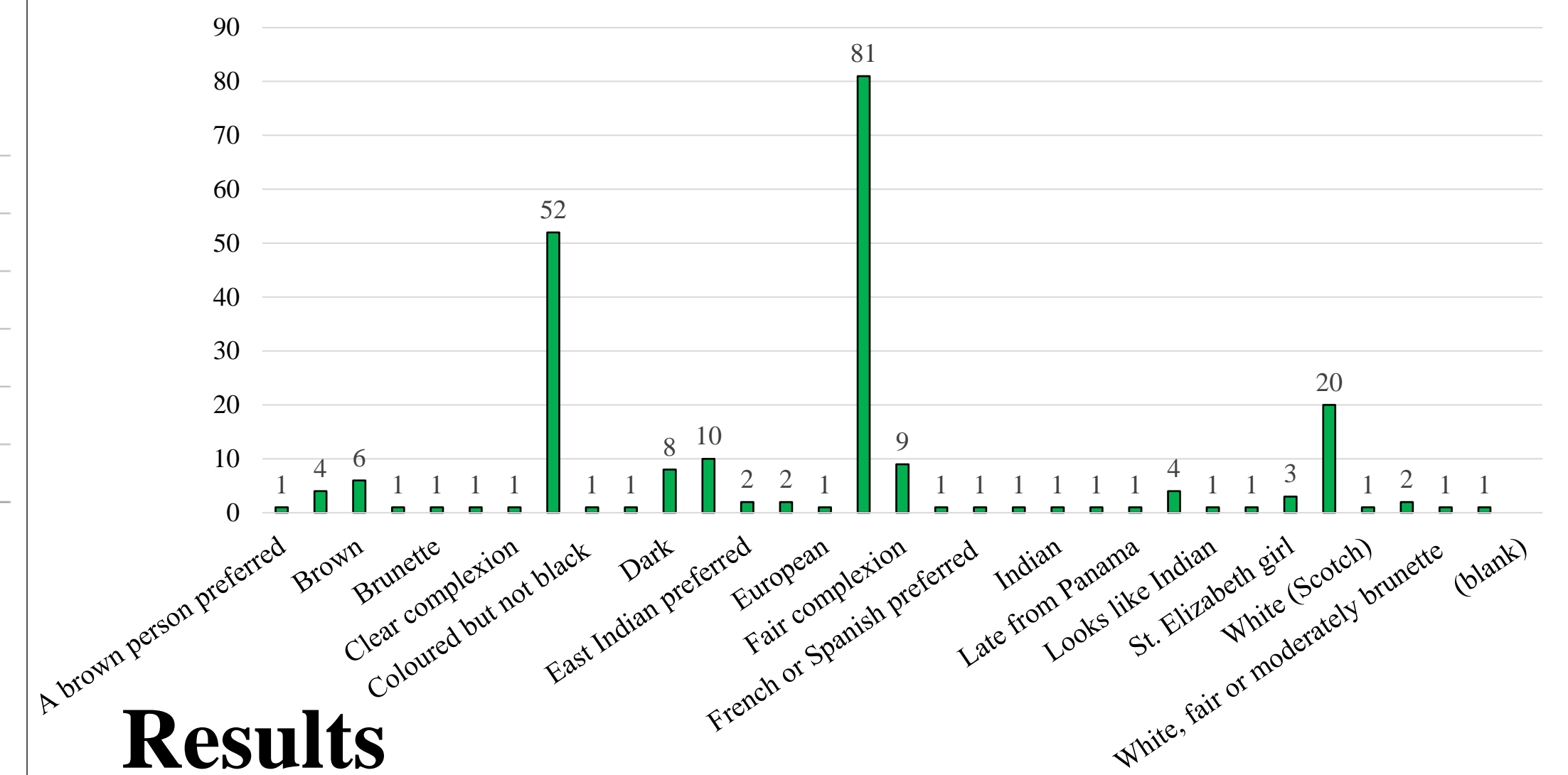
Methodology

The data includes over ten thousand advertisements written by employers, employment agencies, or persons (primarily poor, Black women) seeking employment. We manipulated this data in Excel by comparing specific categories (see the following graphs). Our categories of analysis focused on twenty-six variables, including gender, “race”/colour, and “personal characteristics.”

GENDER PER ADVERTISEMENT (1920-1970)



RACE/COLOUR LISTED



Results

The “slave laws” are significant because they laid the societal framework for Black women’s experiences in 20th century Jamaica. Word choice in the advertisements emphasizes the extensive history of colonial language and its continued use as a means to control and oppress Black life. The importance is not only in the numbers, but in the particular terms themselves. The tables above and below are examples of some of the data that was “mined.”

"PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS": FIRST WORD USED IN DESCRIPTIONS

