

LEGACIES OF PORTUGUESE COLONIAL RULE: POLITICAL VOLATILITY, WELFARE, AND STATE FORMATION IN MOZAMBIQUE AND GOA (INDIA)

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Abstract

Despite of growing body of scholarship on colonial legacies, Portuguese colonialism remains relatively under-theorized in the field of global comparative colonial studies. Moreover, the scholarship on colonialism in India has undermined the colonial past of Goa, alongside Daman and Diu (another Indian state formerly under Portuguese rule). The colonial history of these states has received limited scholarly attention and is often treated as a peripheral case rather



than being situated within broader debates on colonial governance and postcolonial state formation. The research demonstrates the importance of decolonisation in Mozambique and Goa, through the use of the comparative-historical approach and the concept of contingent path dependence. Whereas Mozambique's violent decolonisation resulted in a bureaucratic capacity vacuum associated with decades of political instability, on the other hand Goa's negotiated integration into India produced comparatively stable institutions, due to the continuity of the bureaucratic, legal, and educational systems. This divergence in state formation and welfare provisions is caused by the way in which decolonisation has occurred in these two contexts. The study does not regard decolonization as a single moment of rupture, but rather as an extended and uneven process through which postcolonial states reworked and inherited institutions.

Keywords

Portuguese colonialism; comparative colonial legacies; contingent path dependence; postcolonial state formation; Mozambique; Goa.

Resumo

Apesar do crescente corpo de estudos sobre os legados coloniais, o colonialismo português continua relativamente pouco teorizado no campo dos estudos coloniais comparativos globais. Além disso, os estudos sobre o colonialismo na Índia têm negligenciado o passado colonial de Goa, juntamente com Damão e Diu (outro território indiano anteriormente sob domínio português). A história colonial desses territórios recebeu atenção acadêmica limitada e é frequentemente tratada como um caso periférico, em vez de ser situada nos debates mais amplos sobre a governação colonial e a formação do Estado pós-colonial. O artigo demonstra a importância da descolonização em Moçambique e Goa, através da utilização da abordagem histórico-comparativa e do conceito de dependência contingente da trajetória (contingent path dependence). Enquanto a descolonização violenta de Moçambique resultou num vazio de capacidade burocrática, associado a décadas de instabilidade política, por outro lado, a integração negociada de Goa na Índia produziu instituições comparativamente estáveis, devido à continuidade dos sistemas burocrático, jurídico e educacional. Esta divergência na formação do Estado e na provisão de bem-estar é causada pela forma como a descolonização ocorreu nesses dois contextos. O artigo não considera a descolonização como um único momento de ruptura, mas antes como um processo prolongado e desigual, através do qual os Estados pós-coloniais reformularam e herdaram instituições.

Palavras-chave

Colonialismo português; legados coloniais comparativos; dependência contingente da trajetória; formação do Estado pós-colonial; Moçambique; Goa.

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Introduction

"We base our struggle on the concrete realities of our country. We appreciate the experiences and achievements of other peoples and we study them. But revolution or national liberation is like a dress which must fit to each individual's body. Naturally, there are certain general or universal laws, even scientific laws, for any condition, but the liberation struggle has to be developed according to the specific conditions of each country."

Amílcar Cabral (1973, p. 77)

The words of Amílcar Cabral provide a conceptual core premise for understanding the trajectories of anti-colonial struggles in different parts of the Portuguese empire. Cabral rejected the idea of a universal model of decolonisation, insisting that all liberation struggle

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² Acknowledgments - The authors dedicate this study to the memory of Amélia Sanches Araújo (1933–2026), whose voice became an instrument of liberation. In 1967, she took up a microphone in an improvised studio in Conakry and helped free two peoples. Her voice continues to resonate far beyond the physical space she once inhabited, remaining alive in the histories and memories she helped shape. This research was supported by the University of Macau through Start-Up Grant SRG2024-00008-FAH "Avant-Garde Movements in Non-hegemonic Portuguese-Speaking Contexts". The authors gratefully acknowledge this support. Furthermore, the authors acknowledge the use of Microsoft Copilot in assisting with the formatting of references and the standardization of source citations in this work.



must arise from the “concrete realities” of their own country. Although colonial domination frequently exhibited common patterns of exploitation and hegemony, the forms of resistance, the strategies adopted by nationalist movements and the character of post-colonial state formation were heavily conditioned by local historical, social and political circumstances. A comparative study of former Portuguese colonies therefore demands attention not only to the common legacy of Portuguese colonialism but also to the different contexts in which decolonisation occurred. With this point of departure this paper attempts to understand the legacies of Portuguese colonial rule and in light of it the political volatility, welfare, and state formation in Mozambique and Goa (India).

Portugal's colonial empire legacies stand apart from its European counterparts in one decisive respect, that is its sheer longevity. Portugal Maritime expansion began in the fifteenth century, and Portugal was among the very last imperial powers to relinquish colonial territory of Goa (along with Daman and Diu), which became part of India in December 1961. On the other hand, Mozambique gained independence only in June 1975 following the collapse of the Estado Novo regime in Lisbon. This longevity over four centuries of continuous rule in both territories makes Mozambique and Goa as an interesting pair for studying how colonial institutions work their way into the political and developmental fabric of successor states.

The curiosity in the study of colonial legacies has grown substantially since the 1990s, driven by a wave of quantitative and comparative historical scholarship linking colonial-era institutions to present-day governance and economic outcomes. However, within this literature Portugal's empire occupies a peripheral position, often noted in passing references but rarely subjected to sustained comparative analysis. This neglect is especially pronounced in the Indian case: the colonial history of Goa has been largely subsumed within nationalist narratives centred on British India, treated only as an oddity rather than a substantive comparative site.

This study addresses both these gaps simultaneously. By comparing Mozambique and Goa within a shared analytical framework, it situates the Portuguese imperial case more firmly within comparative colonial studies while also recovering the colonial experience of Goa as analytically consequential in its own right. The two cases are fascinating in their combination of deep structural similarity and sharp postcolonial divergence, shared Lusitanian legal, administrative, and religious frameworks on one side and profoundly different decolonization processes, postcolonial ideologies, and developmental outcomes on the other.

Methodology and Limitations of the study

This paper uses a comparative historical method deriving from the tradition of Barrington Moore (1966), Skocpol (1979), and Tilly (1990), and continued more recently in the comparative colonial legacies literature (Mahoney, 2010; Lange, Mahoney and vom Hau, 2006). This approach is not based on statistical analysis of a large population of cases, but on the careful selection of a few cases on theoretical grounds for close, structured comparison, to develop and test causal arguments about how colonial institutions influence postcolonial outcomes. The analysis is based on secondary sources on Mozambique and



Goa, colonial and post-colonial administrative and census data, as reported in the literature, and existing cross-national measures of state capacity, literacy and welfare outcomes.

The African case is Mozambique and the Asian subnational case is Goa. The case selection is based on the fact that both territories had been under the Portuguese for four hundred years. There are two reasons for the case selection. First, it fills a gap in the literature on comparative colonial legacies, which, although longer-lasting than the British, French, or Belgian empires and covering territory in Africa, Asia, and South America, has only received intermittent attention (Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson, 2001; Nunn, 2008; Lange, Mahoney and vom Hau, 2006), while the field of comparative colonial and precolonial legacies has expanded greatly (Wilfahrt, 2021; Chlouba, Pierskalla and Wibbels, 2023; Neupert-Wentz and Müller-Crepon, 2024). Second, it brings a South-South comparative perspective that is lacking in the decolonisation literature, comparing an African sovereign state with a South Asian subnational territory, both having a Lusophone colonial past. Along with , this paper adopts the concept of contingent path dependence as an analytical tool. This conception lies somewhere between the strong path dependency accounts which suggest that the colonial past leaves little space for the postcolonial present, and the voluntarist accounts which emphasize that the colonial past did not fix the postcolonial present trajectory, but rather restricted the choice of options for postcolonial actors. This is done through three analytical lenses: bureaucratic capacity, legal continuity, and centre-periphery relations, rather than the one lens found in previous comparative studies (Acemoglu, 2001; Lange, 2006; Mahoney, 2010), which allows for a comparison that includes the various ways in which the same colonial architecture generated different outcomes in the domains of administration, law, and political economy.

Colonial Legacies: Theoretical Frameworks

There has been an enormous amount of literature on the impact of colonialism on postcolonial politics and development, and considerable disagreement over the same. In the mid-twentieth century modernisation theorists (Rostow, 1960) tended to see colonial institutions as potential vehicles of development, as they carried over property rights, legal order and infrastructure to the successor states. On the other hand, dependency and world-systems theories saw colonialism as a structural cause of underdevelopment, as they extracted surplus and precluded autonomous industrialisation, continuing into the postcolonial phase (Frank, 1967; Wallerstein, 1974).

Recent scholarship in this area has transcended this two-sided perspective by examining the impact of colonialism in specific institutional terms. The paper by Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson (2001) rely on the variation in settler mortality across Europe to isolate the long run effect of the type of colonial institutions on income, with inclusive 'settler colonies' versus extractive ones with predatory institutional arrangements set up by Europeans. On the other hand, Lange, Mahoney and Vom Hau (2006) offer a different view, demonstrating that the extent of colonial state-bureaucratisation rather than simply the presence of settlers is a more important determinant of postcolonial development pathways. Herbst (2000) emphasizes the territorial dimension, claiming that the inability to establish control over sparsely populated African territories led to structural weaknesses in postcolonial



states' capacity. While Nunn (2008) has demonstrated that the slave trades in Africa, which were largely pre-colonial were harmful in the long run because they wrought havoc on social trust and political institutions.

Some of these arguments are substantiated by the Portuguese colonial case, and others are complicated. Portuguese colonialism was extractive: the indigenato system, forced labour (chibalo in Mozambique), compulsory cultivation of cash crops, and the use of concessionary companies as agents of economic extraction were all part of the extractive model. The Estado Novo regime under Salazar, meanwhile, added a unique ideological gloss: lusotropicalism, an ideology of Brazilian sociology by Gilberto Freyre (1993), which claimed that Portuguese colonialism was an unprecedentedly humane enterprise, marked by miscegenation, Catholic universalism and a supposed absence of racial hierarchy. This ideological construction has also led to creation of certain institutional structures, including the "assimilado" system and the Catholic missionary educational structure, which were different in significant ways from the French or British colonial models.

This paper focuses on two additional theoretical streams. Young (1994) provides a multi-dimensional analysis of the colonial state as an ideological project, a legal-bureaucratic structure and a security apparatus, positing that the postcolonial states inherited the three legacies in varying amounts. A feature of Portuguese colonial governance, formalised by the indigenato system, is captured by the concept of the bifurcated colonial state developed by Mamdani (1996) between the 'civic' sphere of citizens subject to civil law, and the 'native' sphere of subjects governed through customary authority. The decolonization and re-negotiation of this dichotomy was a central issue in both Mozambique and Goa.

In addition, Mahoney's (2010) comparative historical study of Spanish American colonialism, study, in which he demonstrates the interaction between path-dependent colonial institutional legacies and 'reactive sequences' – a series of contingent political decisions that either amplify or mitigate initial colonial legacies. The framework will help in this paper to explain the Mozambique-Goa divergence, which resulted in divergent outcomes despite the same colonial beginnings and contrasting decolonisation processes and postcolonial political decisions.

Portuguese Colonial Rule: An Overview

Administrative Structures

Portugal's involvement in Mozambique goes back to the early sixteenth century, when trading posts were established along the coast and prazos (lands granted to private individuals) and the gold and ivory business of the Swahili coast were developed. This loose network evolved into a formal colonial state over the course of four centuries, a process that was most pronounced during the Estado Novo regime of the 1930s and 1940s. The Portuguese colonial administration in Mozambique was highly dualistic, with a formal structure based on a metropolitan Portuguese bureaucracy with its headquarters in Lourenço Marques (Maputo) and indirect administration through the régulos (traditional chiefs), who were based in the rural interior and who acted as intermediaries in tax collection, forced labour recruitment and maintenance of order.



In Goa, the Portuguese took over in 1510, when Afonso de Albuquerque conquered the city of Goa and the Estado da Índia (state of India) – the name given to the Portuguese empire in Asia – was administered with a relatively high degree of administrative centrality. The territory was divided into *concelhos* (administrative districts) headed by a Governor-General, who had executive powers with the oversight of Lisbon. In the twentieth century, Goa's administration was more directly controlled from the metropole than Mozambique's and civil law was applied more comprehensively to a larger fraction of the population, which was a result of the longer period of Portuguese settlement and missionary activity.

The Indigenato System and Social Policy

Juridically, the *indigenato* system, enshrined in the *Estatuto dos Indígenas* (1926, revised in 1954), was the basis of Portuguese colonial social policy. In this system, the colonised majority were considered *indígenas* and deprived of Portuguese citizenship, forced to work under the Portuguese and limited in their freedom of movement, with their affairs managed by *régulos* via customary law. A small minority whose Portuguese literacy and economic independence and whose adoption of 'civilised' practices could be proven could petition for "assimilado" status, which meant they would become Portuguese citizens and no longer be subject to indigenous law. The assimilation rates were very low in Mozambique: according to official statistics, in 1950, the number of "assimilados" did not exceed 5,000 in a population of more than five million. In Goa, a slightly larger share of the population had become part of the Portuguese civic order, which had been the case for a longer time due to the Catholic missionary activity and the consolidation of a Lusophone Catholic elite in the Old Conquests territories around the original capital.

The legal frameworks and land tenure

The Portuguese colonial law in both territories established a complicated overlapping of legal systems. In Mozambique there was a split between civil law (applicable to *assimilados* and Europeans) and customary law (applicable to *indígenas*). The state's assertion of ultimate sovereignty over all land under the doctrine of *terra nullius*, which legitimised widespread alienation of land to European settlers, *prazo* holders, and concessionary companies such as the Mozambique Company and the Zambezia Company, which enjoyed quasi-governmental authority over large tracts of land under royal charter. In Goa, the law was more reflective of the longer colonial presence. Under Portuguese law, the *comunidades*, pre-colonial village-level land commons, were codified and regulated, and a landowning class of Goan Catholics (the *bhaticars*) has consolidated the control over agricultural land within a legal framework that hybridised Portuguese civil law with pre-existing social arrangements. The *comunidades* system in Goa and the division of customary law and civil law in Mozambique were resilient and contested aspects of the postcolonial legal landscape. In Goa, the "comunidades" have managed to resist the process of integration with India, and continue to be active areas of land tenure conflict and local identity politics. In Mozambique, the land issue emerged as one of the main battlegrounds of postcolonial political struggle, since the nationalisation policy of FRELIMO was challenged by customary rights and the aspirations of the former settlers.



Decolonisation: Contrasting Paths

This section will analyse the processes through which Mozambique and Goa liberated from Portuguese rule. There is excessive divergence, and they are almost different historical phenomena, and this difference was one of the most potent ones to shape the subsequent postcolonial courses.

The quest for freedom was part of the larger wave of anti-colonial Indian nationalism and non-alignment foreign policy in Goa. Following India's independence in 1947, Nehru's government sought the return of Goa, Daman and Diu, but Salazar rejected this demand, claiming the territories were provinces of Portugal and not colonies. After years of peaceful satyagraha protests, transborder marches and rising international pressure, Operation Vijay was launched on 18th December 1961 by India. The Portuguese resistance was quickly defeated in 36 hours. The integration was fast, non-violent and, most importantly, left the existing administrative structure largely intact. Portuguese officials, judges and civil servants stayed in their offices, and were permitted to remain in service of the state of India. Importantly, this was a transition and not a rupture.

Mozambique, however, had taken a different route to independence, having fought an armed struggle for over a decade. The FRELIMO was established in exile in Dar es Salaam in 1962 and its armed struggle began in September 1964. The Portuguese military strategy was to send over 50,000 soldiers, to conduct forced villagisation programmes (aldeamentos) aimed at eliminating civilian support for the guerrillas, and to carry out counter-insurgency operations, including the Wiriyamu massacre in December 1972, where Portuguese forces killed several hundred civilians in Tete Province. With the war in Mozambique and the Angolan and Guinea-Bissauan wars raging at the same time, it became impossible to continue the war financially and politically. On 25 April 1974, the Carnation Revolution, the military coup in Lisbon, led to the end of the Estado Novo and paved the way for a quick decolonisation. Under the Lusaka Accords of September 1974, FRELIMO was acknowledged as the sole negotiating partner and Mozambique was formally independent on 25 June 1975, with Samora Machel as the first President.

The nature of FRELIMO's struggle for liberation had a significant impact on the nature of the postcolonial state that it created. During the war years, the organisation had built up a military-political apparatus and had gained power with a definite Marxist-Leninist ideology of changing the social structures of the colonies, mobilising the peasantry and establishing a one-party state. Shortly after independence FRELIMO nationalised land, housing, education, health services and the banking system, and expelled most of the Portuguese settler population (around 200,000 people left within a year) and embarked on a bold state-led socialist development programme. This represented a deliberate and radical rupture with colonial institutional arrangements a choice that both reflected FRELIMO's political ideology and stored up considerable postcolonial conflict.

Political Stability: Contrasting Trajectories

One of the main concerns of the colonial legacies literature is: whether there is any relationship between colonial rule and postcolonial political instability? Mozambique and Goa provide interesting cases to explore this relationship.



The civil war has been a devastating event in Mozambique's postcolonial political history. FRELIMO's radical transformation programme of forced villagisation (*Operação Produção*), the repression of religious institutions and the elimination of the chieftaincy system produced significant rural discontent which was exploited by external actors such as Rhodesian state. This governance gap and administrative void directly contributed to the weakness in service delivery systems which is exacerbated by the civil war (Bertelsen, 2016). The ethnographic description of postwar Mozambique by Bertelsen (2016) reveals that in practice, chiefly authority was never completely eradicated, remaining instead in local notions of spiritual and territorial legitimacy, which the postcolonial state could not completely incorporate, and which enabled the reorganisation of RENAMO around complaints of the chiefs' authority decades after independence. Following the end of the Rhodesian state in 1979, the apartheid South African government organised, financed and armed RENAMO (*Resistência Nacional Moçambicana*), turning what could have been localised unrest into a full-scale proxy war. This conflict, which began around 1977 and ended in 1992, claimed an estimated one million lives, displaced nearly five million people and destroyed a significant portion of the nation's physical and institutional infrastructure. The political situation remains fragile, with RENAMO periodically resorting to armed conflict, including resumption of fighting in 2013-2019 and current instability in Cabo Delgado, following the signing of the General Peace Accord in Rome in October 1992, which ended formal fighting and introduced a multiparty democratic system.

However, the postcolonial political history of Goa is not the same. Goa became a Union Territory in 1962 and was granted full statehood in 1987 and has since been part of the Indian competitive electoral democracy. Political volatility has been significant at the state level, with changes of coalition, high rates of floor-crossing and corruption associated with the mining and tourism industries, but this volatility has been dealt with through constitutional and electoral processes, rather than armed conflict. The mining scandal of 2011-2012, which led to a judicial commission inquiry and temporary suspension of iron ore extraction, showed the strong linkage between the political elites and extractive industry, but this was solved through institutional channels.

The pertinent question is how much colonial legacies accounted for this divergence? There are a number of points which are worth emphasising. The nature of decolonisation is important: the violent nature of the Mozambican independence, which included a decade of armed conflict, and the resulting loss of skilled administration left the state capacity vacuum that made governance very challenging and opened opportunities for external-sponsored destabilisation. The peaceful and rapid military integration in Goa and the subsequent absorption in the administrative framework of India was less traumatic. Second, FRELIMO's ideology (however understandable in the context of the depth of the colonial oppression and the socialist currents in 1970s African politics) alienated large parts of the rural population and gave the material basis for RENAMO's mobilisation. Third, apart from colonial legacy, Cold War geopolitics and regional destabilisation campaigns by Rhodesia and apartheid South Africa bear the burden of responsibility to Mozambique's civil war.

Colonialism, however, did also create structural vulnerabilities. The indigenato system's unbalanced division of society, its failure to allow for autonomous political organisation, and the lack of development of an educated indigenous middle class, as well as the uneven



administrative reach, all rendered Mozambique poorly equipped to face the challenges of postcolonial governance. Contrary in Goa, the presence of a small, but competent, Catholic educated professional class established in the colonial era, that caused social tensions in minority-majority relations, also made it easier to make a transition to institutions in Goa.

Another aspect of the political volatility comparison is the importance of ethnic and regional politics. Portuguese colonial rule in Mozambique, which was nominally based on universalist claims of lusotropicalism, was in practice based on ethnic and regional differences: labour recruitment was skewed towards certain groups, missionary work was targeted at particular regions, and administrative appointments were linked to geography and the ethnic makeup of the FRELIMO leadership. Such patterns created fault lines which could be exploited by postcolonial political competition, and RENAMO's approach of regional mobilisation. In Goa, the Old Conquests, predominantly Catholic, and the New Conquests were, predominantly Hindu, have also been the basis for postcolonial identity politics in Goa, albeit without a bloody conflict. The political significance of caste, religion, and sub-regional identity in Goan politics is a result of both the colonial administrative and social policies that transformed pre-existing social hierarchies into stable political categories and the salience of these divisions in pre-colonial Goa.

One of the elements that require special attention in Mozambique is the RENAMO insurgency, which was a way of refracting and magnifying the colonial legacy. RENAMO was not an automatic outgrowth of pre-existing colonial resentments; it was carefully created by Rhodesian and South African intelligence as a destabilising force and its political agenda was largely anti-FRELIMO and not anti-colonial. The civil war is not simply a legacy of colonialism, but it can't be explained without an understanding of the legacy of colonialism in terms of its creation of regional inequalities and the postcolonial government's failure to adequately engage with that legacy.

State Formation: Institutional Legacies and Trajectories

Bureaucratic Capacity

The departure of approximately 200,000 Portuguese settlers, officials, and technicians following Mozambique's independence in 1975 precipitated an immediate and severe crisis of state capacity. Under colonial rule, indigenous Mozambicans had been systematically excluded from senior administrative and bureaucratic positions, leaving a profound shortage of qualified personnel at the moment of transition. While FRELIMO had developed an effective cadre of military and political leaders during the liberation struggle, most lacked experience in public administration, economic governance, and state management. Moreover, the relatively small number of educated Mozambicans from assimilated backgrounds was insufficient to sustain the complex functions of a modern state apparatus. Faced with these constraints, the new government increasingly relied on advisers and technical experts from Cuba, the Soviet Union, and other Eastern Bloc countries, while also drawing upon FRELIMO's party structures. However, these institutions had been designed primarily to support guerrilla warfare and political mobilization rather than the administration of a national economy or the management of a complex bureaucratic system. This governance gap and administrative void directly contributed to



the weakness in service delivery systems which is exacerbated by the civil war. The immediate post-independence vacuum of capacity was exacerbated and in some ways replicated by the international statebuilding interventions that came after the 1992 peace accord. Sabaratnam (2017) maintains that donor-led statebuilding in Mozambique was based on Eurocentric notions of how a 'functioning' postcolonial state should be, and that it tended to marginalise Mozambican political agency, including that of the peasantry, in similar ways to the colonial and one-party eras.

Goa's smaller size, the higher educational level of its population, and its decisions to give a choice to have Portuguese administrators who worked under the Indian state after the integration of Goa, gave it a degree of bureaucratic continuity that was lacking in Mozambique. The integration of Goa into the Indian Union brought its administration under the framework of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), providing access to greater institutional and financial resources while also exposing governance to challenges that have been identified in the literature on Indian public administration, including political interference, patronage networks, bureaucratic rigidity, and corruption (Gupta, 2012; Aiyar & Bhattacharya, 2016).

Legal Continuity

The durability of Portuguese legal legacies has been particularly noticing in Goa. The Goa Civil Code which incorporates the Portuguese Civil Code of 1867 and relates to family law, marriage, succession and property continues to be the civil law of Goa for all its inhabitants, irrespective of their religion. This is a special feature of the Indian constitutional order – the state of Goa (and now Uttarakhand) have operational uniform civil code that supersedes the personal laws that apply to India based on religion. The Goa Civil Code has been hailed as a secular uniformity and condemned as a colonial imposition which does not reflect local customary practices. The persistence of it is a direct and inviolate colonial institutional legacy, which has been sustained by successive state governments and confirmed even by the Supreme Court of India.

The fact that the Goa Civil Code survived also brings to light a larger theoretical issue concerning the impact of subnational status on the passing on of colonial legacies. Legal reform in a sovereign postcolonial state depends on political will and capacity, and the colonial legal legacy is pitted against the national political needs to establish legal sovereignty through re-coding. In a subnational unit in a federal system, however, the dynamics are different. The Goa Civil Code's survival after integration was, in part, due to the fact that it was in the interests of the dominant Catholic landowning community, because the Indian judicial system did not have the institutional capacity to immediately enforce a single alternative, and in part because the Code was politically elevated as a symbol of Goa's distinctiveness in the Indian union. It was not only the colonial legal legacy which was preserved, but also through conscious political decisions taken in the postcolonial era, the choices made reflecting the power structure of Goan society and the special relationship between Goa and the Indian state.

In Mozambique, the first idea of the postcolonial government was to eliminate colonial law and its replacement by a socialist legal system in its entirety. In practice, some provisions



of the Portuguese civil code and the Portuguese commercial code continued to exist because of institutional inertia, especially where new laws had not yet been passed. Since the adoption of the post-1990 Constitution, the country has adopted a multiparty democratic system and a formal rule of law, but legal reform has been inconsistent and the relationship between formal state law and customary practice in land tenure and family affairs is still disputed and unresolved. Bertelsen (2016) describes this as a situation of 'multiple sovereignties', in which the state law, customary authority, and other forms of political legitimacy exist in parallel and compete, but never merge into a single hierarchy.

Centre-Periphery Relations

Mozambique's long coastline and an extensive hinterland linked to the coast mainly for extraction purposes left it with a postcolonial state with weak centre-periphery ties and high regional disparities. FRELIMO had been strongest in the northern provinces of Cabo Delgado and Niassa, and its ethnic and regional strength had been concentrated in the north, while RENAMO had attracted much support from the centre and south, and aligned itself with the regional political divisions of the colonial era. The spatial and regional aspects of political contestation remain in modern Mozambican politics and are a direct, albeit mediated, legacy of colonialism. This territorial imbalance of state authority is not just a historical legacy, but a dynamic feature of the Mozambican state's constitution: Bertelsen (2016) suggests that state power in Mozambique has always been distributed unevenly across territory, and is produced through ongoing negotiation between the centre and local sources of legitimacy.

In the case of Goa, territorial integration into the Indian Union answered one aspect of the centre-periphery question by placing the territory within a working federal structure with a set of mechanisms for the allocation of resources between the centre and the state. However, the integration also created fresh conflicts over the issue of cultural autonomy of the Goans, the inclusion of Konkani as an official language, and the identity issues of the Catholic minority in a Hindu majority republic. The limits of Goan cultural and political identity – and the connections between these and the Portuguese colonial history – have been a constant object of political contestation, as mobilised by regional parties, cultural associations, and occasionally by economic interests defending legal arrangements specific to the state.

Welfare Provision Through an Analytical Lens: (Education Healthcare and Social Protection)

"Always remember that the people are not fighting for ideas, nor for what is in men's minds. The people fight and accept the sacrifices demanded by the struggle in order to gain material advantages, to live better and in peace, to benefit from progress, and for the better future of their children. National liberation, the struggle against colonialism, the construction of peace, progress and independence are hollow words devoid of any significance unless they can



be translated into a real improvement of living conditions” (Amílcar Cabral, 1973, p. 101).

Amílcar Cabral's believed that National liberation was an achievement but it cannot by itself satisfy the aspirations of anti-colonial struggles unless it will be translated into a real improvement of living conditions. Cabral reminds us that the ultimate measure of independence is not just the transfer of power but the state's capacity to deliver better life to its people through accessible, fair and just public services and inclusive development. From this perspective, we have to analyse how the provision of welfare becomes a critical indicator of post-colonial state performance. The institutional instruments by which states translate the promises of independence into improvements in human well-being are education, healthcare and social protection.

Education

One of the Mozambique's legacies from Portuguese colonization was an extreme dearth of education. The Church-state educational partnership had resulted in very low literacy rates at time of independence which was below 10 per cent of the population. In the late 1970s, FRELIMO responded with an ambitious literacy campaign and rapid primary school expansion, and made gains in school enrolment in the early post-independence years. The civil war then set back much of this progress: thousands of rural schools were destroyed or abandoned and millions of children lost access to schooling. The problem was compounded by the introduction of school fees and the restriction of the educational budget as a result of structural adjustment conditionalities imposed since the late 1980s. The process of recovery has been slow and, although there has been considerable improvement in net enrolment rates since the 1992 peace accord, quality and completion rates are still very problematic.

On contrary the educational base of Goa was much stronger when it came out of the Portuguese fold. The longer the Catholic missionary presence, and the smaller the scale of the mission area (smaller territory) had resulted in literacy rates of 35.41 per cent at the time of integration (Indian Budget database, MoF), significantly higher than the Indian national average(28.3%) of the early 1960s. Reflecting the effects of incorporation into the federal system of India, access to national education programmes and central government funding was introduced, and the legacy of colonial-era Catholic educational institutions, many of which remained in operation even after 1961, contributed to the continued infrastructural capacity. Goa has consistently high literacy rates (88.7% per cent) and has a strong network of secondary and tertiary education institutions.

Healthcare

In Mozambique, the provision of healthcare was mainly geared towards the needs of the European and “assimilado” population, while rural Africans received very little healthcare. During the postcolonial period, FRELIMO's government focused on health as a socialist right and created a system of rural health posts, while promoting preventive health care.



Similar to the realm of education, the health infrastructure was ravished by civil war. Access was further reduced for the poorest with the implementation of healthcare fees under structural adjustment. Mozambique faces substantial health-system challenges characterized by elevated maternal mortality, a high burden of HIV infection among adults, and the adverse health consequences of the ongoing conflict in Cabo Delgado, which has displaced populations and disrupted access to essential health services (World Health Organization, 2025 *Mozambique: Health data overview*).

In comparison to Mozambique, Goa's colonial healthcare system was relatively well developed, in that there were functioning hospitals, dispensaries and basic medical training facilities at the time of integration. Post-integration, Goa enjoyed the benefits of Indian national health programmes, central government investments, and the economic benefits accruing from remittance and, subsequently, tourism (Bastos, 2002; Menezes, 2008). The health indicators in Goa today are comparable with the national average of India and close to those of middle-income countries of Southeast Asia.

Social Protection

A significant formal social protection system was lacking during Portuguese colonial rule in Goa and Mozambique. In Mozambique, the doctrine of the *Estado Novo*, inspired by Catholicism and oriented towards the community, attributed the responsibility for welfare to family and Church, not to the state. As a result, social protection was mostly absent for the indigenous people.

Civil war and structural adjustment stunted FRELIMO's postcolonial project of building a socialist welfare state. Social protection in Mozambique is largely dependent on external development assistance, and some cash transfer programmes have only a small impact on the poor. On the other hand, in Goa, integration with India led to access to the national social protection programmes such as the Public Distribution System, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, and the state pension programmes. Goa's relatively high-income levels, due to mining, tourism and remittances from the diaspora have also allowed for more generous social spending at the state level than most other Indian states.

South- South Comparative Perspective

The principal axis of comparison in colonial legacies scholarship has been dominated by North-South axis, as European countries compared to their African, Asian, and/or with Latin American colonies. Intra-regional comparisons (in Africa or in South Asia) are also well established. De Juan and Pierskalla (2017), highlighted that existing work "has made important contributions to understanding colonialism's long-term effects on political, social, and economic development" but there is need for greater attention to "internal dynamics of colonial intervention" and "non-institutional transmission mechanisms that cross-regional comparison is particularly well placed to illuminate".

While holding the colonial power constant (both regions were ruled by Portugal, under similar legal, administrative, and ideological structures, particularly after the consolidation



of the Estado Novo in the 1930s), and changing the postcolonial institutional setting (an African nation-state versus a subnational region of a South Asian federation), the comparison is close to a controlled analytical experiment. It enables the colonial legacy to be somewhat separated from the postcolonial factors, and what remains the same, even when the postcolonial circumstances are so different, can be confidently attributed to the colonial legacy; where changes illuminate the role of postcolonial choice and context. This can be seen as the comparative logic of “subnational comparison” as described by Snyder (2001) and also as the comparative logic of “cross-regional South-South comparison” where the units of analysis have a shared colonial history.

In a South-South comparison of colonial legacies in higher education between South Africa and Brazil, Majee and Ress (2020) have shown that “internationalization of higher education has been largely theorised from a Euro-American perspective, with less consideration given to the impact of colonial expansion in postcolonial settings”. The same is true of the wider colonial legacies’ literature: the methodological and theoretical assumptions embedded in North-South comparisons – where the North is the norm and the South is the deviant case and this does not always apply to comparisons between two colonized territories that have been colonized by the same power. A South-South framework is an analytical approach that moves the analytical baseline from the colonizer to the experience of colonialism itself, so that the analyst is able to question not what the colonizer did to these territories but how those territories worked upon and transformed and what the colonizers left behind.

Colonial Memory, Identity and the Lusophone World

The liberation movement FRELIMO has created an official memory of colonialism in Mozambique that portrays the Portuguese colonial past as a period of systematic exploitation and violence (chibalo forced labour, Wiriyamu massacre in 1972, and the humiliations of the indigenato), in which the armed struggle is presented as the founding national myth. In this ongoing conflict between this official state memory and the “insurgent counter-memory practices of civil society”, Peralta (2025) has explored how the Portuguese state has been hesitant to recognise the damage inflicted by its colonialism, while civil society actors in Portugal and Mozambique have become more vocal around demands for postcolonial justice. The Portuguese case is one of the elements of the transnational nature of colonial memory, linking the metropole to the former colonies.

Colonial memory is much more complex and ambivalent in Goa. A large portion of the Catholic community has cultural and linguistic ties with Portugal that are still felt today, as seen in the use of Portuguese in Catholic life and interactions with the Portuguese diaspora. As Sertler (2020) as documented, Goa's post-colonial situation involves “a far from straightforward” negotiation of colonial identities, marked by both the persistence of Portuguese cultural identification among the Catholic elite and the assertion of anti-colonial Hindu nationalist narratives by other segments of the population. This religious and caste division of colonial memory is a direct legacy of the Portuguese colonial practice of differential conversion and administrative integration that carved out Goa's social geography over four centuries.



As Penvenne and Macagno (2022) have pointed out, the right to Portuguese citizenship (which has been extended to all Goans born prior to 1961 and their descendants, has become a material force in the context of freedom of movement within the European Union. In the chapter 'Goans in Portugal', India-EU People Mobility (Cambridge University Press, 2015), Katharya Uma and Bhaumik document in detail that around 90 per cent of those who applied for Portuguese citizenship in Goa are Catholic and most of them are from the Old Conquests talukas of Tiswadi, Bardez and Salcete, the very talukas that were first and most intensively colonised and evangelised by the Portuguese. The citizenship path therefore extends the postcolonial privilege for those most fully colonised and thus allows them to continue to enjoy the same privileges as colonials, but in a new form.

Hindu Goan communities and political movements have shaped the colonial past in other ways, focusing on the forced conversions by the Inquisition (which the scholar Teotonio de Souza has documented, and which continued to some extent until the eighteenth century), the destruction of Hindu temples in the Old Conquests, and the long subordination of the majority Hindu population of Goa to a Catholic institutional framework. This contested colonial memory is explored in "Goa: A Post-Colonial Society Between Cultures" by Jackson (2016), who traces how the "problematic yet productive encounter between Europe and India" of Goa's history is continuing to influence identity claims in the postcolonial present.

On the macro level, the CPLP — The Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa), established in Lisbon on 17 July 1996, is the institutional manifestation of the postcolonial ties of the Lusophone world. It has expanded to nine member States across four continents and a total population of around 290 million (IOM, 2023, Migration Governance in the Community of Portuguese Language Countries). However, Nadobnik (2020) has suggested that the CPLP has been limited in its scope, as it has centred on cultural cooperation, and has also pointed out that the CPLP is an "institutional emanation of the idea of Lusophony" with its "enormous economic possibilities" underutilized. Portuguese is also the official language of Mozambique, placing it in this world-wide Lusophone network, but also maintaining the colonial hierarchy between Portuguese literate elites and Bantu language speaking majority. It is less direct in the case of Goa, since it has had a Lusophone relationship since 1961 but the historical Lusophone connection is a thread that ties the two cases together in a wider comparative perspective.

Diaspora and Postcolonial Development

The diaspora networks that developed in Mozambique and Goa are not just demographic; they are institutional products of divergent colonial and decolonising histories and their developmental implications reveal the postcolonial impact of Portuguese rule, not just through domestic processes but also across transnational lines.

The character of the Goan diaspora was influenced by multiple concurrent waves of migration, which were influenced by the legal and cultural heritage of Portuguese colonialism. In the colonial era, Goans went to Portuguese Africa, mostly to Mozambique, Kenya and Tanzania, as clerical workers and administrators in an intermediate position between the blacks and whites in between the colonial hierarchy that were facilitated by



their Catholic education and Portuguese citizenship (Chanda & Ghosh, 2012). After India annexed Goa in 1961, a second wave of migration started to Portugal, and many Portuguese went to the UK, the United States and Canada – a trend Chanda and Ghosh (2012) refer to as Goans having a hard time finding permanent employment in Portugal, and then using Lisbon as a stepping stone to the rest of Europe. A third wave, which is ongoing until today, is based on the right to Portuguese citizenship for those who were born in Goa prior to 1961 and their descendants. At the time of their study, according to a there was a waiting list of 12,000-13,000 persons applying for passports at the Portuguese consulate office in Panaji and about 17,000 Goans who were already holding Portuguese citizenship in the United Kingdom. Importantly, this access to citizenship is not socially homogeneous; as Uma and Bhaumik (2015) show, some 90 per cent of applicants are from the Catholic community, which is concentrated in the Old Conquests talukas of Tiswadi, Bardez and Salcete, the areas of earliest and most intensive Portuguese missionary and administrative settlement (India-EU People Mobility, Cambridge University Press). Citizenship access in the postcolonial period thus reproduces the colonial hierarchy of assimilation, the legal legacy of assimilation is most beneficial for those whose ancestors were the first to be incorporated into the Portuguese civic order.

This diaspora has a substantial impact on development. The funds remitted by the Goans who have migrated to the Gulf states, the United Kingdom, Portugal and North America have been a major source of income for the households in Goa and helped in investment in education, houses etc., which have resulted in the unusually high per capita income in Goa as compared to the Indian average. The diaspora's cosmopolitan professions have also helped Goa become part of the international tourism and service industries, with economic multiplier effects that can be traced, to the cultural capital that has been built under Portuguese colonization.

The Mozambican diaspora is a different case. Labour migration from Mozambique to South Africa has a long history, with pre-independence migration to South Africa driven by the colonial mining economy which systematically recruited labour from southern Mozambique by bilateral contracts with the mines on the Witwatersrand. The massive colonial-era migration of labour from Mozambique to South Africa has been maintained and diversified in the postcolonial era with migrants transitioning from formal employment in the mines to a range of economic activities, many of which are informal, according to study of migration and remittances from Mozambique to South Africa during the post-apartheid era, conducted by Mercandalli, Nshimbi, and Moyo (2017) in the period 2009-2013 (Migration, Cross-Border Trade and Development in Africa, Palgrave Macmillan). The consequences of this change from formalised colonial era labour recruitment to informal post-apartheid labour migration are important: it has lowered the proportion of remittances flowing through formal banking systems, threatened the capacity for deferred remuneration, and lowered the development potential of what is still a structurally significant source of household income in southern Mozambique.

The impact of these remittance transfers on development is real but limited. According to Mercandalli et al. (2017), remittance-receiving households in southern Mozambique are generally better off than non-migrant households, but that migration does not necessarily bring about structural transformation of the sending economy, but rather perpetuates a "dependent relationship" between sending households and the South African labour



market. This is consistent with the existing literature on African remittances, which shows that remittances serve as an important alternative source of development finance that has a positive direct impact on economic growth, but such impact is moderated by the quality of the financial sector, which is still weak in Mozambique due to the legacies of the post-conflict reconstruction and a shallow banking system (International Migration, 60(5), 252–270).

The comparative analysis of both diasporas is analytically relevant to the argument of this paper. The Goan diaspora's EU citizenship advantage, in turn, is a direct result of the legal nature of Portuguese colonialism in Asia, and of Portugal's political choice not to recognize the annexation of 1961 as legitimate (however this was recognized in 1974 after carnation revolution), which has created a developmental divergence between the two territories; not pre-ordained by any aspect of the colonial order. By contrast, the structural embedment of the Mozambican diaspora in the South African mining economy is a legacy of the colonial era, that the postcolonial state has yet to overcome; and which continues to direct Mozambican human resources towards South Africa, instead of directing it to the purpose of domestic development. In both the contexts, colonial legacies are enacted in terms of diaspora formations; although in very different institutional forms: -in Goa through the inheritance of Portuguese citizenship, and in Mozambique through the inheritance of migrant labour's spatial economy

Conclusion

The Portuguese colonial rule which lasted for over four centuries in Mozambique and Goa (India) profoundly altered their political and social structures, leaving enduring legacies. The paper has demonstrated how shared colonial edifice led to diverse political and developmental outcomes in these two regions after decolonization owing to political volatility, postcolonial state formation and bureaucratic capacity, welfare provisions for education, health and social protection. The divergent paths to decolonization are significant: a decade of armed conflict in Mozambique resulted in the loss of skilled administration and created vacuum in state bureaucratic capacity; opening opportunities for external-sponsored destabilisation. On the other hand, Goa witnessed a degree of bureaucratic continuity owing to several factors such as the smaller size of territory of Goa, the higher educational level of its population, and the decision to continue administrators hired under Portuguese rule to work under the Indian state after the integration of Goa. This eventually led to better state and administrative capacity.

This study has examined the legal, administrative and social policy arrangements put in place under Portuguese rule in Mozambique and Goa and the legal and administrative continuity and disjuncture following the divergent paths of decolonization. As the scholarship on decolonization has demonstrated that decolonization should not be viewed as a single moment of rupture, but regarded as an extended and uneven process through which postcolonial states reworked and inherited institutions. This research has analysed how divergent route to decolonization influenced state capacity, welfare provisions, and political order in different ways in Mozambique and Goa. This perspective allows us to engage more sensibly with ongoing debates about colonial legacies in general and more



specifically, the influence of colonial legacy in generating political instability and/or supporting forms of institutional continuity and postcolonial development.

By examining a Lusophone African nation state alongside a postcolonial subnational state in South Asia, the paper brings a South-South comparative perspective that is essentially absent from existing studies on decolonization. The paper has focussed on the political and institutional realities of both regions, tracing how colonial legacies were shaped by local political agency, distinct paths to decolonization, and postcolonial policy choices over time. This allows us to argue that colonial legacy is not necessarily deterministic of the future processes and outcomes. However, the influence of colonial rule cannot be treated as insignificant and more attention need to be paid to the path and process of decolonization. The comparison of Mozambique and Goa provides evidence for contingent path dependence theory; emphasizing that the effects of colonial legacy are mediated by historical contingencies and actor choices.

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