



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

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

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#### ANALYTICAL SUMMARY

The colonial legacy of racial exclusion is a critical explanation for educational inequalities. Previous research has shown that in racially heterogeneous societies with colonial backgrounds, the implementation of exclusionary policies negatively affected the educational performance of marginalised groups. However, this literature has placed little attention on the precise processes through which exclusionary policies produce these negative effects.

Focusing on Colombia and Mozambique, this paper analyses the processes through which racially exclusionary policies lead to lower educational outcomes for indigenous population groups in racialised and colonial settings. In order to do this, we study 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.

We first collect and analyse new archival qualitative data from multiple sources, including memories of education, serial publications, and reports by Catholic missions. We show that for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, indigenous people in the peripheral National Territories of Colombia, and indigenous people in colonial Mozambique under the racial discrimination system of the *indigenato*, 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, where the objective was to “civilise” and evangelise the children, rather than to develop their skills. 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.

To show the effects of said disadvantage, we use data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) and colonial population censuses to construct new estimates of literacy rates and primary education completion rates for the different ethnic groups in Colombia and Mozambique over the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In accordance with our argument, we find systematic differences in the accumulation of human capital for the indigenous and non-indigenous populations respectively. In Colombia, for all cohorts born during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was a large gap in literacy rates and primary education completion rates between indigenous people born in the National Territories, who ranked at the bottom, and the rest of the population. Similarly, in colonial Mozambique there were huge disparities in literacy rates between black indigenous children and white children in the decades leading up to the independence of the country.

Overall, this paper contributes to the economic history of education, providing new insights into the educational experience of marginalised groups under racialised and colonial settings, and highlighting the importance of studying the effects of racially exclusionary educational policies on the long-term trajectories of human capital accumulation for said groups.

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