

BOOK REVIEWS

Enriqueta Camps-Cura, *Changes in population, inequality and human capital formation in the Americas in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: a comparative perspective*. Palgrave Studies in Economic History**(Palgrave Macmillan, 2019). Pages xvi + 159 + figures 53 + tables 44. Hardback £44.99, eBook £35.99.**

Andrew Hinde

University of Southampton

This book is a collection of empirical studies of a nexus of associations between education, human capital, inequality and population change in (mainly) Latin America, though there are excursions into the United States and historical Spain. The chapters of the book are largely self-contained; it is structured as a series of related papers rather than as a single monograph. As the author explains in the introduction, these papers are the product of a research project spanning almost 15 years. They were thus presumably originally written at various times during that period, though for this volume they have all been updated with the most recent information.

We are presented with empirical analyses of the impact of race and inequality on human capital formation, on the economic geography of human capital and, at the end of the book, on how income, human capital inequality and ethnicity have been associated during what Camps-Cura describes as ‘the second era of globalization’ between 1960 and 2010. Although not mentioned in the book’s title, education is a critical part of the macro-economic model which underpins Camps-Cura’s analysis. She examines the long-term association between education and inequality, and presents a detailed and convincing theoretical exposition of the two-way relationship between education and child labour. The analyses use countries as units and frequently employ panel-type data sets constructed by observing sets of countries at a succession of time points.

The conclusions of these analyses can be stated as follows. First, education improved throughout Latin America during the twentieth century, although the relative position of the countries within the region remained the same. The ‘southern cone’ countries were ranked ahead of the countries of Central America, with large indigenous populations, and countries with large black populations. Ethnicity and educational attainment continue to be closely associated in the region, and there is much to do to bring black and indigenous inhabitants to the

level of the people of European origin. Second, in Latin America inequality in education diminished markedly during the twentieth century, which may have fed through to a reduction in income inequality in more recent years. Nevertheless, educational inequality remains substantial, especially in countries with large black populations. Third, Latin America has made substantial progress in raising the level of women's education, and this has in turn led to improvements in the education of their children and a decline in child labour.

A particularly interesting conclusion emerges from a chapter on the relations between education, the gender gap (in earnings and human capital) and market openness. Here Camps-Cura compares Latin American countries with three East Asian countries, China, South Korea and Singapore. She finds that market openness has facilitated a narrowing of the gender pay gap, but that this effect has been offset in East Asia by religion and culture (Confucianism) whereas in Latin America it has been reinforced by Roman Catholicism.

In an ambitious chapter, which sits apart from the rest of the book, Camps-Cura attempts to formulate and test a model which explains the evolution of global fertility. This is something which most demographers would hesitate to do these days, as the history of general models of fertility decline is not a glorious one. In keeping with the rest of the book, Camps-Cura's model is macro-economic. In the end, although the empirical results suggest that the model has something to recommend it, the model itself is not especially original and the conclusions of the chapter do not reveal anything which demographers do not already know.

Much more interesting is her account of the decline of fertility in Catalonia. She argues that in early twentieth century Catalonian women were increasingly employed in textile mills, partly because employers tired of the incessant strikes and disputes in which their male employees engaged through the activities of anarchist trade unions. These women were provided with education through apprenticeship schemes and their wages rose rapidly. In consequence the opportunity costs of childbearing increased, fertility fell, but the education provided for children (child 'quality') increased. I find this account largely convincing, and it adds to the case studies of the 'multiple fertility transitions' in Europe (see, for example John Gillis, Louise Tilly and David Levine's 1992 edited volume *The European Experience of Declining Fertility 1850–1970: A Quiet Revolution* (Oxford, Blackwell)).

This book will be of interest to economic historians and demographers interested in Latin America since the start of the twentieth century. It is concisely written and peppered with useful tables and diagrams presenting both raw data and the results of statistical analysis. Although those principally interested in demographic outcomes will not find much here that is new, the book should – even for them – be useful for its analysis, both theoretical and empirical, of the associations between a set of social and economic variables that undoubtedly influence population change.

doi:10.1017/S0268416021000047