

Examining the Socio-economic and Health Conditions of Afro-descendants in COSTA RICA



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Black Studies Across the Americas- Costa Rica Team

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Introduction

In this project, we examine the socio-economic and health conditions of Afro-descendants in Costa Rica by considering various sources of data, published studies, and journal articles. In the first section, we determine whether Census of the National Institute of Statistics and Census of Costa Rica (INEC) has the appropriate data disaggregated by ethnic groups for our analyses. We also consider other sources of data (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization-UNESCO) and reports (United Nations Development Programme-UNDP) for analyzing our variables of interest. In the second section, we study the differences in educational outcomes between Afro-descendants and the rest of the population (through a province-level analysis). We then examine differences in employment outcomes, namely, unemployment rate, labour participation rate, and economic dependency rate across ethnic groups in Section 3. We supplement this analysis by uncovering important trends in sectoral level of employment data across provinces in Section 4. This sheds light on differences in economic mobility by ethnic groups in Costa Rica. In Section 5, we study health conditions of Afro-descendants in Costa Rica by considering indicators that provide information on the share of population with disabilities and medical insurance across provinces. The results obtained in Sections 1-5 are then situated within the historical and political context of Costa Rica in Section 6. The final portion, Section 7, presents conclusions, references and sources.

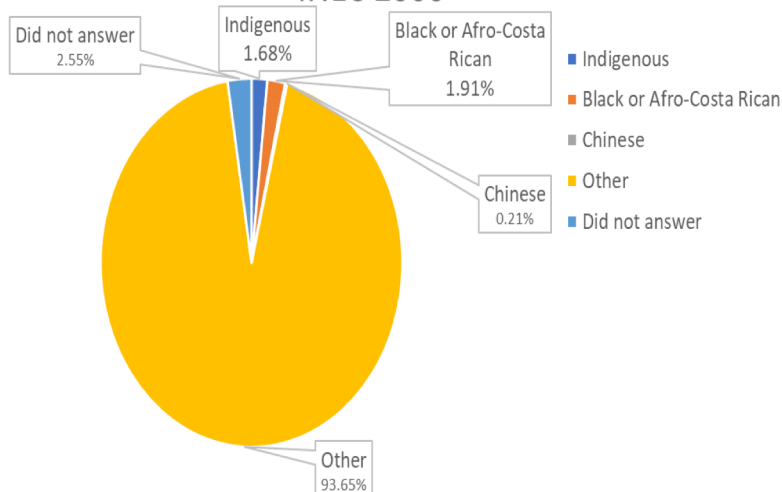
1 Demographic Composition of Costa Rica

Contributor: Arturo Alejo

Costa Rica Census Data (INEC 2000 & 2011)

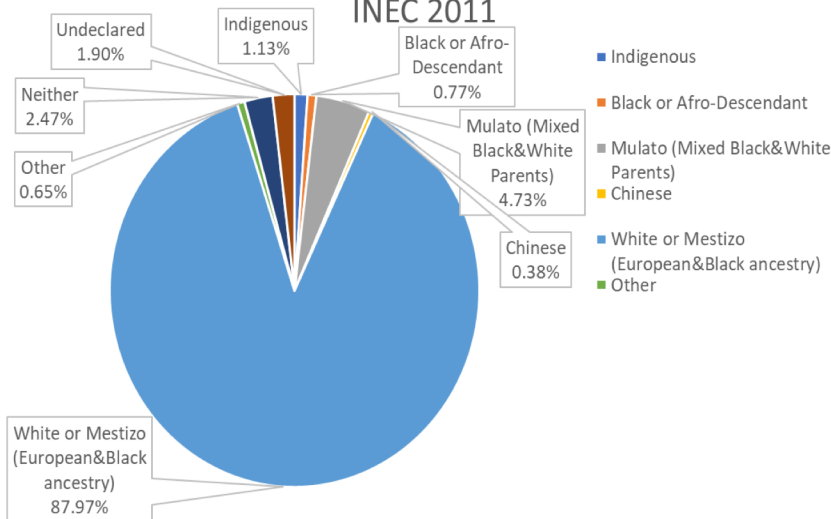
Costa Rica Population Distribution by Ethnicity

INEC 2000



Costa Rica Population Distribution by Ethnicity

INEC 2011



Costa Rica Census Data

Population Distribution by Ethnicity, INEC 2000	
Ethnicity	Percent Totals
Indigenous	1.68%
Black or Afro-Costa Rican	1.91%
Chinese	0.21%
Other	93.66%
Did not answer	2.55%

Population Distribution by Ethnicity, INEC 2011	
Ethnicity	Percent Total if Answered 'Yes'
Indigenous	1.13%
Black or Afro-Descendant	0.77%
Mulato (Mixed Black&White Parents)	4.73%
Chinese	0.38%
White or Mestizo (European&Black ancestry)	87.97%
Other	0.65%
Neither	2.47%
Undeclared	1.90%

DISCUSSIONS

Ethnic group data sets only became available after 2011.

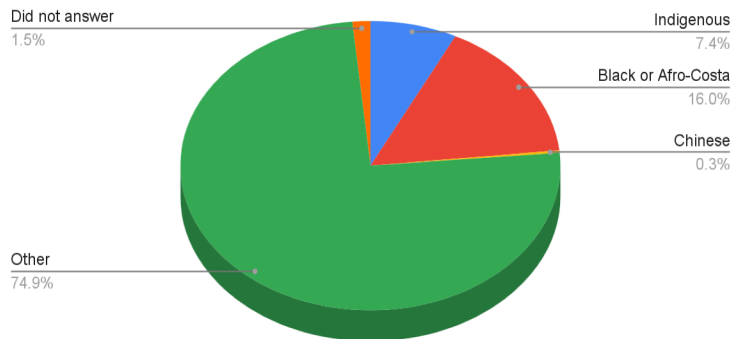
When comparing the Costa Rica census from 2000 and 2011, there are several differences that should be accounted for. The Census 2000 has five ethnicity options for Costa Ricans to self-identify, whereas the Census 2011 has a total of eight ethnicity options. The largest percentage of Costa Ricans in the census 2000 was *Other* with 93.66%. In contrast, the largest percentage of Costa Ricans in the census 2011 was *White or Mestizo* with 87.97%. The black Costa Rican population has decreased between the census 2000 and 2011 (1.91% Census 2000 vs 0.77% Census 2011). This can be accredited to the introduction of the ethnicity option *Mulato*, where the percent population is 4.73%.

Finding data on socioeconomic variables broken down by race.

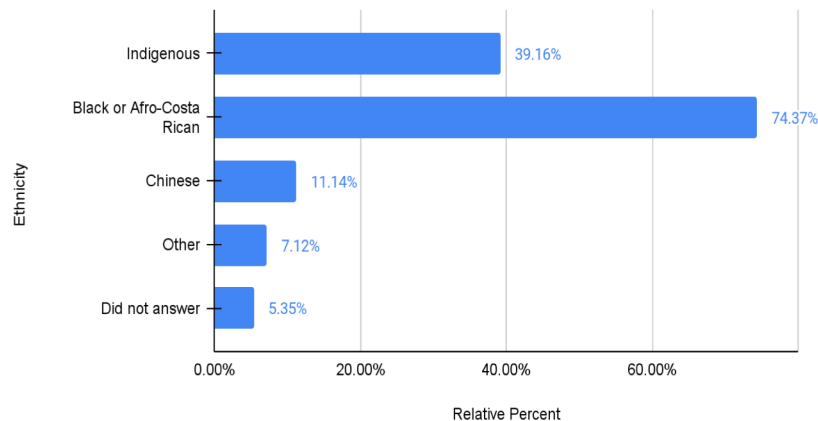
A challenge we encountered when conducting our research was that certain variables did not use ethnicity as a measure. For example, when researching which occupations have a large percentage of Afro-Costa Ricans, there was no relevant data broken down by race. Available data from the INEC regarding occupations measured education levels, provinces, and gender. To work around this issue, we analyzed which province of Costa Rica has the largest concentration of Afro-Costa Ricans and what the common occupation is within that province. From our research, we concluded that the province of Limón has the largest concentration of Afro-Costa Ricans.

Data on Limón, Costa Rica

Population Distribution of Limon, Costa Rica (INEC 2000)



Relative Percent of Ethnicity in Limon to Costa Rica (INEC 2000)



Data on Limón, Costa Rica

Population of Limón, Costa Rica by Ethnicity (INEC 2000)	
Ethnicity	Percent Total
Indigenous	7.37%
Black or Afro-Costa Rican	15.95%
Chinese	0.26%
Other	74.88%
Did not answer	1.53%

Population of Limón and Costa Rica by Ethnicity (INEC 2000)			
Ethnicity	Limón	Costa Rica	Relative Percent
Indigenous	25,016	63,876	39.16%
Black or Afro-Costa Rican	54,131	72,784	74.37%
Chinese	877	7,873	11.14%
Other	254,073	3,568,471	7.12%
Did not answer	5,198	97,175	5.35%
Totals	339,295	3,810,179	8.90%

DISCUSSIONS

After comparing Costa Rica as a whole to Limón - Information on general well being of Afro descendent populations.

With the province of Limón having the largest concentration of Afro-Costa Ricans (74.88% of all Afro-Costa Ricans reside in the province of Limón), we decided to look into Limón to determine socio-economic differences among Afro-Costa Ricans. Education levels, literacy rate, school attendance rate, and occupation were several measures we researched within Limón to have a greater understanding of the Afro-Costa Rican population.

Various sources were utilized to obtain social group datasets (UNESCO/UNDP)

The data we gathered from the 2000 and 2011 census was provided by the INEC website (El Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos). The INEC is a governmental institute responsible for providing all census data and surveys conducted in Costa Rica. Although the website contains a substantial amount of information regarding Costa Rica, our research primarily focused on racial differences regarding Afro-Costa Ricans. Along with the data we gathered from the INEC, we analyzed several data tables from UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) and UNDP (United Nations Development Programme).

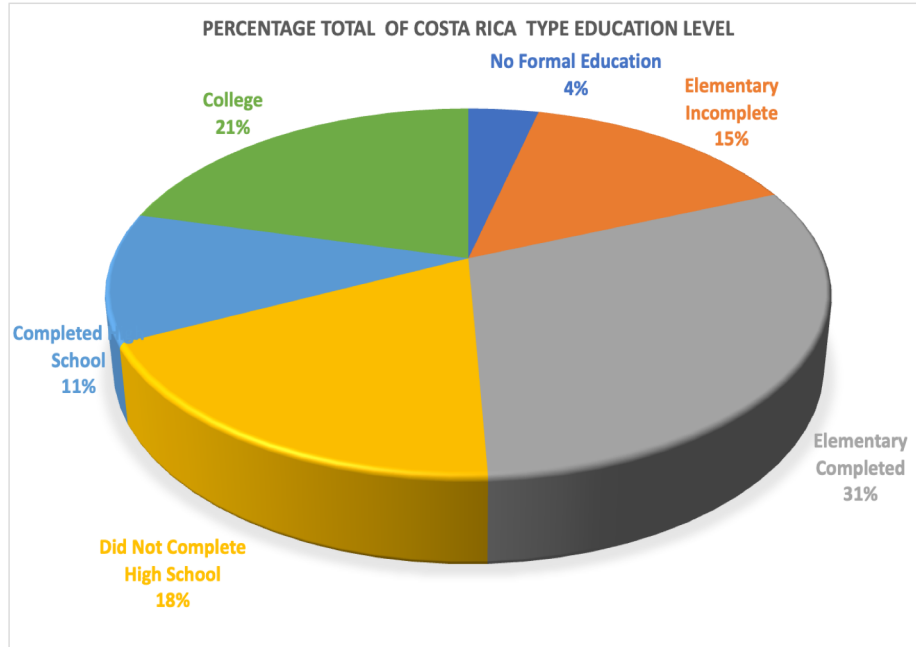


2

Educational Attainment Data

Contributors: Nazeera Audi and Arturo Alejo

Educational attainment: Costa Rica

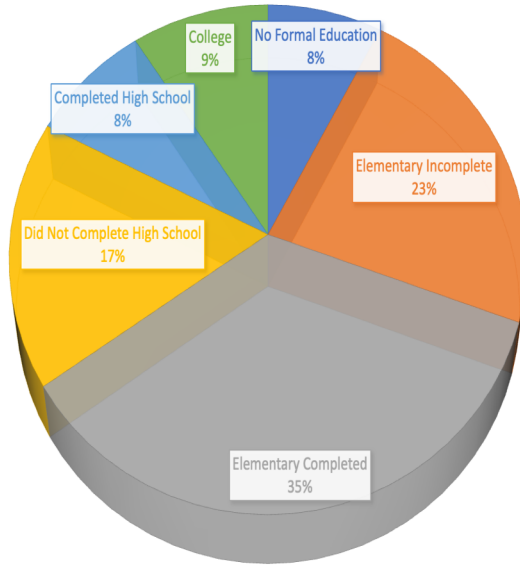


COSTA RICA EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	
No Formal Education	3.74%
Elementary Incomplete	14.97%
Elementary Completed	30.57%
Did Not Complete High School	18.47%
Completed High School	11.33%
College	20.92%

Source: INEC 2011

Educational attainment: Limón

PERCENTAGE TOTAL OF LIMON TYPE OF EDUCATION LEVEL



Limón EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

No formal education	7.84%
Elementary Incomplete	22.62%
Elementary Completed	34.91%
Did Not Complete High School	17.01%
Completed High School	8.21%
College	9.40%

Source: INEC 2011

UNESCO Education Levels

UNESCO 2011 (Ethnicity Filter Applied)		
Education	Black/Afro-Costa Rican	Overall Average
Pre-Primary Attendance	28%	17%
Never been to School	5%	1%
Over-age Primary School	10%	11%
Out of School Children	1%	6%
Primary Graduation Age	94%	94%
Primary Graduation 15-24	96%	94%
Transition Rate to Lower Secondary School	59%	87%
Out of School Adolescents	15%	9%
Lower Secondary Completion Rate	28%	64%
Lower Secondary Completion 15-24	50%	61%
Transition Rate to Upper Secondary School	96%	84%
Out of School Youth	11%	24%
Upper Secondary Completion Rate	65%	46%
Upper Secondary Completion 20-29	53%	44%
Higher Education Attendance	14%	26%
25-29, 2 yrs uni	7%	25%
25-29, 4 yrs uni	7%	21%
30-34, 4 yrs uni	12%	22%
Less than 4 yrs of schooling	2%	1%

Table obtained using the data through filters on the UNESCO webpage

UNESCO Education Levels

Costa Ricans and Black/Afro-Costa Ricans Average Education Levels (UNESCO 2011)

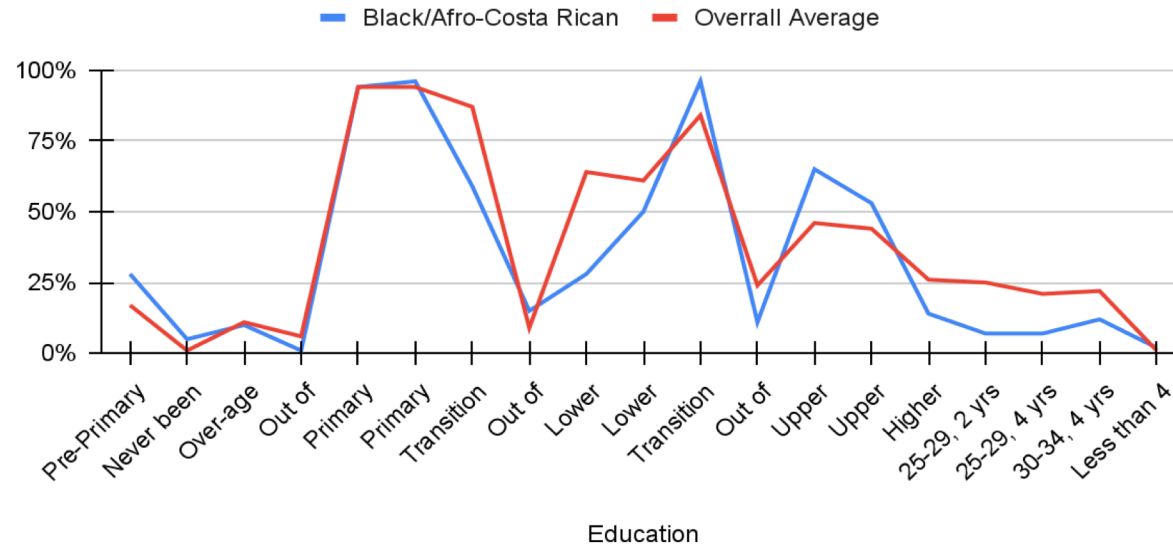


Figure obtained using the data through filters on the UNESCO webpage

DISCUSSIONS

Census (2011) data

Our analysis from the census data reveals important findings when we compare educational attainment statistics between Limón and Costa Rica. The first set of statistics that is striking is that while on average, in Costa Rica, only 3.74% of the population has no formal education, for Limón, that share is 7.84%, more than twice the share of Costa Rica's. These inequalities in educational attainment persist even at the college-level. We find that while 20.9% of the average population from Costa Rica is college educated, for Limón, it is only 9.40%. Given that a majority of Afro-descendants live in Limón, this gives us an idea about their lack of access to resources, and perhaps pressures to join the workforce at a young age at the cost of a college education.

UNESCO 2011

The UNESCO data given demonstrates similarities and differences between Afro-Costa Rican education types with overall average. Both Afro-Costa Rican and overall average have similar education in regard to Primary School Age and Primary School Graduation. Interestingly, the averages decrease for Afro-Costa Rican when transitioning to Secondary School (59%) and Lower Secondary School Completion Rate (28%). Afro-Costa Ricans on average complete Secondary School at a higher rate (65% vs overall of 46%), but their higher education attendance rate is less than the overall average (14% vs. 26%). This can be attributed to Afro-Costa Ricans valuing a greater emphasis on employment, rather than education.



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Employment Data

Contributor: Josephine
Inpanya

Costa Rica. Economic Indicators selected according to ethnic ancestry, area of residence and sex. 2011



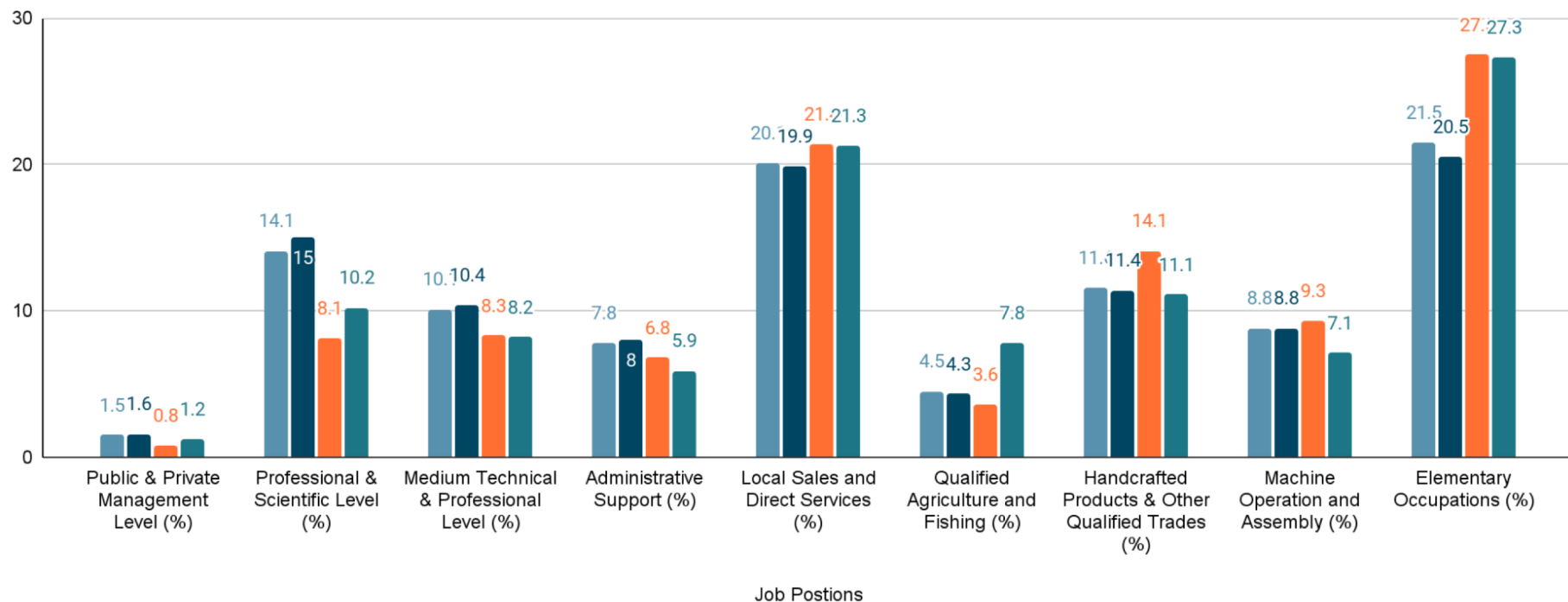
Source: Based on data from Socioeconomic situation of the Afro-descendant population of Costa Rica according to data from the 10th National Population Census and VI Housing 2011 A publication of the UNDP regional project "Afro-descendant population of Latin America II"

Costa Rica. Economic Indicators selected according to ethnic ancestry, area of residence and sex. 2011

Selected Economic Indicators	Total Population	White/Mestizos	Afro-descendants	Others
Net Participation Rate (%)	53.6	53.6	56.8	50.7
Employment Rate (%)	51.8	51.8	54.4	48.9
Unemployment Rate (%)	1.8	1.7	2.3	1.8
Economic Dependency Ratio (%)	46.8	47	43	49

Souce: Based on data from Socioeconomic situation of the Afro-descendant population of Costa Rica according to data from the 10th National Population Census and VI Housing 2011 A publication of the UNDP regional project "Afro-descendant population of Latin America II"

Costa Rica. Distribution of the Population of 15 years of age and older by Ethnic Ancestry and Job Positions in 2011 Census



Source: Based on data from Socioeconomic situation of the Afro-descendant population of Costa Rica according to data from the 10th National Population Census and VI Housing 2011 A publication of the UNDP regional project "Afro-descendant population of Latin America II"

Costa Rica. Distribution of the Population of 15 years of age and older by Ethnic Ancestry and Job Positions in 2011 Census

Job Positions	Total Population	White/Mestizos	Afro-descendants	Others
Public & Private Management Level (%)	1.5	1.6	0.8	1.2
Professional & Scientific Level (%)	14.1	15	8.1	10.2
Medium Technical & Professional Level (%)	10.1	10.4	8.3	8.2
Administrative Support (%)	7.8	8	6.8	5.9
Local Sales and Direct Services (%)	20.1	19.9	21.4	21.3
Qualified Agriculture and Fishing (%)	4.5	4.3	3.6	7.8
Handcrafted Products & Other Qualified Trades (%)	11.6	11.4	14.1	11.1
Machine Operation and Assembly (%)	8.8	8.8	9.3	7.1
Elementary Occupations (%)	21.5	20.5	27.5	27.3

Source: Based on data from Socioeconomic situation of the Afro-descendant population of Costa Rica according to data from the 10th National Population Census and VI Housing 2011 A publication of the UNDP regional project "Afro-descendant population of Latin America II"

DISCUSSIONS

UN Development Programme (UNDP) 2011 Data

Based on the UNDP 2011 census, the Afro-descendant population has the highest net participation rate in economic activity, with a rate of 56.8%. However, the data also suggest that the Afro-descendant population has the highest levels of open unemployment rate in the country: the rate was 1.8% for the total population, while it was 2.3% for the Afro-descendant population. Furthermore, the data also implied the lowest percentage of economic dependency ratio at 43% compared to the total population at 46.8%, which suggest the contrast between participation in the economy and the prevailing high rate of unemployment of the Afro-descendant population.

The Correlation Between Educational Attainment and Employment.

Regarding the 2011 UNDP Census, the Afro-descendant population scales the highest number in elementary occupations at 27.5% compared to 21.5% of the total population. Moreover, they have the lowest percentage recorded in professionals and scientific level among all population groups at 8.1%. This data indicates that they are less likely to be employed at the professional level than the other population groups. It also suggests the correlation between the education level and the job position. Since the Afro-descendant population has a lower educational attainment rate, it can result in unfavorable labor market outcomes such as unemployment, and create barriers to achieving better living conditions.



4

Sector of Employment Data

Contributor: Johnny Anderson

Industry of Employment

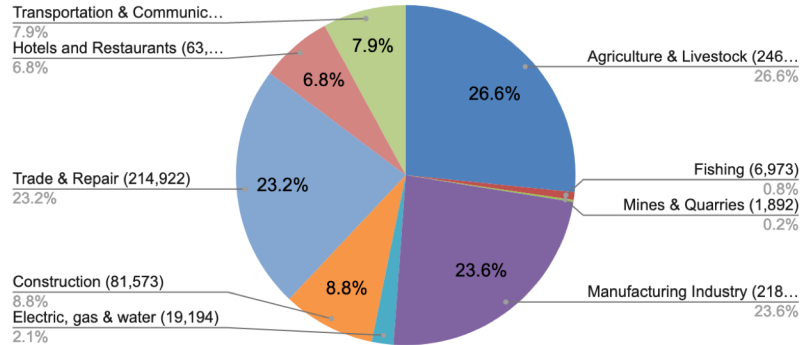
Industry of Employment (INEC 2000)		
Industry	Costa Rica	Limón
Total Population	1,301,546	102, 378
Transportation	7.90%	7.6%%
Hotels and Restaurants	6.80%	5.2%%
Trade and Repair	23.20%	13.60%
Construction	8.80%	5.10%
Electric, Gas & Water	2.10%	0.90%
Agriculture & Livestock	26.60%	57.70%
Fishing	0.80%	N/A
Mines & Quarries	0.20%	N/A
Manufacturing Industry	23.60%	9.4%%

(Source: INEC 2000 Census)

Industry of Employment

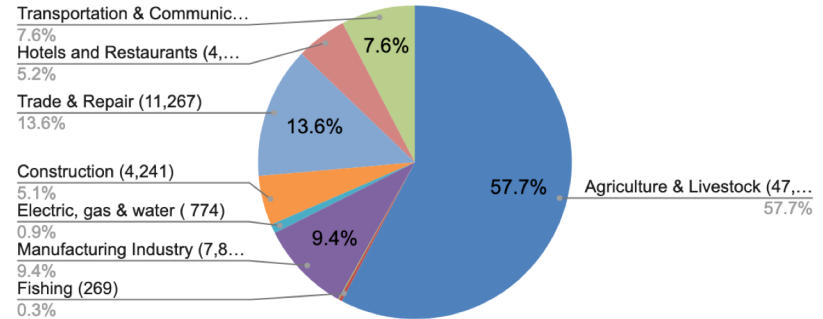
Costa Rica

Costa Rican Residents [Pop:1,301,546]



Limón

Limon Residents [Pop: 102,378]



Source: INEC 2000

Industry of Employment

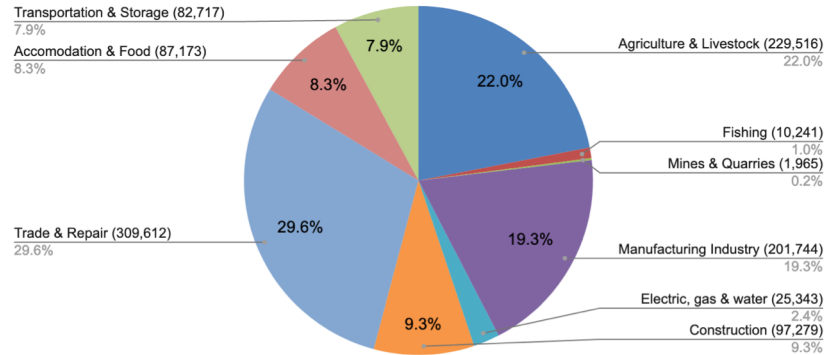
Industry of Employment (INEC 2011)		
Industry	Costa Rica	Limón
Total Population	1,670,632	103,393
Transportation	7.90%	8.50%
Accommodation & Food	8.30%	5.40%
Trade and Repair	29.60%	18.8%
Agriculture & Livestock	22.00%	49.80%
Fishing	1.00%	0.80%
Mines & Quarries	0.20%	N/A
Manufacturing Industry	19.30%	9.30%
Electric, Gas & Water	2.40%	1.70%
Construction	9.30%	5.60%

(Source: INEC 2011 Census)

Industry of Employment

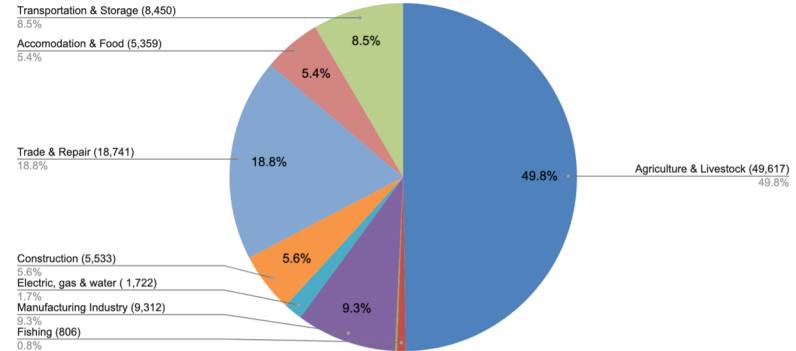
Costa Rica

Costa Rican Residents (M+ W) [Total Pop: 1,670,632]



Limón

Limon Residents (M+ W) [Total Pop: 130,393]



Source: INEC 2011

Discussion

The Data

Based on the 2000 and 2011 data sets available we are able to point to the specific industries in which the majority of Limón residents are employed in. The vast majority (almost half) of Limón residents are employed in the agricultural and livestock sector of the economy. When comparing 2000 to the 2011 data we see a slight dip in employment within the sector of agriculture & livestock, but the numbers still show at least $\frac{1}{2}$ of all Limón residents in this industry. Interestingly the employment sectors are spread out considerably when looking at the entirety of Costa Rica.

What we can infer

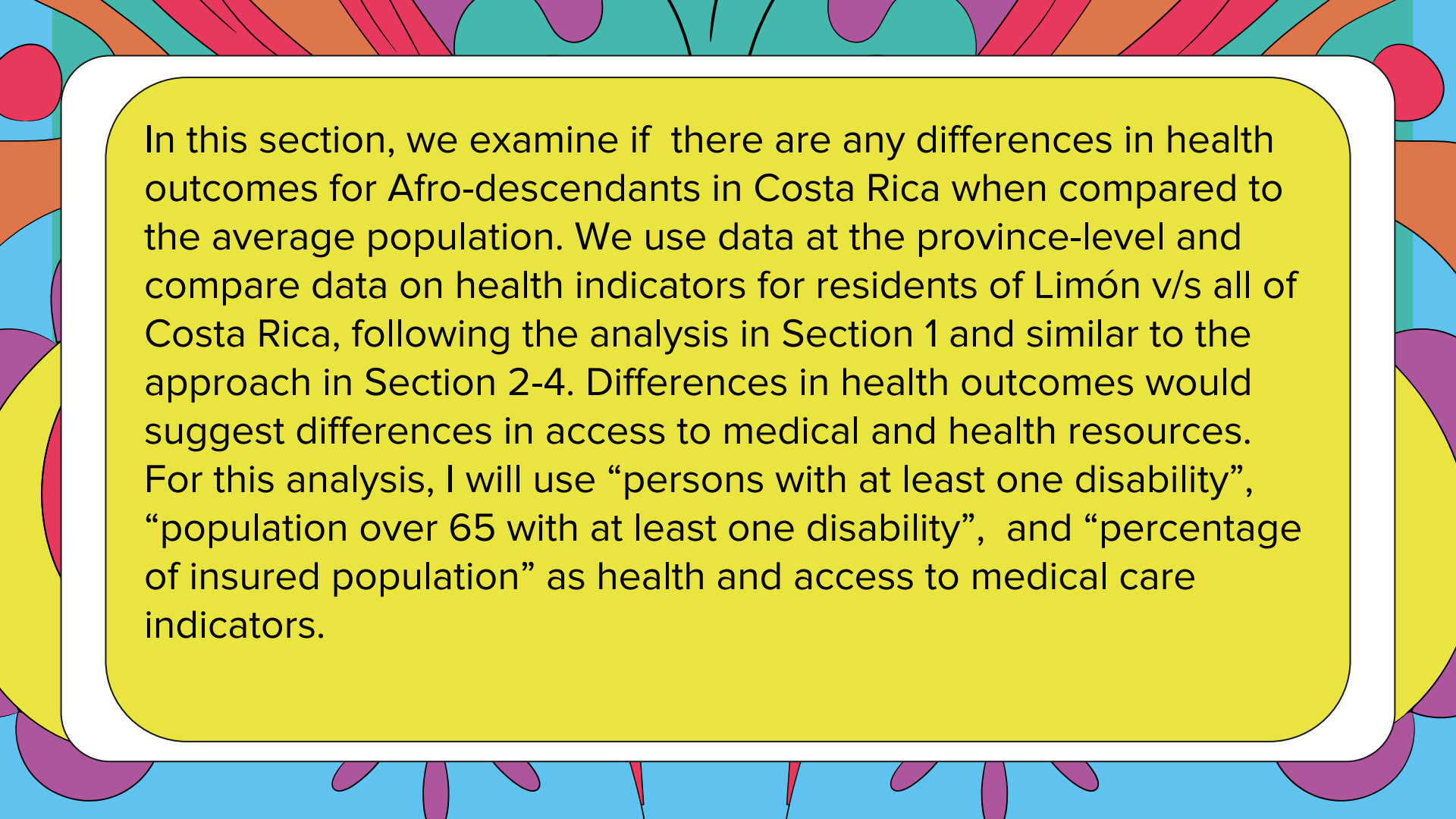
Agriculture and livestock are generally low paying, thus do not leave much room for upward mobility as it relates to socioeconomic standing. When we look at levels of education data (see previous slides) it is noted the majority (over 50%) of Limón residents have not or only completed an elementary level of education. This speaks to the jobs available once reaching a working age. Residents of Limón have historically not had access to the same jobs other residents of Costa Rica do. Given that the Limón region is primed as an agricultural landscape we can understand the lack of opportunity for its residents, the majority being afro-descendant.



5

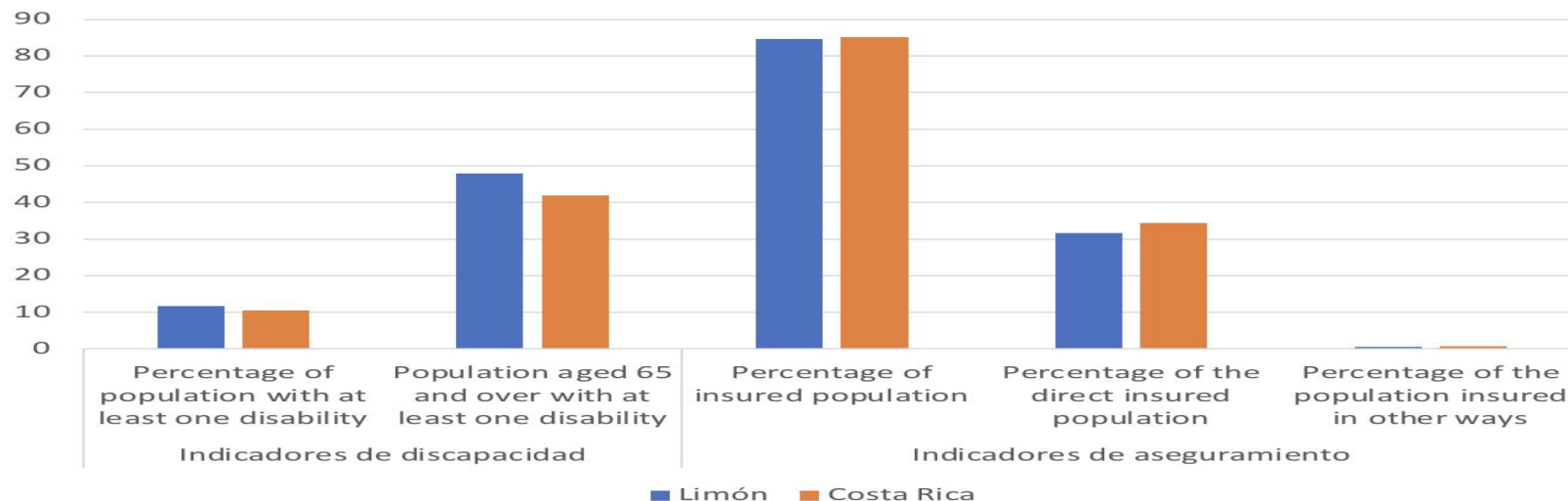
Health Data

Contributor- Leah Lalljie



In this section, we examine if there are any differences in health outcomes for Afro-descendants in Costa Rica when compared to the average population. We use data at the province-level and compare data on health indicators for residents of Limón v/s all of Costa Rica, following the analysis in Section 1 and similar to the approach in Section 2-4. Differences in health outcomes would suggest differences in access to medical and health resources. For this analysis, I will use “persons with at least one disability”, “population over 65 with at least one disability”, and “percentage of insured population” as health and access to medical care indicators.

Comparing indicators for Limón to Costa Rica on average



Source: INEC 2011

Health and insurance indicators for Limón and Costa Rica

	Percentage of population with at least one disability	Population aged 65 and over with at least one disability	Percentage of insured population	Percentage of the direct insured population	Percentage of the population insured in other ways
Limón	11.8	47.9	84.6	31.6	0.6
Costa Rica	10.5	42	85.2	34.4	0.8

Source: INEC 2011

Discussion of results

The analysis reveals that health and access to medical care outcomes are poorer for residents in Limón when compared to the average population in Costa Rica. When considering the population aged 65 and over with at least one disability, I find that the percentage for Limón is 47% while for Costa Rica it is only 42%, which suggests that a larger share of Afro-descendants suffer from one disability when compared to the average population. Further, for Costa Rica, the percentage of population directly insured is 34.4%, while for Limón, this is only 31.6%. This suggests that Afro-descendants have lower access to insurance and health care when compared to the average population. These statistics suggest that Afro-descendants deserve more policy attention when it comes to access to health care.

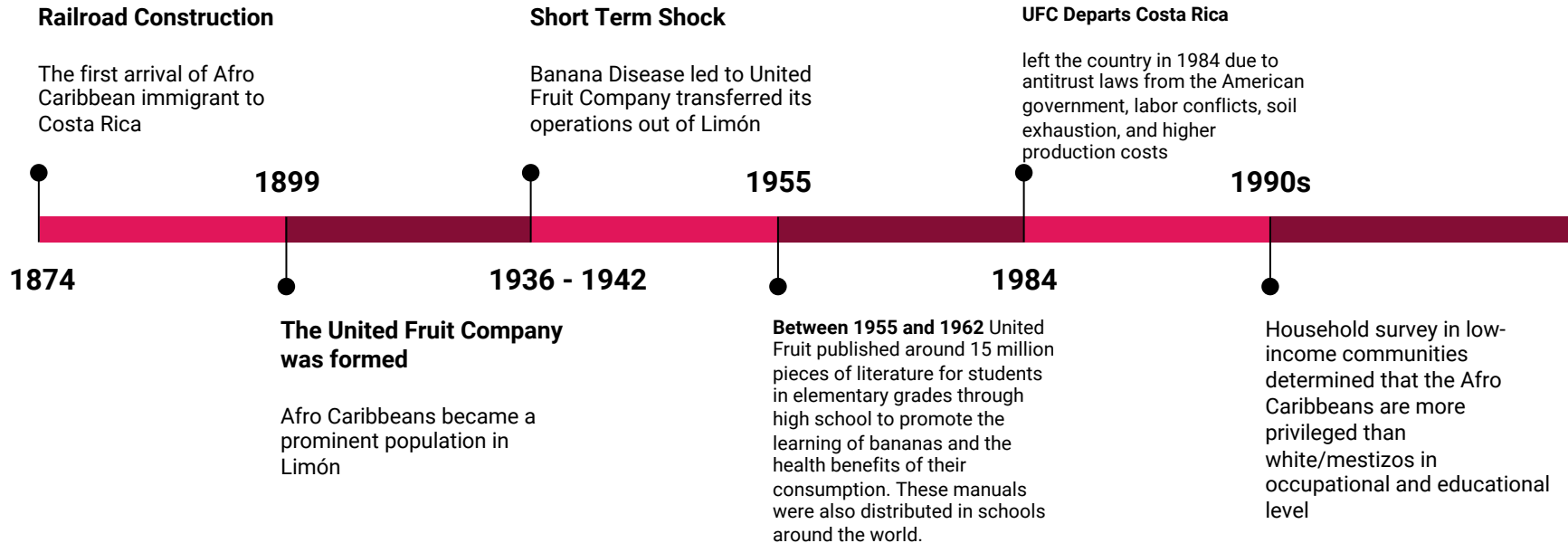


6

Historical Context: Foundational Understandings

Contributors: Johnny Anderson and
Josephine Inpanya

Historical Timeline



The Bases and Settlement Act of 1862

In 1862 Costa Rica government instituted a legal ban on the immigration of persons of African descent and Chinese descent as well (Hernandez, 2012)

At the same time, they promote European immigration with a 1896 decree authorizing the annual executive funding of European immigration incentive programs.

This law resulted from race regulation and eugenic-inspired customary laws that swept Latin America at the time.

Railroad Construction (1874)

However, in 1871, Minor C. Keith, the U.S. entrepreneur and miner, defied the Costa Rican legal ban on black immigration and recruited Jamaican workers to construct a railroad system.

He claimed they were “more resistant to the hardships of working in the tropics.” (Hernandez, 2012)

This was the first arrival of Afro Caribbean immigrants to Costa Rica.

Yet, due to the distaste for black immigrants, the Costa Rica government refused to recognize them as citizens or give them legal rights over the land they farmed once they settled in Costa Rica.

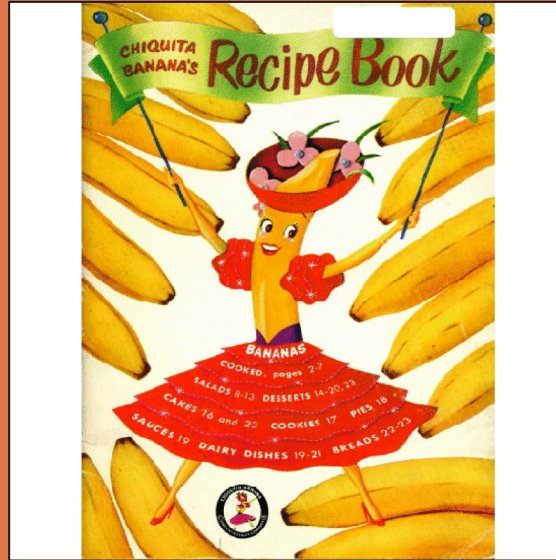
The Laws on Immigration and Citizenship

In 1942, when a banana exports from Limón had almost ceased, the government passed a law prohibiting all immigration of people of African descent (Harpelle, 1994)

The government also refused to recognize them as citizens or to give them legal rights over the land that they farmed once settled in Costa Rica.

In fact, black immigrants in Costa Rica did not receive citizenship rights until as late as 1949 (Hernandez, 2012)

Banana Country in Costa Rica



Source: Magazine, Smithsonian. "Peeling Open the 1947 Chiquita Banana Cookbook."

Smithsonian.com, Smithsonian Institution, 24 Feb. 2012,
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/peeling-open-the-1947-chiquita-banana-cook-107775458/>.

Minor C. Keith

Keith first came to Costa Rica to manage the cross national railway system being built by his uncles company.

Initially, Keith recruited Italians, Irish and Central Americans for the railway project, but the conditions were too harsh (McIlwaine,1997).

This led to an influx of Afro Caribbean labor (specifically males) who proved to handle the rough working climate

Presenting Chiquita: Foundational Context

Banana cultivation by Keith was initiated via a land grant provided by the Costa Rican government - this acted as a thank you for renegotiated Costa Rica's debt with England

Keith's company eventually merged with the Boston Fruit company in 1899. Success at this point was dependent on Afro Caribbean labor (McIlwaine, 1997).

Afro Caribbean laborers chose to work for United Fruit for the economic opportunity - their goal was to go back home after their "service"

With the arrival of more Afro Caribbean women Limón would acquire a permanent population of Afro Caribbeans

United Fruit acted as its own state within the province of Limón, providing housing, schools and medical care.

Patriarchal structure of United Fruit

Maintaining / developing identity: Customs & Values

Afro caribbeans were the majority group in the Limón region isolated from the rest of Costa Rica. Because of this they were able to nurture their own cultural identity expressed via social institutional traditions such as cuisine, leisure (sport) and education (Jamaican / British)

Some felt pride in their connection to the British crown - leading to a sense of superiority compared to other non-white populations of Costa Rica

Anti Black Sentiment

The coffee elite did not want highland laborers migrating to the province of Limón due to higher wages available to workers

During the 1930 contract renewal residents (white / mestizos) of Costa Rica challenged United Fruits planned expansion to the pacific coast - officials claiming that their was a potential for the pacific coast to be "Africanized" as well (McIlwaine,1997).

Characteristics of a Transnational Corp.

According to the encyclopedia Britannica a multinational corporation, also called a transnational multinational is any corporation that is registered and operates in a more than one country at a time. Generally the corporation has its headquarters in one country and operates wholly or partial and oply owned subsidiaries in other countries

UFC is a multinational operation - based on the readings we can understand how it embodies the following characteristics

- Large Organization
- Direct Investments in foreign countries
- Accused of negative economic impacts in home country due to outsourcing jobs
- Critics of the multinational corporation usually view it as an economic and, often, political means of foreign domination.

Source: "Multinational Corporation." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 8 Nov. 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/multinational-corporation>.

Departure from Limón to Pacific

Due to banana disease ufc was forced to move

By the early 1940's United Fruit Company transferred to the opposite coast of Costa Rica leaving behind a dilapidated infrastructure . The plan was to bring along West-Indian works to the other coast, but due to criticisms of upsetting the social pattern and a potential for civil war the United Fruit Company conceded.

The response - what to do?

Some migrants chose to return to their country of origin after UFC's move to the pacific. However, not everyone could afford to do so.

Some migrated to Panama and the United States to start anew.

Others elected to stay in Limón working in industries like agriculture

Government reform: join them

Afro Caribbeans fought in the revolution of 1948 on the side of the liberals - they acquired full citizenship status by 1950 with the ratification of Costa Rica's Constitution signed by then president, Jose "Pepe" Figueres

A series of reforms took place in the Limón region to restart banana production. Transnational companies were encouraged to invest. The transportation system was nationalized leading to various populations now taking part in employment in what was considered the only sole "Black Region" of Costa Rica

Afro descendents in Limón by midcentury became a small minority in a now wider society

Socio-Economic of Afro-Caribbeans: 90's Trend

One-third of Afro-Caribbean households headed by women compared to less than one-fifth of white/mestizo families (McIlwaine, 1997).

Afro-Caribbean women tend to be employed in professional jobs, such as nursing and teaching.

Afro-Caribbean men earned 6,181 colones/month in transport sector. compared to 5,557 colones/month among white/mestizo men in factory work.

They also put much greater weight on education for their children, often sending them both to state schools and private tutors, which results in significantly high educational attainment (McIlwaine, 1997).

Socio-Economic conditions of Afro-Caribbeans: Present

Ethnic Configuration: Black Identity VS Mixed Nation

Shrinking presence of black public space, black-oriented business, black property ownerships, black economic controls, and Afro-Caribbeans dominated civic life (Vandegrift, 2009).

Employment Instability and Ethnic Segregation

Low payment, seasonal, unstable jobs. lack of Childcare options. Most of Afro-descendant population combat this challenge with international migration.

Limited Serious Public Discourse On Race and Education

They had no control and power of decision regarding the contents and the ways of educating their children (Jimenez, 2020)

Intercultural Bilingual Education

Afro-Costa Ricans speak three languages: Spanish, Limón Creole, and standard Limón English. Which makes this population not only culturally diverse, but also linguistically different from the general population of the country (Jimenez, 2020).

Between 1880 and 1915, formal English schools were established in Limón. In these parochial institutions; the First Baptist Church, the Methodist Church, the Episcopal Church and the Adventist Church, was taught in the mother tongue of the students.

The 1948 revolution gives birth to a nationalist movement that affects the Costa Rican Caribbean in that the revolution declares education as a national priority. In Limón this meant the establishment of official and compulsory public schools (Jimenez, 2020).

These compulsory public schools are in Spanish.

Educators sent from the central valley were not prepared to understand their students culturally or linguistically, and Afro-Costa Ricans are marginalized in policies that forced them not to use English as a means of communication in schools (Jimenez, 2020).

Labor Vulnerabilities in Afro-Caribbeans Population

Social Exclusion = the social disadvantage or social isolation of particular group of people from resources, services, rights, and opportunities.

Occupational Segregation = occurs when one demographic group is overrepresented or underrepresented in a certain job category.

Afro-Caribbean Men: port work, manufacturing and cargo handling

White/Mestizos Men: factory operatives, managements, and semi-skilled or skilled jobs.

Afro-Caribbean Women: nursing, teaching, but trapped in those careers and struggled with occupational mobility

White/Mestizos Women: Private Owned Firms

Challenges in Ethnic Data Collection

The Myth of Social Democracy

Costa Rican government promotes the idea that ethnicity and race do not serve as barriers to mobility in society, suggesting that racism is virtually absent (McIlwaine, 1997)

However, the Afro-descendant population struggled with social invisibility or exclusion from the national culture, lack of government acknowledgment, or underestimation of census number, especially in disaggregated data (Lennox and Minott, 2011)

Results

High level of poverty, unemployment, and lower level of education. This invisibility also contributes to our difficulty in researching about Afro-descendant population in Costa Rica.



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Conclusion

Conclusion

In 2011, the Census of the National Institute of Statistics and Census of Costa Rica increased the number of categories for reporting ethnic identity since its last census. While this allowed for a better understanding of the demographic composition for the country, we were unable to find data on socio-economic variables disaggregated by ethnicity. We therefore focused on comparing data for Limón, where a majority of the Afro-descendants are concentrated, to what we obtained for Costa Rica on average to examine if there are any disparities in socio-economic and health conditions. The first important finding is that there are disparities in education, with much lower rates of college attainment for residents in Limón (9.4%) as compared to all of Costa Rica (20.92%). Further, using data from UNDP on employment statistics, we found that Afro-descendants have a higher labour participation rate than other ethnicities along with a higher unemployment rate. This suggests that they opt to join the labour market instead of going to college, but suffer higher rates of unemployment. We also find that residents of Limón have mainly been employed in the Agricultural sector- a trend that has not changed since 2000. This suggests that opportunities for economic mobility and income growth for Afro-descendants are low. Finally, we find that residents of Limón also have poorer health outcomes than for the average Costa Rican resident, with higher disability rates, and lower insurance coverage. This, along with our analysis of Costa Rica's history suggests that the welfare of Afro-descendants needs policy attention, recognition, and there need to be concerted efforts towards reducing racial disparities in socio-economic and health conditions.

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