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An education to colonise. The educational discrimination of indigenous people in colonial settings: lessons from Colombia and Mozambique

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyses the processes through which racially exclusionary policies lead to lower educational outcomes for indigenous population groups in racialised and colonial settings. Focusing on Colombia and Mozambique, we show that for much of the 20th century indigenous people were unable to access the same schooling as the non-indigenous population. Most indigenous children did not advance beyond very low-quality forms of education in schools run by Catholic missions. This, together with much lower public investments in the education of indigenous peoples, put indigenous children at a comparative disadvantage for the accumulation of human capital. We show this by constructing new estimates of literacy and primary education completion rates for the different ethnic groups in Colombia and Mozambique over the 20th century. In accordance with our argument, we find systematic differences in the accumulation of human capital for the indigenous and non-indigenous populations respectively.

Una educación para colonizar. La discriminación educativa de los pueblos indígenas en contextos coloniales: lecciones de Colombia y Mozambique

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RESUMEN

Este artículo analiza cómo las políticas de exclusión racial conducen a peores resultados educativos en la población indígena dentro de entornos racializados y coloniales. Centrándonos en Colombia y Mozambique, mostramos que durante gran parte del siglo xx la población indígena no tuvo acceso a la misma educación que el resto de la población. La mayoría de los niños indígenas solo accedieron a una educación de muy baja calidad en escuelas dirigidas por misiones católicas. Esto, junto con inversiones públicas mucho más bajas en la educación de los pueblos indígenas, puso a los niños indígenas en desventaja para la acumulación de capital humano. Para mostrar dichas diferencias, construimos nuevas estimaciones de tasas de alfabetización y de finalización de la educación primaria para los diferentes grupos étnicos en Colombia y Mozambique durante el siglo xx. Conforme a nuestro argumento, los resultados confirman diferencias sistemáticas en la acumulación de capital humano entre las poblaciones indígenas y no indígenas.

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1. Introduction

Educational inequalities are a central problem in economic history. Many studies have explained how educational disparities vary with differences in income, redistributive policies, the roles of the state, or endemic socioeconomic structures (Cappelli, 2020; Galor *et al.*, 2009; Lindert, 2004). One important driver of educational inequality is the colonial legacy of racial exclusion. Frankema (2009), for instance, suggests that the colonial legacy of ethnic stratification may have blocked agreements on collective action projects like the expansion of mass schooling. Arroyo Abad (2015) and Pasquier-Doumer and Risso-Brandon (2015) also show the links between the persistence of colonial exclusionary dynamics, such as racial differences, and the comparatively suboptimal provision of schooling for the indigenous population in Peru. Similarly, although indigenous peoples in Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Mexico represent large percentages of the total populations in their respective countries (Sulmont, 2011), these groups receive less educational investment than the rest of the population (Hall and Patrinos, 2012).

The analyses described above place their main focus on the negative effects of discriminatory educational policies on schooling performance. However, how are these negative effects produced? More importantly, how do racially exclusionary educational policies lead to lower educational outcomes for marginalised people in colonial settings? In existing works, the precise processes through which exclusion produces these negative effects remains vague. In a different debate, the literature in economics presents an analytical description that may support studies in economic history. Alesina and La Ferrara (2005) provide three potential channels linking ethnic fragmentation with a lower supply of public goods[1]. According to the authors, ethnically diverse communities present difficulties in defining common policies, enforcing informal rules, and developing altruism, these three factors acting as a link between ethnic diversity and the poor provision of public goods. Motivated by Africa's "growth tragedy", Easterly and Levine (1997) demonstrated the negative effects of ethnolinguistic heterogeneity on economic growth, with these effects operating indirectly through the greater levels of polarisation in heterogeneous communities. Similarly, the analysis of rural Kenya by Miguel and Gugerty (2005) showed that ethnic diversity has a negative effect on primary school quality and funding, stemming from failures of collective action due to a lesser ability to impose social sanctions. The gap in this literature is that, although these works provide information on intervening processes linking ethnic diversity to the poor provision of public goods, several aspects remain unexplored. For example, this literature refers to ethnic diversity or fragmentation, defined as "the probability that two randomly drawn individuals belong to the same group" (Alesina and La Ferrara 2005, pp.764). This variable is not the same as racial stratification or racial exclusion, which has received much less attention. Moreover, in most of these works, such as those by Alesina and La Ferrara (*ibid.*) or Easterly and Levine (1997), the processes are suggested and not systematically explained. Finally, while this scholarship analyses cases with a colonial background, such as the United States of America or different African countries, this strain in the economics literature pays little attention to colonial exclusionary dynamics as a historical source of inequalities. In colonial contexts, phenotypic characteristics have been used to impose the interests of powerful groups on the disempowered (Mahoney 2010, 2015). In these types of society, educational disparities may be more closely linked to colonial actions that discriminate against historically excluded groups than to the obstacles placed by ethnic heterogeneity in the way of coordinating social agreements, enforcing sanctions, or reducing polarisation.

In the context of this debate, we compare Colombia and Mozambique, highlighting the processes through which racially exclusionary educational policies result in lower educational performance of marginalised populations in colonial settings. Specifically, we analyse the internal colonisation of the National Territories within independent Colombia between the late 19th and mid-20th centuries, and the Portuguese colonial rule of Mozambique between the Scramble for Africa and the independence of the country in 1975[2]. We select these countries and time periods to exploit their commonalities. Firstly, both Mozambique and Colombia's National Territories experienced colonialism during these historical periods. In other words, under "the pretext of 'development'", both territories saw the colonisation of a non-white indigenous majority by an elite belonging to a minority ethnic group of European origin (Calvert 2001, p. 51; Gabbert 2019). Secondly, both territories presented similar endowments of high land-to-labour ratios, and colonial exploitation in the production of commodities.

In order to identify how racially exclusionary educational policies lead to lower educational outcomes for marginalised groups, we collect and analyse qualitative and quantitative data. We examine archival sources such as memories of education, serial publications, and reports by Catholic missions to describe the educational system experienced by marginalised people, identify the exclusionary character of the schooling design, and distinguish its operative dynamics. We also use quantitative data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) and from national population censuses to estimate educational indicators for each ethnic group. Through this combined approach, we show that, for much of the 20th century, most indigenous children in Colombia and Mozambique only had access to very low-quality education provided in mission schools, which was focused on "civilisation" rather than the development of skills through education. This hampered the accumulation of human capital by the indigenous population, which presented much lower literacy rates and primary education completion rates than the rest of the population throughout the 20th century.

In conducting this comparative analysis, this paper makes several contributions. Firstly, it complements studies like those by Frankema (2009) and Arroyo-Abad (2015), who suggest or even demonstrate that colonial racial stratifications matter for educational inequalities, but do not show how the process evolved. The comparison between Colombia and Mozambique provides a closer inspection of how colonial racialised structures produce lower educational outcomes for marginalised

[1] Describing the work of Okten and Okonkwo-Osili (2004).

[2] During this period, Colombia was divided into Departments, equivalent to provinces, and National Territories. National Territories were isolated and tropical areas that were mainly inhabited by indigenous people.

groups. Secondly, the comparison offers additional knowledge to the literature on the economic history of education. Usually, this literature analyses the determinants or evolution of the main educational variables such as enrolment, literacy, or funding. However, little is known about the economic history of the education of excluded people. This paper presents new estimates of educational differences across ethnic groups as well as archival evidence for some of the explanations behind the said differences. Lastly, it also contributes to the economic history of both Colombia and Mozambique. For Colombia, especially, there has been a growing interest in the historical evolution of the educational system during the 19th and 20th centuries. However, most of these works focus on the central regions of the country (Ramírez-Giraldo and Téllez-Corredor, 2007; Ramirez and Salazar, 2010), and although some authors have included analyses of peripheral regions (España-Eljaiek, 2019; Fuentes-Vásquez, 2019; Romero-Baquero and Amezquita-Zárate, 2021), little is known about the education of the indigenous population. Therefore, we contribute by describing the specific forms of indigenous education and their fit within the broader educational system.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. Section two describes the systems of racial discrimination in which educational policies in both Colombia and Mozambique were embedded. Section three describes the said policies, and the effects they had on the quality of education received by the different racial groups in both countries. Section four then shows the differences in the accumulation of human capital between population groups. Section five concludes.

2. Historical background

The systems of racial discrimination in Colombia and Mozambique shared many aspects. In both countries, this system was enshrined in law, separating the population dichotomously according to phenotypic characteristics and ancestry, and serving as justification for the process of colonisation, as well as functioning as an instrument for the said process by securing cheap labour and land.

In talking about Colombia, we focus on an internal colonisation that took place between the 19th and mid-20th centuries. The territory that constitutes modern Colombia was colonised by Spain in the 16th century. Exclusionary rules were introduced early on, establishing an ethnic-racial hierarchy which placed a minority of white Spanish colonisers at the top, with control over the land and the labour supply (McFarlane, 2002). The majority of the population below them in the hierarchy consisted of indigenous peoples, African slaves, and their mixed descendants. These non-white people were subject to social domination and economic exploitation (Gabbert, 2012). In the 1820s, Colombia became an independent republic, and colonial-era exclusionary rules were eliminated. Slavery was abolished in 1851, and the republican discourse adopted racial equality as a principle of the new nation (Lasso, 2003). However, as in the rest of the newly independent states in Latin America, Colombia embraced what Gabbert (2019, p. 353) refers to as "a second conquest", a process of internal colonisation in which native ethnic groups were formally subordinated within the state's boundaries (Chávez, 2011, p. 809; Schorkowitz, 2019, p. 35).

Racial discrimination and the process of colonisation now focused on the indigenous, so-called "savage" population living in isolated, tropical jungle regions identified as peripheral (Fitzgerald, 2017; Lasso, 2003). These processes were materialised through a set of laws that were designed to bring "civilisation" to the "savages" living in these peripheral regions (España-Eljaiek, 2019). The Constitutions of 1863 and 1886, and the Law 89 of 1890, categorised the population of these territories into three groups (see table 1). The first group was composed by *mestizo,* white, and black people with full access to Colombian citizenship. We follow the implicit nomenclature of the time and refer to them as the *civilizados* (the civilised)[3]. The second group was known as *indígenas civilizados* (the civilised indigenous), indigenous peoples who were considered to be sufficiently acculturated because they spoke Spanish, lived in towns, and had converted to Catholicism. However, this group had limited access to citizenship. Articles 1 and 2 of Law 89 of 1890, for instance, established that general republican laws did not apply to *indígenas civilizados*: instead, they were governed by special legislation passed by the national government and the religious authorities[4]. Finally, the rest of the indigenous population were categorised as *tribus salvajes* (savage tribes), which we thus refer to as the "savage" indigenous.

The project of bringing "civilisation" to the "savages" was based on white acculturation, the economic colonisation of the peripheral territories, and the exploitation of indigenous communities through forced labour (Appelbaum, 2017; España-Eljaiek, 2019; Múnera, 2005; Rojas, 2014)[5]. Racial discrimination also extended to the geographical and administrative division of the country, which the Colombian legislation divided into two types of territory: Departments and National Territories. Departments were territorial entities with at least 250,000 inhabitants and relative administrative autonomy from the central government. These were mainly located in the central regions of the country, where the majority of the *mestizo* or white population (as classified under Colombian categories) lived, although there were also some Departments in the Caribbean and Pacific regions. National Territories, on the other hand, were peripheral regions inhabited primarily by indigenous people, and had no administrative and fiscal autonomy.

On the other side of our comparison, the Portuguese presence in Mozambique dated back to the 15th century but was limited mostly to coastal outposts and royal concessions (known as *prazos*) until the colonisation process picked up with the Scramble for Africa in the late 19th century. In talking about Mozambique, we focus on the period between this moment and independence in 1975. With the formal abolition of slavery in the 19th century, a new system of colonial labour was

[3] Although the legislation did not give this group an explicit name, the term *civilizados* (civilised) can be derived by comparison with the explicit name given to the other two groups: the *indígenas civilizados* (civilised indigenous) and the *salvajes* (savages).

[4] These regulations included restrictions on the management of their properties (España-Eljaiek, 2019).

[5] In Colombia there was also a large Afro-descendant population which, despite the republican rhetoric of equality, was subject to racial discrimination. However, in this paper we do not focus on said population. Since the abolition of slavery, discrimination against Afro-descendants occurred informally, while in the case of indigenous people it was formal and was the main subject of the newly established structures of racial discrimination (España-Eljaiek, 2017; Gabbert, 2019).

instituted in the Portuguese Empire, "characterised by multiple modalities of coercion and compulsion that substituted slavery from legal and practical points of view" (Jerónimo 2015, p. 2). In 1899, for example, the Regulamento do Trabalho dos Indígenas established a legal obligation for Africans in Portuguese colonies to work and authorised the public authorities to compel those who were not working. Labour laws such as this formed the backbone of a system of racial discrimination which came to be known as the *indigenato*, and throughout the colonial period "the legal imposition of racial criteria permeated all aspects of colonial rule" (Havik, 2018, p. 216).

Like the system described for Colombia, the *indigenato* classified the population into three groups. The first group was known as the *civilizados* (civilised), and included white people, people of Asian and South Asian descent, and people of partial African ancestry, known as *mistos* (see table 1). This group had the same rights as Portuguese citizens (Jerónimo, 2018; O'Laughlin, 2000). The second group were the so-called *indígenas* or *não-civilizados* (uncivilised), essentially the African black population, who did not have equal rights and were subject to exploitation through, among other policies, forced labour, hut taxes, land expropriation, and controls on their movement (Cross, 1987; Havik, 2018; Marshall, 1985). Finally, there was an intermediate class known as *assimilados* (assimilated), available to the *indígenas* if they fulfilled a number of requirements, which in principle granted the same rights as those of *civilizados* (Cross, 1987). However, by the end of the *indigenato*, in the 1960s, only one percent of the African population had been granted the condition of *assimilado* (Marshall, 1985).

Table 1.
Ethnic-racial hierarchies in Colombia and Mozambique

Colombia - civilisation projects	Mozambique - *Indigenato*
Civilizados (Civilised)	*Civilizados* or *não-indígenas* (Civilised)
Indígenas civilizados (Civilised indigenous)	*Assimilados* (Civilised indigenous)
"Savages" (Indigenous)	*Indígenas* (Indigenous)

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Another common feature in the systems of racial discrimination of Colombia and Mozambique is what Gabbert (2012) has described as the dichotomy between elite and excluded populations. In Colombia, the new republican elite was a minority, with national authority, of "predominantly white" ancestry, established in the Andean-central region of the country, and descended from Spanish colonial elites. Despite supporting the movements for independence, these elites were primarily conservatives who had access to wealth and land and sought to preserve their privileges and interests (España-Eljaiek, 2019, p. 131; Gabbert, 2019). This national elite complemented its authority with regional representatives or subnational elites, that is, local officials, politicians, and landlords who had control of political and economic power at the subnational level and who adapted the privilege granted to them by their condition of whiteness to the local context (Appelbaum, 2017; Múnera, 2005). In Mozambique, elite interests were represented by colonial officials, white settlers, and the wide range of companies that relied on Mozambican labour to produce commodities. These companies included not only those that ran sovereign concessions, *prazo* concessions, and plantations in the colony, but also mining interests in the Transvaal and other neighbouring colonies, which relied heavily on Mozambican labour provided through an institutionalised system of migration.

On the other hand, the excluded population corresponded to the non-white indigenous people who were majorities within their territories. In Mozambique, they represented close to 100% of the population (see figure 1). As for Colombia, internal colonialism was exercised exclusively over the periphery. As already mentioned, the periphery was composed of isolated areas which were primarily inhabited by the so-called "savage" indigenous and "civilised" indigenous populations, such as Caquetá, Meta, Putumayo, or Vaupés. Therefore, although the "savages" only represented 10.5% of the total Colombian population in 1912, they represented more than 90% of the population in most of the peripheral territories (see figure 2).

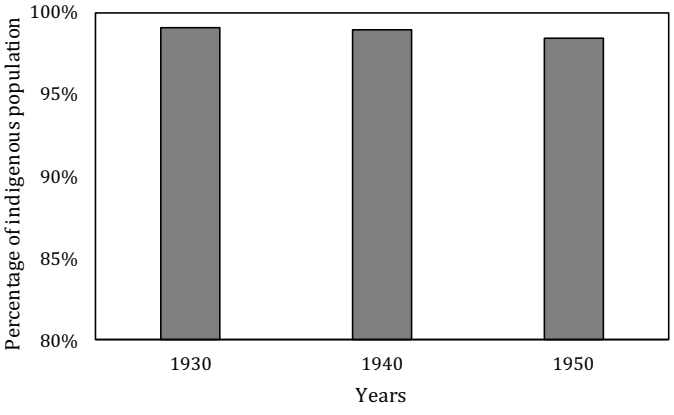

Figure 1. Percentage of indigenous population in Mozambique, 1930, 1940, and 1950.

Note: We calculate the percentage of indigenous population in 1930 using the census of 1928, which provides data on the number of *civilizados*, and the census of 1930, which provides data on the number of *indígenas*.

Source: Authors' elaboration from population censuses for Mozambique (1928, 1930, 1940, and 1950).

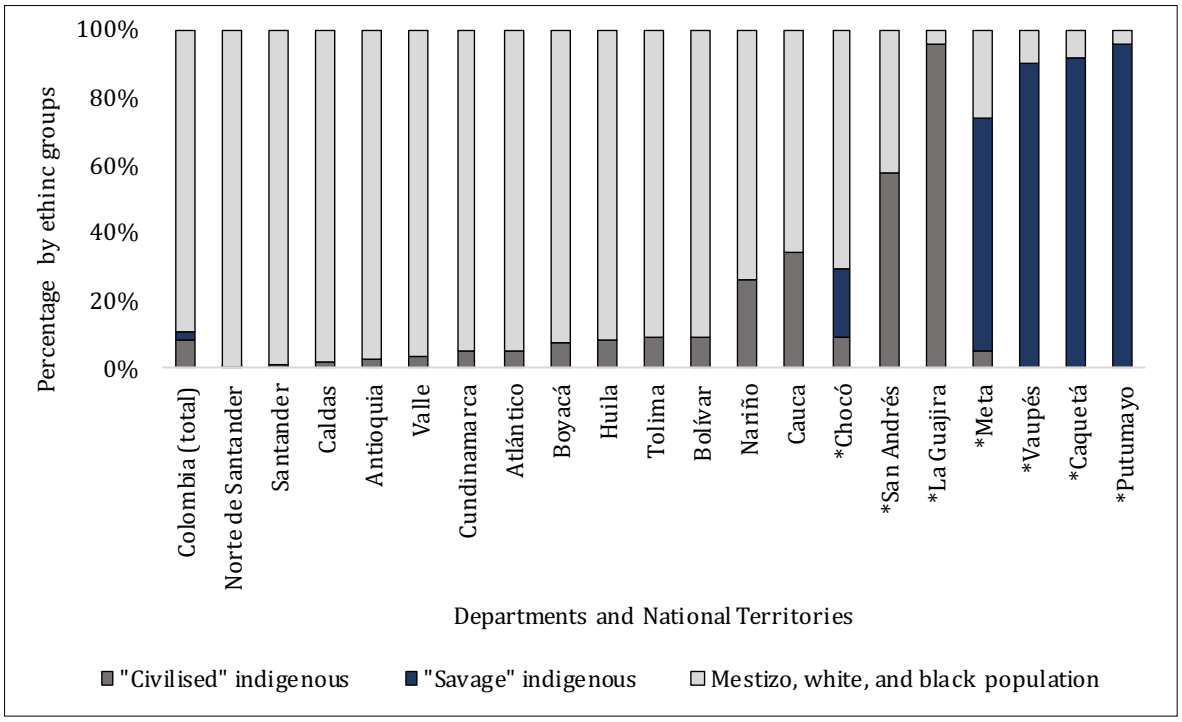

Figure 2. Total population disaggregated by ethnic group in Colombian regions, 1912.

Note: We plot the percentage of the total population represented by each ethnic group for the Departments and for National Territories (which are indicated with an asterisk) in 1912, combining the information provided in the census of 1912 and the corrected population numbers for 1912 provided in the census of 1918.

Source: Authors' elaboration from the population censuses of 1912 and 1918.

Finally, in both cases, the system of racial discrimination served the interests of the elites by ensuring cheap land and labour to produce commodities. At the same time, the racist rhetoric and the racial hierarchies established through legislation served as justification for the processes of colonisation. In Mozambique and other Portuguese colonies in Africa, the colonial state relied on the concept of the "civilising mission" (Jerónimo, 2015), while Colombian elites upheld the social constructions of elite-whiteness as representative of "civilisation and progress", and the "savage" nature of indigenous people as an obstacle to development, which justified the "civilisation projects" to which they were subjected (España-Eljaiek, 2019; Pohl-Valero, 2016). Educational policies represented a continuation of this dichotomy and, as explained in the next section, contributed to the stagnation of human capital accumulation by indigenous people.

3. Racially exclusionary educational policies in Colombia and Mozambique

In this section we show that, in colonial contexts, the quality of education for indigenous people living in Colombia and Mozambique was much lower than that for non-indigenous people, thus hampering their opportunities to accumulate human capital. This resulted from educational policies that were deeply embedded within the systems of racial discrimination described above. The duality in these systems manifested itself in all aspects of education, from the type of education each racial group could access to the level of educational investment each received.

We first focus on the stark contrast between the educational trajectories that indigenous and non-indigenous people could follow (see figure 3 for a visual summary). In Colombia, the educational system in vigour during the 20th century responded to three main types of legislation. The first was the territorial and administrative division between Departments and National Territories, described in the previous section. The second was the 1887 Concordat signed between the Colombian State and the Catholic Church, which granted the Church control over specific administrative and educational competencies. Finally, Laws 39 of 1903 and Decree 491 of 1904 divided the education system into the following categories: pre-primary, primary, lower-secondary, upper-secondary, post-secondary, non-tertiary, professional, and tertiary (see Fuentes-Vásquez, 2021).

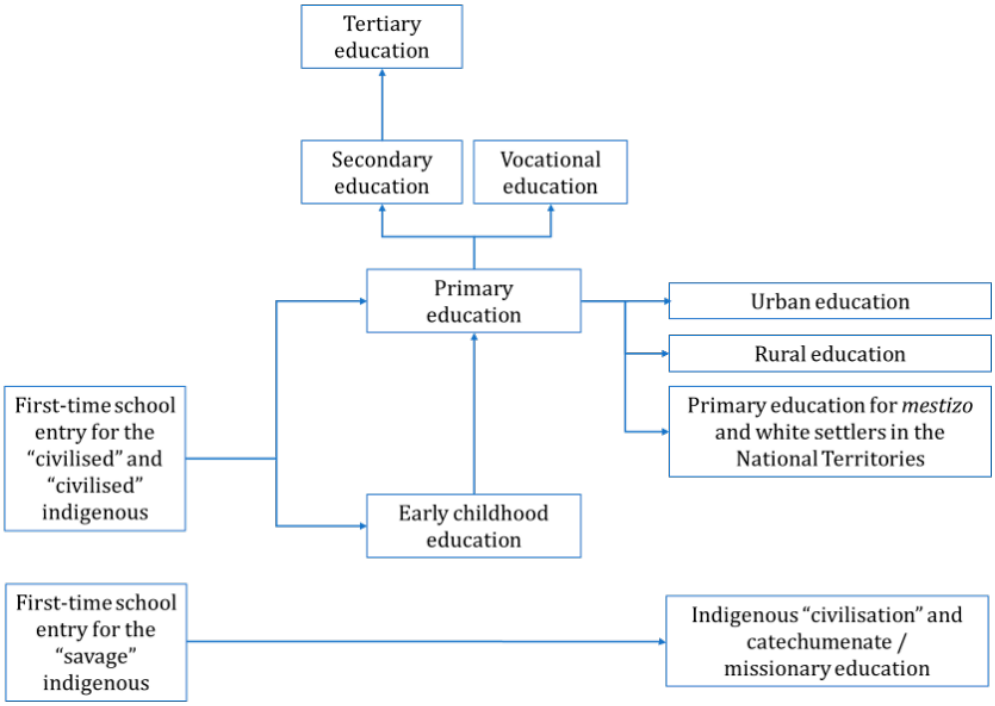

Figure 3. Educational itineraries in Colombia, c. 1903-c. 1950.

Note: Missionary education was only targeted at indigenous children living in the National Territories.

Source: Authors' elaboration based on Law 39 of 1903, Decree 491 of 1904, Memoir of the Ministry of Education of 1949, and Becerra (2010).

These laws established different types of primary education for Departments and National Territories. In Departments, primary education was divided into two categories, rural and urban, which could both be accessed by *civilizados*. The educational legislation for the National Territories, our focus in this paper, was often ambiguous and unclear. However, a thorough reading of the relevant legislation allows us to identify the division of education into two types of primary school targeted at different groups of children. On the one hand, there were primary schools for the children of white and *mestizo* settlers and of the "civilised" indigenous, which provided a similar education to that offered in schools located in the Departments, albeit with a more modest curriculum, as seen in the list of subjects detailed in table 2. On the other hand, the educational laws listed above determined that the main objective of primary schools for indigenous children classified as "savages" was their "civilisation". Catholic missions played an essential role in the provision of this type of education. In 1888, the first of the agreements signed under the Concordat charged Catholic missions with colonising and bringing Christianity to peripheral areas within the country. This agreement gave the missions complete autonomy over the design of the educational programs to be followed in the said territories and established the provision of resources to Catholic missions without requiring prior approval from Congress (Soto *et al*., 2019)[6].

The educational plans implemented by the Catholic missions emphasised the "civilisation" of indigenous children through the catechumenate (Becerra, 2010), and through an emphasis on acculturation into Western values, the elimination of native languages, and their replacement through the teaching of Spanish (Soto *et al*., 2019). This was explicitly stated, for example, in a 1919 report by Catholic missions[7]. Indeed, as shown in table 2, subjects were fewer in number than in primary schools for non-indigenous children, there was no teaching of history or arithmetic, and the focus was placed instead on morality, the Spanish language, and practical agricultural knowledge. Some of these missionary schools took the form of *orfelinatos*, boarding schools for indigenous children who were taken away from their families and put through extreme acculturation programmes. In one report for 1918-1919, missionaries in the regions of Caquetá and Putumayo described how the children living in the *orfelinato* spent three hours per day working the fields and did so from a fear of not receiving their daily food ration *(Reporte de las Misiones de Caquetá y Putumayo del año Magdalena y Arauca, 1918-1919,* p. 151). Figure 4 shows a photo from a different region in the same report, that of Magdalena (in La Guajira), in which small children are picking cotton, suggesting the wide adoption of child labour in Catholic missions within the National Territories.

[6] Educational competencies were only part of the role played by Catholic missions in National Territories. In 1902, the Missionary Agreement (Convenio de Misiones) sought to expand, consolidate, and regulate the relationship between Church and state more generally. Clavero (2011) affirms that, by virtue of this agreement, the Colombian state effectively ceded the governance of the National Territories to the Catholic Missions, allowing them to establish what he calls "missionary states". Within this framework, missionaries exploited local labour, appropriated land, monopolised trade, and exercised political and judicial authority (Gálvez-Abadía, 2006). Later on, the Missionary Agreement of 1953 would provide similar competencies to Catholic missions, who came to control a territory of 861,000 km² (more than two thirds of the total area of Colombia).

[7] Vicariato Apostólico de Caquetá (Colombia) (1919). *Las misiones católicas en Colombia: labor de los misioneros en el Caquetá y Putumayo, Magdalena y Arauca; informes, año 1918-1919* (Imprenta Nacional. pp. 9, 12, and 13).

Table 2.
Primary education curricula by type of school in Colombia, c. 1903-c. 1950

Types of primary education	Duration	Subjects	Inspection	Funding
Urban education in the Departments	6 years	Religion, arithmetic, civics, writing, reading, geography, natural history, gymnastics, physics, and sewing (for girls)	Departmental governments	Mostly by Departmental governments
Rural education in the Departments	3 years	Religion, arithmetic, civics, writing, reading, geography, and sewing (for girls)	Departmental governments	Mostly by Departmental governments
Primary school in National Territories	Unspecified	Sacred history, geography, history of Colombia, arithmetic, and Spanish grammar	Catholic missions	Central government funding and missions' own sources of income
Education for indigenous in National Territories	Unspecified	Elementary teaching of morals, patriotic values, religion, study of the natural resources of the region, and basic notions of the Spanish language	Catholic missions	Central government funding and missions' own sources of income

Source: Authors' elaboration based on Law 39 of 1903 and Becerra (2010).

Figure 4. Children of the San Antonio orfelinato picking cotton in La Guajira, 1918-1919.
Source: *Las Misiones Católicas en Colombia, 1918-1919.*

In Mozambique, educational laws passed under the *indigenato* established a similarly dualistic system (see figure 5). Children classified as *civilizados* attended a type of primary education known as *ensino primario elementar e complementar*. This "elementary" education was provided primarily in state-run schools and followed the same programmes as those in force in the Portuguese metropolis. For example, the preamble to Portaria 918 of 1929, which passed the programme for elementary education in Mozambique, mentioned the need to harmonise this type of education with that imparted in Portugal.

On the other hand, the first educational level for children classified as *indígenas* was the *ensino primario rudimentar*. This

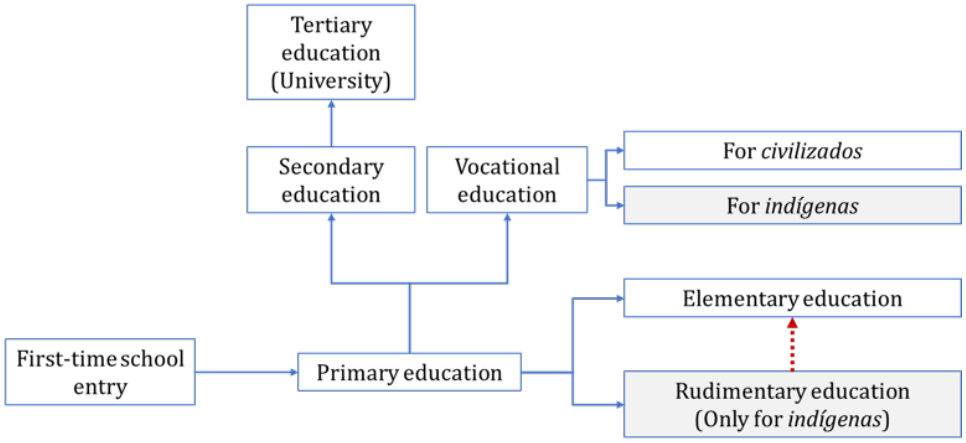

Figure 5. Educational itineraries in colonial Mozambique, c. 1930-c. 1960.

Source: Authors' elaboration from Portaria 918 (6th July 1929), Diploma Legislativo 238 (17th May 1930), Portaria 1115 (17th May 1930), and Portaria 2316 (1st September 1934).

was a "rudimentary" education of very low quality, run primarily by the Catholic missions: the colonial state did run some rudimentary schools in earlier decades, but the 1941 Estatuto Missionário granted a monopoly to Catholic missions over the education of the so-called *indígenas*[8]. Although the stated objective of indigenous education, described in Article 1 of Diploma Legislativo nº 238, of 1930, was to gradually "civilise" and "nationalise" indigenous children, the list of subjects and the curriculum approved for rudimentary education by Portaria 1115 of 1930 shared many similarities with those of elementary education (see table 3). Indeed, Article 1 of Portaria 2,316, of 1934, which regulated elementary education in Mozambique, allowed for the enrolment of indigenous children who had completed all three courses of rudimentary education. However, the reality on the ground was that this type of education was focused on the acculturation and indoctrination of indigenous children (Bavo and Coelho, 2022), as well as their preparation for agricultural work (Dores, 2019), with missions often forcing students to work in their fields (Isaacman, 1992). Poorly trained teachers often focused on rote learning of the Catechism, neglecting the syllabus cited above (Marshall, 1985)[9]. Ultimately, the quality of the education received by indigenous children was so low that, according to Newitt (1995, p. 480), it "barely allowed even for the acquisition of literacy", something that is borne out in our analysis of literacy rates in the next section.

As in the case of Colombia, differences in the quality of primary education were not the only obstacle that indigenous children faced in their accumulation of human capital: the educational itinerary they could follow was very different from that of children considered *civilizados*. Though, as stated above, it was theoretically possible for indigenous children to enrol in elementary school after completing their rudimentary education, bureaucratic obstacles, together with the low percentage of students passing each course in rudimentary education, meant that very few children managed to do so (Cross, 1987; Fernández-Cebrián, 2022; Marcum, 2017; Marshall, 1985). As a result of these obstacles, rudimentary education acted as a bottleneck for the advancement of indigenous children towards higher levels of education (see figure 5).

In both Colombia and Mozambique, the limited quality of a primary education destined for "civilisation", as well as the hours spent on agricultural labour, would have put indigenous children at a disadvantage in the accumulation of human capital when compared with non-indigenous children. In addition to this, while non-indigenous children in both settings could access stages of education beyond elementary primary education, indigenous children in the Colombian National Territories were barred from advancing to the latter stages, while indigenous children in Mozambique faced so many obstacles that most of them were unable to advance beyond rudimentary education.

These inequalities would have been compounded by disparities in the allocation of educational investments. The fact that education for indigenous children had the objective of merely "civilising" them instead of providing quality education was reflected in the level of funding it received. In Colombia, the central state funded indigenous education in the National Territories indirectly by giving subsidies to the Catholic missions that were in charge of this education. These subsidies were determined as a fixed sum under the Missionary Agreement of 1902 and subsequently updated under the Missionary Agreements of 1928 and 1953. As table 4 illustrates, a snapshot of the year 1934 suggests that these subsidies represented a much lower expenditure per capita than educational expenditure per capita on the non-indigenous population[10].

[8] Fernández-Cebrián (2022) argues that Catholic missions were chosen because they were a cheaper option for the colonial state than running schools directly, and because they were thought of as a more adequate tool to counteract the perceived negative influence of Protestant missions on indigenous Mozambicans.

[9] Marshall (1985) also suggests that the requirement to teach in Portuguese, which most of the children did not speak, lowered the quality of education received by the children indirectly. This may also have been at work in Colombia, where lessons had to be taught in Spanish, even if children did not speak the language.

[10] For most of the 20th century, the education system for non-indigenous people in Colombia was based on a decentralised model that distributed educational spending among the three levels of government: national, departmental, and municipal. The Departments assumed the expense of hiring teachers, the municipalities financed the construction of schools, and the central state paid for schooling materials (Helg, 2001). As noted above, the central state also funded education for indigenous people in the National Territories through mission subsidies. Catholic missions in both Colombia and Mozambique had alternative sources of income beyond state subsidies, which may have been directed to the provision of education. However, we are interested primarily in the distributive priorities of the state across population groups, and not necessarily in the financial structure of the missions. Thus, the analysis in table 4 is focused on state expenditure, including subsidies to Catholic missions.

Table 3.
Primary education curricula by type of school in Mozambique, c. 1930-c. 1960

Types of primary education	Duration	Subjects	Provider	Funding
"Elementary education" (*Ensino primario elementar e complementar*)	4 years	Portuguese language, arithmetic, geometry, arts and crafts, natural science, Portuguese history and geography, moral and civic education, physical education and hygiene, and singing.	Mostly state-run schools	Colonial state budgets
"Rudimentary education" (*Ensino primario rudimentar*)	3 years	Portuguese language, arithmetic, arts and crafts, Portuguese history and geography, moral and civic education, physical education and hygiene.	Mostly Catholic missions	Colonial state subsidies and missions' own sources of income

Source: Authors' elaboration from Portaria 918, Diploma Legislativo 238, Portaria 1115, and Portaria 2316.

Table 4.
Total budget for primary education in Colombia, 1934

Educational expenditure	**In current *pesos* of 1934**	
State expenditure for school supplies and primary education in the National Territories	554,443	
Departmental expenditure	4,565,711	**Non-Indigenous population**
Municipal expenditure	1,977,526	7,183,349
Total educational expenditure for primary education	7,097,679	
Expenditure per capita for the non-indigenous population	**0.988**	
		Estimated Indigenous population
State subsidies for Catholic missions	55,184	1,184,893
Expenditure per capita for the indigenous population	**0.047**	

Note: the closest population census, in 1938, did not provide data by ethnic group. Therefore, we estimate the indigenous population by applying the percentage it represented over the total population in the population census of 1912 (see figure 2), to the total population indicated in the population census of 1938.

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the Statistical Yearbook of Colombia for 1934.

Educational investment was similarly skewed in Mozambique. Fernández-Cebrián (2022) shows that in 1930 expenditure on the indigenous population was only 48% of total educational expenditure, even though it represented 99% of the total population of the colony at the time. Disparities continued into the 1950s after the Catholic missions had been granted a monopoly on indigenous education, with the Catholic authorities complaining about the unequal distribution of educational expenditure across population groups in the second six-year development plan (id.).

Educational disparities across population groups persisted through time, preventing the indigenous population from accessing quality education and accumulating human capital. Although a deeper analysis of this would go beyond the scope of this paper, it is important to note that conditions in both Colombia and Mozambique would begin to change slowly in the 1960s. In Colombia, a broad social rejection of the official schooling policy for indigenous people began in the 1960s (Aragón, 2000), and in 1974 Law 20 allowed the emancipation of the indigenous population from the Church, eliminating the latter's legal monopoly on their education. Finally, the discriminatory condition of indigenous education was formally eradicated in the Constitution of 1991, and the category of National Territory was suppressed, with all regions becoming Departments and gaining full fiscal and administrative autonomy (Aragón, 2000; Molina-Betancur, 2012). In Mozambique the 1960s saw the formal abolition of the *indigenato* in 1961 (O'Laughlin, 2000), and a theoretical end to the differentiation between indigenous and non-indigenous children in primary education in 1964, as well as the Church monopoly on the education of African children (Dores, 2019; Fernández-Cebrián, 2022). Within the framework of the liberation struggle, new literacy schools were created by FRELIMO (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique) in the "liberated zones" to instil in the population new ways of thinking and acting that differed from colonial education (Bavo and Coelho, 2022). Although small changes in trends in the literacy rate can be observed during these decades (see the next section), indigenous Mozambicans faced significant educational and political obstacles until the independence of the country in 1975 (Cross, 1987; Marcum, 2017).

Overall, we observe large similarities in the racially exclusionary educational policies of the two colonial settings examined here, one internal, the other external. As a result of these policies, indigenous people in the National Territories of Colombia and in Mozambique only had access to education of very poor quality. The literature has found that variables such as rurality, geography, or poverty are important determinants of the accumulation of human capital. In addition to these, educational quality has been linked to differences in literacy rates (Vos, 1996). Thus, although the existing data do not allow us to assess the relative importance of each variable, our analysis suggests that, by reducing the quality of education available to indigenous people, racially exclusionary educational policies would have had *ceteris paribus* a negative effect on their accumulation of human capital. In the next section, we show quantitative evidence consistent with a stagnation in the accumulation of human capital by indigenous people during the colonial periods in both Colombia and Mozambique.

4. Educational attainment by ethnic group in Colombia and Mozambique

In this section, we show newly constructed literacy rates and completion of primary education by ethnicity (similarly to De Haas and Frankema, 2018) for indigenous and non-indigenous people in Colombia and Mozambique[11]. Comparing educational outcomes between the two groups exposes the negative consequences of racially exclusionary educational policies and the low quality of education received by indigenous people for the accumulation of human capital by marginalised population groups.

We use data from IPUMS to estimate literacy rates and the percentage of the population that completed primary education[12]. We aggregate individual-level data to analyse these educational outcomes by age cohorts[13]. For Colombia, IPUMS provides data from the censuses of 2005, 1993, 1985, 1973, and 1964. We use data from the 2005 census to calculate literacy rates and primary education completion rates because the 1993 census for Colombia in IPUMS does not provide data for all Colombian Departments, and earlier censuses do not include data on ethnicity. For Mozambique, IPUMS provides data from the 2007 and 1997 censuses. However, white people counted in the Mozambican censuses of the turn of the century were most likely not the same communities that lived in the country during colonial times because most of the Portuguese settler population left the country after its independence from Portugal in 1975. According to Mindoso (2017), of the 250,000 Portuguese who lived in Mozambique before independence, only between 15,000 and 20,000 remained after 1976. Therefore, to compare educational outcomes for indigenous and non-indigenous people during the colonial period, instead of using IPUMS data, we construct new literacy rates for the white and black populations living under the *indigenato* using data from the 1940, 1950 and 1960 colonial censuses. In addition, we construct primary education completion rates for the black population in Mozambique using the 2007 census data from IPUMS[14].

To estimate the share of the population that is literate and that completed primary education from IPUMS data, we first aggregate individual data by year of birth and estimate for each cohort the percentage of individuals who have completed all levels of primary education and the percentage who have become literate. To reduce statistical noise, we group individuals into five-year cohorts. Then we remove from our data population that was less than ten years old at the time of the census, since they may not have had time to become literate or complete primary education, as well as people older than 85 to avoid "survivorship bias", that is, the greater probability of survival into old age of more educated individuals (De Haas and Frankema, 2018).

Starting with Colombia, we calculate the share of the population that is literate and that completed primary education by cohort for the black population, indigenous population, and the rest of the population (including the *mestizo* and white population together). We disaggregate estimates for the indigenous population into those who were born in a National Territory and those who were born in a Department in order to identify differentiated patterns.

Figure 6 shows the share of the population that is literate in Colombia by ethnicity and cohort, using data from the 2005 census. Several patterns stand out. Focusing on those born between 1920 and 1924 (the first cohort shown), 59% of the *mestizo* and white population and 53% of the black population became literate, while only 38% of the indigenous population born in Departments and 19% of the indigenous population born in the National Territories learned to read and write. From that moment on, the percentage of the population that became literate increased for all groups throughout the 20th century. However, while literacy rates for the black population had converged with outcomes for the *mestizo* and white population in cohorts born as soon as the 1940s, the gap with the indigenous population, especially for those born in the National Territories, was maintained: the maximum gap in literacy between the *mestizo* and white population and the indigenous population born in the National Territories was 48 percentage points for those born between 1955 and 1959, while the minimum gap was 32 percentage points for those born between 1985 and 1989. Within the indigenous population, a wide gap is observed between those born in the National Territories and those born in Departments for all birth cohorts in our data, with an average gap of 29 percentage points.

[11] Primary education completion rates indicate the percentage of the population that has completed all levels of primary education.

[12] IPUMS is a public international database that collects census data from countries around the world using sampling techniques.

[13] Cohort analysis is the analysis of the behaviour of a certain segment of people who share a common characteristic over a period. In this case, using age cohorts implies grouping people by the year they were born. For literacy rates, this means calculating the share of people born during a certain period who were literate.

[14] Even though we cannot compare primary education completion rates with an equivalent measure for the white population, this exercise provides valuable additional information on the long-term trends in educational outcomes for the black population.

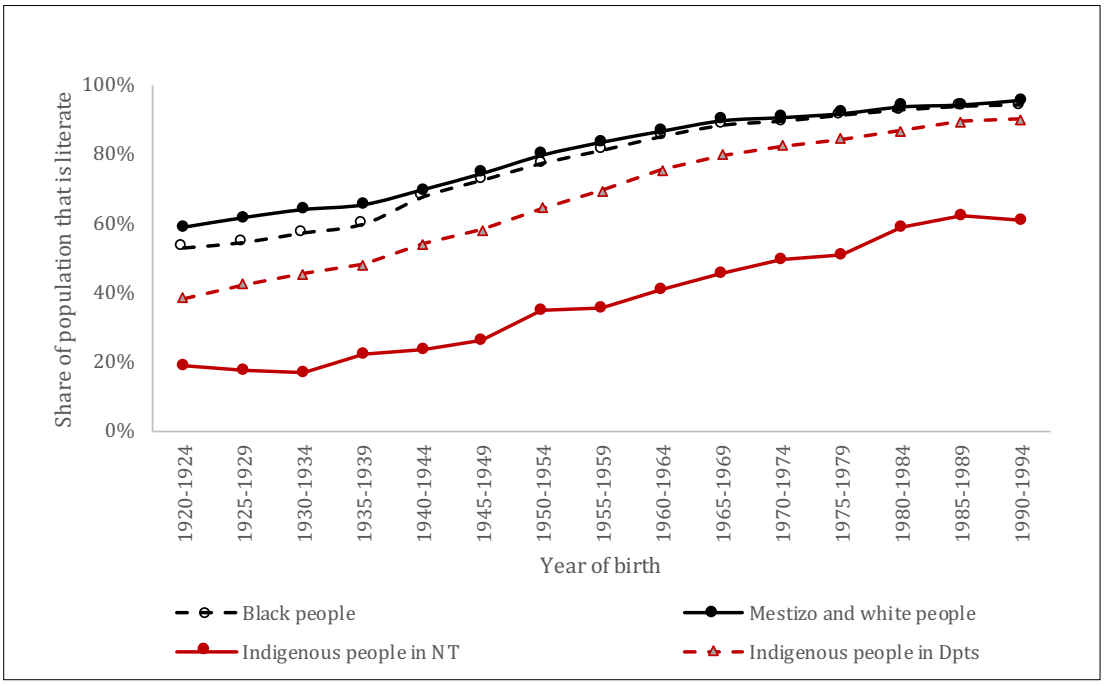

Figure 6. Literacy rates in Colombia by ethnicity and cohort.

Note: we plot the share of population that is literate for four different population groups in Colombia, namely black people, indigenous people born in the National Territories, indigenous people born in the Departments, and other population groups (*mestizo* and white people). Cohorts are plotted by their year of birth. The data correspond to five-year moving averages.

Source: Authors' elaboration using data from IPUMS, 2005 Colombia population census.

These results are in line with our analysis of the educational system in Colombia, shown in the previous sections: the Afro-descendant population had access to the same type of education as the *mestizo* and white populations and thus achieved similar levels of literacy. At the same time, for many decades the education of indigenous children living in the National Territories had the objective of "civilising" them and acculturating them (España-Eljaiek 2019). Acquiring literacy and other skills was not the main objective, and this is reflected in the persistent gap observed in figure 6[15].

Figure 7 replicates the previous exercise for Colombia, but now focusing on the share of the population that completed primary education, and it shows a very similar picture. Throughout the 20th century the percentage of the indigenous population that completed primary education was consistently lower than for the other two population groups. Again, we can observe differences within the indigenous population: outcomes for those born in Departments were closer to completion rates for the black population and *mestizo* and white populations than to completion rates for the indigenous population born in the National Territories. Finally, as in figure 6, we can observe an improvement in educational outcomes for all population groups during the 20th century, with the indigenous population born in Departments converging with the black population and the *mestizo* and white population, and the indigenous population born in the National Territories remaining at a greater disadvantage, even when looking at the most recent cohorts[16]. One additional pattern can provide insights into the importance of the quality of education for the acquisition of skills among marginalised populations. For all cohorts born in the 20th century, the gap in completion rates between the indigenous population born in the National Territories and the other three groups was much lower than the equivalent gap in literacy rates. Indeed, if we focus on differences within the indigenous population, the average gap in literacy rates between the indigenous population born in the Departments and those born in the National Territories, for all the cohorts in our data, was 29 percentage points, while the equivalent average gap in primary education completion rates was only 11 percentage points. In line with our argument, this suggests that the quality of education accessed by indigenous children in the National Territories was lower than that for other population groups.

[15] As a robustness test, we compare the average literacy rate for all ethnic groups and age groups in our IPUMS data with the literacy rates in the Moxlad database for the same year of 2005 in Colombia. We find that there is a difference of 10 percentage points between both averages. Therefore, our calculation of literacy rates from IPUMS data should be understood merely as an instrument to compare educational outcomes between ethnic groups and observe their trends over time, and not as a precise estimation of literacy rates.

[16] Figure 7 shows a decline in completion rates for the indigenous population born in the National Territories between 1990 and 1994. Although examining this trend would go beyond the scope of this paper, one potential explanation is the process of decentralisation implemented after the passing of the Constitution of 1991, which may have deepened the disadvantage of peripheral areas like the old National Territories (see MEN, 2010).

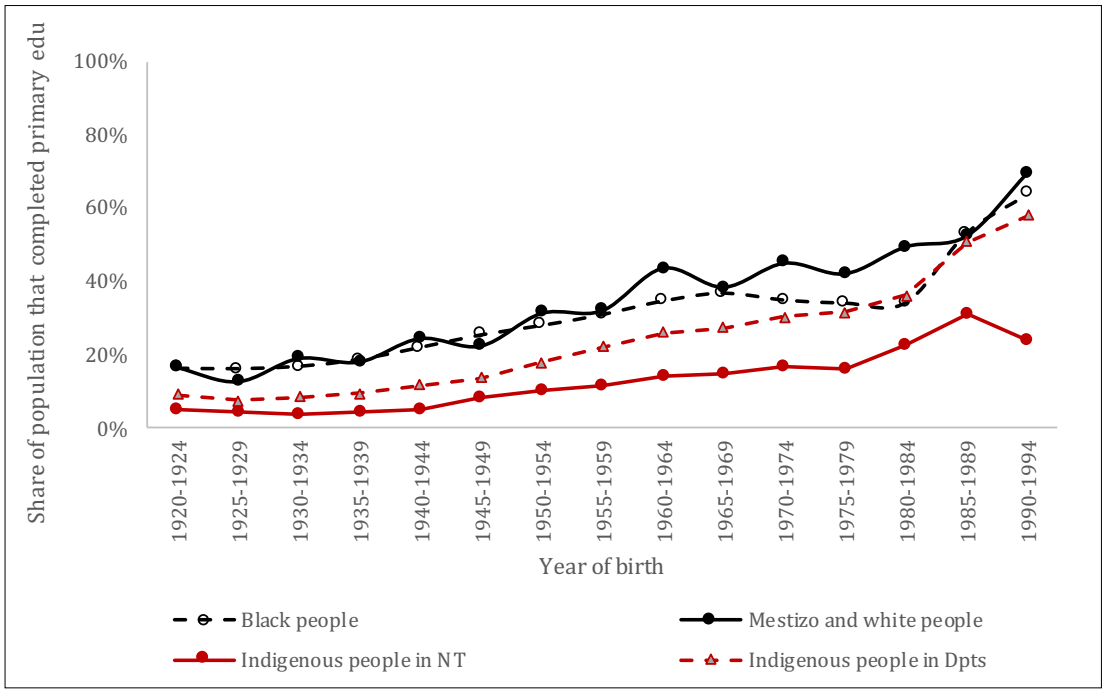

Figure 7. Share of population that completed primary education in Colombia, by ethnicity and cohort.
Note: see figure 6 for details of the calculation of educational outcomes.
Source: Authors' elaboration using data from IPUMS, 2005 Colombia population census.

We now turn to the evolution of literacy rates in Mozambique under the *indigenato*. Using data from colonial censuses, we construct literacy rates for black children and white children aged 7 to 14 years old in 1940, 1950, and 1960. Figure 8 shows that literacy rates for black children were much lower than the literacy rates for white children in all three years. While literacy rates for white children in Mozambique had reached almost 100% by 1950, literacy rates for black children were close to zero in both 1940 and 1950 and reached only 11.7% in 1960. This picture is similar to that observed for Colombia: educational outcomes for the marginalised indigenous population were much lower than outcomes for the non-indigenous population throughout the colonial period. The low quality of rudimentary education is shown by the fact that, in 1960, the enrolment rate in rudimentary education for black children aged 7-12 was 40% (Fernández-Cebrián, 2022), but literacy rates were much lower.

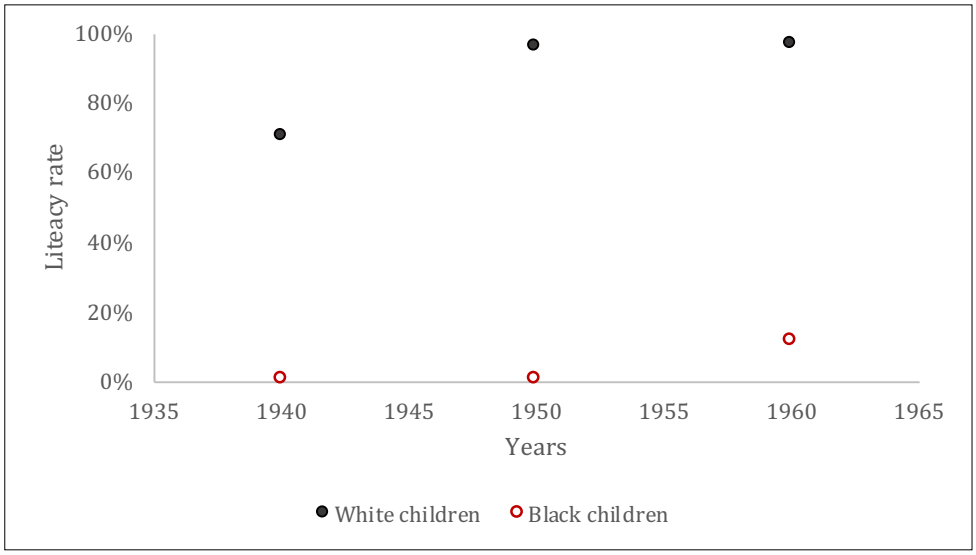

Figure 8. Literacy rates for black children and white children aged 7-14 in colonial Mozambique, 1940-1960.
Source: Authors' elaboration using colonial population censuses for Mozambique (1940, 1950, 1960).

Finally, as described above, the fact that the majority of the white settler population in Mozambique left after the independence of the country in 1975 means that we cannot use IPUMS data to compare educational achievement between the white population and the black population during colonial times. However, calculating the share of the black population that completed primary education is still helpful when observing the long-term trends in educational outcomes for this group beyond the 1960 literacy rates. Figure 9 shows the results of this exercise. Similarly to the patterns in figure 8 for literacy rates, the share of the population that completed primary education was close to zero during the 1940s and 1950s, and only began to rise slowly in the 1960s and beyond. This matches our analysis of the educational system in Mozambique in the previous section. The indigenous population had very limited access to primary elementary education, and most black children did not advance beyond rudimentary education, with the situation slowly beginning to change only in the 1960s with the end of the *indigenato.*

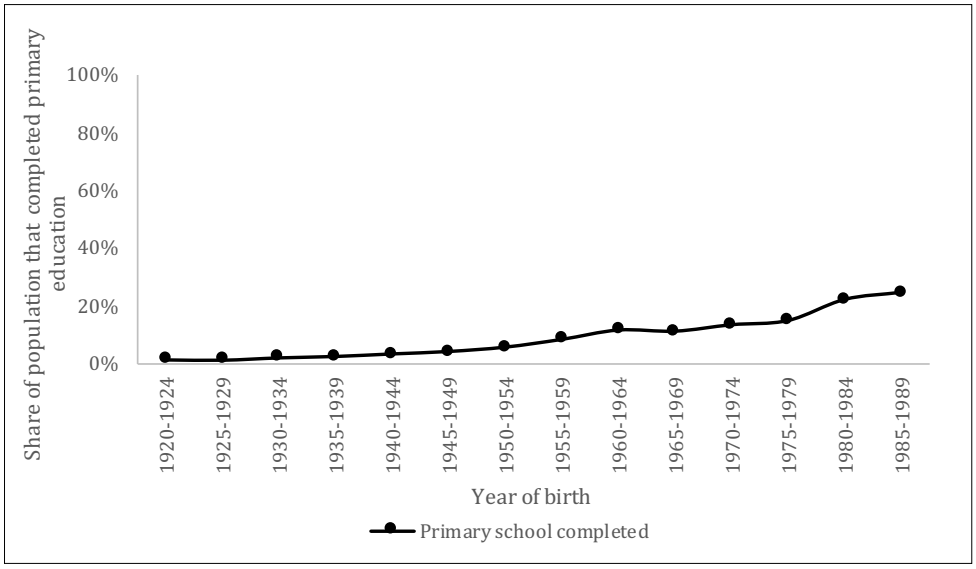

Figure 9. Share of the black population that completed primary education in Mozambique, by cohort.
Source: Authors' elaboration using individual data from IPUMS, 2007 Mozambique population census.

5. Conclusions

Colonial legacies of racial exclusion negatively affect educational performance. In Latin America, Frankema (2009) suggests that the colonial legacy of racial stratification prevented consensus on educational projects for the masses. Other analyses in the economic history literature have shown that colonial systems of racial discrimination have influenced educational levels (Arroyo Abad, 2015).

In Africa, another area with a colonial past, the evidence also illustrates the influence of racial divisions on educational inequalities. For black Africans, the educational system consisted of a segregated school which prevented racial integration, spread a sense of inferiority among black students, ensured white interests, and permanently increased educational disparities (Moore, 1990).

However, while the negative effects of racially exclusionary educational policies are known, the literature has not focused on the specific processes that explain how these gaps are generated. To contribute to this debate, we have carried out a comparison between the colonial settings of the Colombian National Territories and Mozambique to provide insights into the relationship between racially exclusionary educational policies and educational inequalities.

Using an array of new archival evidence, our analysis has found that the processes through which racially exclusionary educational policies negatively affected the education of marginalised groups mainly took the form of a lower-quality education implemented through the Catholic mission schools. Under this colonial context, Catholic missions in both Colombia and Mozambique ran schools in which education was of very low quality and geared towards the "civilisation" of indigenous children rather than towards the accumulation of skills. For example, in one of the most extreme forms of indoctrination, indigenous children in the Colombian National Territories were taken away from their families, placed in boarding schools known as *orfelinatos*, and put through extreme programmes of acculturation and forced labour. The low quality of education for indigenous children was in stark contrast to the types of schooling non-indigenous people were able to access. This, together with much lower public investments in the education of indigenous people, put their children at a disadvantage for the accumulation of human capital when compared with non-indigenous children. These disparities are borne out in our newly constructed series of literacy rates and of primary education completion rates for the different ethnic groups in Colombia and Mozambique.

One final caveat is that our results shed light specifically on the negative effects of racially exclusionary educational policies for the accumulation of human capital in marginalised groups within colonial settings. Thus, more research is necessary to understand how the negative effects of exclusionary educational policies operate in other contexts, such as post-colonial settings. This paper also opens up the possibility of mak-

ing further comparisons with other colonial settings in Latin America, Africa, and other regions, which may illuminate the importance of the local context for the configuration of racially exclusionary educational policies and their effects. It is also worth investigating the potential role of metropolitan identities by establishing comparisons with colonial territories ruled by other powers, such as the British or French.

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Author's contribution

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