

State versus Missions: Colonial educational development and its impact on post-colonial state governance in the Belgian Congo and the Netherlands Indies, c. 1880-2000

This paper compares the development of the state-based colonial education system in the Netherlands Indies with the mission-based system in Belgian Congo from a long term economic development perspective. The paper presents long run time series of school enrolment rates and government investment in education, showing that enrolment expansion was actually faster in the Congo than in Indonesia. I then continue to argue that the small opportunities for Indonesian children to attend a full Western curriculum of primary, secondary and tertiary education played a key role in the development of national leadership in post-colonial Indonesia, while the *de facto* racial segregation in the education system and in the administration of the state and the major companies prevented the development of a similar class of experienced leaders in the Belgian Congo. This is may be one of the key factors in explaining the very different post-colonial policy and growth trajectories.