INSTITUTIONS, COLONIALISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
The Acemoglu-Johnson-Robinson (AJR) Thesis in Light of the Caribbean Experience

Orlando Patterson, Harvard University

Abstract

Are institutions more important than good policies in explaining successful development, or vice versa? A recent comparison of Barbados’ extremely successful development experience since independence, in sharp contrast with Jamaica’s failures, suggests that good policies trump institutions, since both islands inherited similar institutions from their British colonial past. The paper rejects this argument by showing that while their inherited institutions might have been superficially similar, Barbadians during the colonial period acquired far greater learning of the procedural knowledge of effectively running institutions. Geography, ruthless elite maneuvering, and the counter-hegemonic strategy of appropriating the institutions and culture of the white elite by Afro-Barbadians, resulted in an efficient pre-independence system institutionally attuned to the challenges of development. The analysis highlights the category of herrenvolk colonial democracies; the cultural embeddedness of institutions; the distinction between declarative and procedural institutional knowledge; and the importance of colonial elites, as well as the cultural strategies of subaltern classes, in explaining post-colonial socio-economic developments

Introduction

Following the “perceived failure” of earlier explanations of economic growth by economists and other social scientists, several competing explanations have emerged in recent years (Engerman & Sokoloff, 2008: 119). At one end of a spectrum of explanations has been a growing emphasis on institutions as the major source of growth. As the leading proponents of this position write: “Countries with better ‘institutions,’ more secure property rights, and less distortionary policies will invest more in physical and human capital, and will use these factors more efficiently to achieve a greater level of income” (Acemoglu et al, 2001: 1369; see also Easterly and Levine 200; Rodrik, Subramanian, and Trebbi, 2002). Contesting this view, at the other end, are those who emphasize good policies focusing on investment in physical and human capital as the key to successful development, contending further that authoritarian regimes that pursue such policies are just as likely to achieve growth as democratic ones. (Alvarez, 2000; Barro, 1997; Glaeser et al 2004; Henry, 2012). Actually, the critical distinction between both camps is more one of causal priority, since they agree that the right institutions and policies are both necessary for growth. However, Institutionalists argue that getting the institutions right is a pre-requisite for growth, and further, that historical factors were critical in explaining which countries initially got it right in the post-colonial period, whereas the policy advocates claim that successful growth, even when initiated by authoritarian regimes, will inevitably induce the right institutions.

Between these two ends of the spectrum, are scholars who contend that “institutions matter, but they are influenced by the political and economic environment. Institutions must change as circumstances change to permit growth to be maintained” (Engerman and Sokoloff, 2008). They argue, further, that different kinds of institutions may substitute for each other and that there is no compelling evidence that a particular set of institutions are required for capitalism to flourish (Przeworski et al, 2000). Most importantly, they emphasize the role of culture, geography and natural endowments and argue that the interaction between these and institutions is complex and reciprocal (Engerman and Sokoloff, 1991; 2002; 2008). Institutions,
they note, may in this wider context be endogenous, but endogeneity does not mean absence of causal potency (on which, see also Chang, 2006).

This paper brings a socio-historical and cultural perspective to the debate by way of an intensive two-case study. We largely support the intuitionalist position, but contend, like Engerman et al, that the economists’ view must be augmented with the sociological position that institutions are embedded in a broader socio-cultural context that must be considered in any assessment of their causal priority and effectiveness. Furthermore, we argue for a crucial distinction between declaratory and procedural institutional knowledge.

1. Definition and Argument

Institutions are durable structures of knowledge that define the rules and expectations of recurrent behavior. They are ensembles of shared schemata, precompiled information packages that reduce uncertainty and promote coordination. They range from weakly sanctioned, intermittent dyadic interactions (such as ritualized greetings) to formally sanctioned, continuous networks of rules, roles and activities designed to achieve specific goals, such as organizations. Nearly all institutions involve formal and informal norms and are efficient to the degree that both are coupled (Brinton and Nee, 2002; North, 1990; Douglas, 1986).

An important aspect of institutions is institutional strength, which has been disaggregated into two dimensions: enforcement and stability. Formal institutional rules may or may not be enforced and, instead of stably taking root, may be contested, frequently violated, and changed (Levitsky and Murillo, 2009). The distinction yields four possibilities: where institutions are stable and strongly enforced (as in most Western societies); unstable though strongly enforced, as in many authoritarian political system; stable but weakly enforced, as is the fate of socialism in contemporary China, or of laws against prostitution in many Western countries; and both unstable and weakly enforced, as is true of many African and Latin American political constitutions.

Of equal importance is Chang’s (2006) distinction between the forms and functions of institutions. The same institution may serve several functions, and different institutions may contribute to the performance of the same function. For example, a central bank may stabilize a currency, but may also promote economic growth through its monetary policies; religion is often a major source of conservatism but, as was true of the European Reformation or the American abolitionism movement, a main source of change. Conversely, there are many institutional ways of achieving given outcomes: thus economic take-off may be promoted by free-market, and private investment, as was true of England, or by a developmentalist state, as was the case in East Asia. Chang also adds the important point that there is often more than one cultural tradition and set of institutions in a country (Chang, 2006:3).

Finality, I propose to take special account of institutional learning. Douglass North (1990) used the analogy of games to distinguish institutions as rules of the game from the players or organizations implementing these rules, which leads to the issue of how competently the institutional game is played. I extend this idea by drawing on a distinction from cognitive science: that between declarative and procedural
knowledge structures. The former refers to our knowledge of facts, the latter to know-how or skills, “the sequences of interrelated operations that transform, store, retrieve and make inferences based on declarative knowledge” (Smith, 1994). Declarative knowledge can be learned verbally; procedural knowledge is learned only through observation and performance; it is, for example, the difference between knowing what a bicycle is and does and how to ride one. As Kolodko has noted “institutions are not only built, promulgated and decreed, but also understood and learnt,” and “this learning process, even if very actively pursued, must be gradual and lengthy.” Extrapolating from the transition experience of post-communist Eastern Europe, he adds that: “To be able to follow the rules of the market game, one needs an adequate knowledge, which may not always be acquired from textbooks or from other actors, but must be learnt by experience.” (Kolodko, 2006:11) Or, as several sociologists succinctly put it: “institutional effects unfold over time, sometime a great deal of time and (that) these temporal effects are cumulative” (Gerring et al 2005:325).

The basic thesis of this paper is that while Barbadians and Jamaicans inherited the same declarative rules of the institutional game from the British, there was far greater training in institutional procedure, or how to play the institutional game, in Barbados than in Jamaica, that as a result, institutions became far more embedded in Barbadian culture than in Jamaica and, after gaining independence, were far more effectively used for development than in Jamaica. To understand how and why this happened requires a detailed look at the historical sociology of both islands, paying special attention to cultural developments and elite-non-elite interactions. We show that while the institutions of both islands were formally similar, the claim that they began the post-colonial path to development on equal terms is seriously open to question. The more effective use of institutions by the Barbadian white elite, by means that were often ruthless, unfolding over a long period of time, and the reliance on blacks to perform all but the most elite-level institutional roles, to the exclusion of the white lower class, led to the emergence of a high-functioning socio-economic system during the colonial era, as well as the acquisition of the procedural knowledge and related cultural norms, values and beliefs that undergird such a system by black Barbadians of all classes.

I proceed as follows. Section 2 presents summary profiles of the islands and briefly reviews previous attempts to evaluate the relative role of institutions and policies in light of a comparison of Barbados with other Caribbean societies. Section 3 summarizes the AJR argument, followed, in section 4, by a more detailed assessment of Henry’s recent critique of AJR, in the course of which more basic data on the economic performance of the two islands is presented. Section 5 explores the socio-cultural and institutional histories of both islands. Section 6 examines the institutionalization of democracy during the late colonial and post-colonial periods. Section 7 examines whether the role of the Barbadian off-shore financial sector undermines not only our argument, but the whole basis of the comparison. Section 8 considers other closely related comparative work on the role of institutions and colonial development through an appraisal of Peter Evans’ recent review of the subject. Section 9 discusses the implications of our study for the institutionalist argument, especially that of AJR. We end with a brief coda.
2. Previous work comparing Barbados with underperforming Caribbean cases

Tables 1 and 2 offer comparative snapshot profiles of the socio-demographic and macro-economic performance of both islands. They show that on every indicator Barbados is far ahead of Jamaica, the former country now ranked among the advanced economies. Because of its unusual success in socio-economic development from its independence in 1966 (to be specified later), there have been several previous comparisons of the Barbadian case with other less successful Caribbean societies. An ECLAC report in 2001, one in a series on sustainable development in small island developing states, (ECLAC 2001), pointed to several factors in explaining Barbados’ success relative to other Caribbean and Latin American societies: a high level of investment in human capital, especially education and health; an effective infrastructure and communications system; a stable democratic regime “with respect for the rule of law;”; absence of class and ethno-racial conflict; social cohesion and trust between major groups; strong political, labor, business and bureaucratic leadership; an “effective institutional, and incentive framework” as well as “socio-cultural features of the population that permit national discipline, diligence, respect for law and order, social cohesion and pride.” The problem with this near exhaustive post-hoc list of contributing factors is that it gives little indication of the relative causal strength of specific factors, especially in light of the fact that several far less successful Caribbean societies, including Jamaica, are characterized by one or more of them.

Tables 1 & 2 about here

Later studies have attempted to do so: two of these have compared Barbados and Guyana (DaCosta, 2007; Grenade & Lewis-Bynoe, 2010), and two others Barbados and Jamaica (Henry and Miller, 2009; Henry 2013; Dawson, 2013). Nearly all have in common the assumption that Barbados and the other Anglophone Caribbean societies inherited similar institutional structures from Britain, the imperial power, and shared a common colonial past characterized by plantation slavery and similar post-emancipation rule. DaCosta explained the post-independence divergence between Guyana and Barbados in terms of radical and poorly executed economic policies in the former, especially its nationalization program, in addition to “weak governance institutions that provided little restraint on the executive; a persistent instability in the political system marked by a lack of trust and dialogue among political and labor groups that precluded consensus building on national policies; and a breakdown in the rule of law.” (DaCosta, 2007:24) However, DaCosta also documents a quite remarkable return to economic orthodoxy and growth in Guyana, surpassing that of Barbados, between 1989 and 2005, which poses the puzzle of how such fundamental problems, especially institutional ones, and other “deep-seated factors that derive from the countries’ history, geography and demographics” could be so easily overcome. His analysis suggests that good policies trump institutional, cultural and ethno-racial weaknesses, although his own view was that Guyana’s most pressing problem was the strengthening of institutions and the need to build consensus between the two rival ethnic and political groups. This discrepancy remained unexplained.

A few years later, Grenade and Lewis-Bynoe of the Caribbean Development Bank replicated the Barbados-Guyana study and, while acknowledging the role of institutions, came down strongly in favor of differences in macroeconomic policies, especially the role of physical and human capital, foreign investment,
and sound fiscal policies, in explaining the divergence between the two countries. However, they found that both countries were susceptible to external economic shocks that threaten to undermine development gains.

A major flaw in both studies comparing Barbados with Guyana was their complete silence on a major external factor contributing to Guyana’s disastrous economic turn just before and after independence: the arbitrary suspension of its path to independence by the British, followed by sustained interference in the internal political affairs of the country by the CIA, which distorted the democratic process by both training and supporting the black minority Burnham government in the art of rigging national elections. (Rabe, 2005) This was a blatant act of Cold War external manipulation, motivated by the determination of the U.S. and Britain to prevent Cheddi Jagan, the socialist, non-aligned, leader of the Indian and left-leaning black groups to gain power. Indeed, Jagan was militarily removed from office by the British after being democratically elected. Both the CIA and the British government have subsequently acknowledged their roles in this outrageous affair (Ishmael, 2004; New York Times, 1997). It is hard to see how any evaluation of Guyana’s development prior to the end of the Cold War (when the interference abruptly ended and Jagan was promptly voted back into power, not long before he died) can be taken seriously without due consideration of this extreme form of late colonial and Cold War neo-colonial manipulation.

Henry and Miller continued this scholarly trend by comparing Barbados with Jamaica, arriving at conclusions that anticipated those of Grenade and Lewis-Bynoe. Emphasizing even more forcefully the claim of similar institutional and politico-cultural heritages at the end of the colonial era, they contend that the post-emancipation divergence between the two countries can only be explained in terms of the much better policies pursued by the Barbados government and business sector. Because they present their work as a direct challenge to the AJR thesis, we examine Henry’s detailed later study more closely after summarizing the AJR argument.

A more recent study, by Dawson (2013), which also compares Jamaica and Barbados, is striking for its seeming lack of awareness of, and engagement with, the decade-long series of comparative studies on the subject. Dawson focuses on differences in state legitimacy and, consequently, the rule of law, in both countries--reflected in different rates of corruption and homicide--as the critical factors explaining their divergent post-independence trajectories. These differences, he argues, emerged during the last quarter of a century of the colonial period and are attributed to the greater cultural autonomy of the Jamaican masses, especially in religious matters, the emergence of an oppositional culture among the lower classes, and differences in the correlation of race and class. The result was that Barbadians in the late colonial period accepted the state as legitimate while Jamaicans did not and this, in turn, made it easier for patronage politics to emerge in Jamaica, which was a key factor accounting for later post-emancipation violence. We agree with Dawson that differences in the historical and cultural development of the two islands were critical. However, Dawson makes no attempt to relate differences in the rule of law to divergent economic outcomes; his explanandum is the rule of law, and as such, his paper only implicitly contributes to the problem of divergent development paths in the region. We also disagree with his basic thesis that there is a profound lack of state legitimacy in Jamaica. The concept of state legitimacy is a “mushy” one, but if we accept Gilley’s definition...
that a state is legitimate to the degree that “it is treated by its citizens as rightfully holding and exercising political power,” (Gilley, 2006: 500) there can be no doubt that the Jamaican state, with its robust if periodically violent parliamentary democracy, voter turn-out rates since independence that sometimes exceed 80 percent, and frequent change of governments, is legitimate in the eyes of all but a violent minority of its urban, impoverished citizens. Dawson also badly misinterprets the role of cultural dualism in modern Jamaican society, as I explain later.

3. The Colonial Origin of Comparative Development Argument

The basic argument of AJR (Acemoglu et al 2001) begins with the observation that there was wide variation in the kinds of colonial societies established by Europeans, which had important consequences for the kinds of institutions they established. At one extreme, Europeans established settlement colonies, such as the U.S, Canada and New Zealand, in which they replicated the institutions of the home country; at the other, they established largely exploitative colonies in which the main goal was to extract resources to be sent to the metropolitan country. The type of colonization they pursued, and hence their institutional transmissions, depended on the feasibility of settlement, which was largely determined by the mortality rate of the early colony. In simplest terms, they hypothesized “that settler mortality affected settlements; settlements affected early institutions; and early institutions persisted and formed the basis of current institutions” (Acemoglu et al 2001:1373). The significance of the historical record is that it neatly gets around the problem of endogeneity in all attempts to explain current economic outcomes in terms of current institutional performance, since there is no easy way of figuring out what is the causal direction. What is needed is a source of exogenous variation in institutions if the current effects of institutions are to be properly estimated. Early settler mortality, they argue, provide a powerful instrumental variable in estimating the effects of current institutions (measured mainly by an index of government protection against expropriation); it correlates highly with current per capita income, but the relationship is mediated almost entirely by colonial institutional history. In addition to solving the problem of reverse causality, it nicely disposes of the bias inherent in all ex post construction of variable measurements--in this case the hidden temptation to see well performing institutions in more advanced countries.

In a meticulous econometric analysis, they controlled for all possible variables that may have correlated with settler mortality and economic outcomes, variables that have been proposed in other explanatory efforts, including those critical of their thesis—climate, disease, the identity of the main colonizer, soil quality, ethnicity and even legal origins (civil vs. common law)—none of which undermined their results. Of special interest in these control variables is the disease environment, since others have argued that the same diseases that accounted for variation in European settlement may well continue to account today for low economic outcomes(AJR, 2001: 1391-1393; see also Glaeser, 2004; Sachs, 1998).

This, now seminal, paper has survived nearly all attempts to pick holes in it. One of the most vigorous recent attacks on the institutionalists came from Glaeser et al (2004) who focus mainly on the reliability of variable measurements of institutions and the problem of endogeneity. They argue that most of these variables assess outcomes rather than institutional durability and depth, which are critical aspects of
institutions, and that the causal direction runs from economic growth (generated mainly by human capital) to institutional development. However, since the AJR paper was designed to take account of such endogeneity issues, Glaeser et al. shifted to other critiques when addressing the AJR paper, the most important of which being that what the Europeans brought with them were “themselves, and therefore their know-how and human capital” (2004: 21). There is a great deal about this paper that is puzzling to a sociologist. First, having criticized institutionalists for measuring institutions mainly in terms of institutional outcomes, rather than the durable structures that produce them, they proceed to do exactly this in their argument for human capital (measured in terms of literacy) as the primary cause of growth, neglecting the obvious fact that literacy is itself the outcome of the durable institution we call schooling or, more generally, education. Glaeser et al., it should be noted, were merely following this strange practice among economists (and, unfortunately, sociologists who use the human capital concept). No attempt is made to explain how the literacy of the first generation of European settlers was passed down over the centuries of the colonial era to the present. Of course, if one sees human capital as the outcome of the educational institution, not only have Glaeser et al. committed the very error they spent most of their paper accusing institutionalists of, but they have ended up providing, not an argument for policy over institutions, but of one kind of institution (the educational) as the main source of growth. As a critique of AJR, and of institutionalists’ arguments, it is a non-starter. For good measure AJR, anticipating this critique, controlled for the fraction of the population of European descent in the robustness check of their instrumental variable regressions (table 6, columns 3 & 4, p. 1390) and found the variable insignificant and of no consequence for the effect of institutions.


Of greater interest is the recent critique by the economist Peter Blair Henry, following on an earlier study with Miller (Henry & Miller, 2009), who claims that a comparison of the post-independence development record of Barbados and Jamaica “throws cold water on this (AJR) theory” (Henry, 2013: 23). Henry claims that, as ex-British colonies, the two islands “inherited virtually identical institutions: the English language, Westminster parliamentary democracy, constitutional protection of private property, English common law, and the Anglican Church for good measure” (Henry, 2013:23). In addition, the comparison offers natural controls for several other crucial factors: their populations are both predominantly of African ancestry; both shared a similar history of the Atlantic slave trade and plantation slavery; both are blessed with near perfect tourism resources—sand, sea and sun—in addition to the fact that Jamaica is well endowed with bauxite, the ore that produces aluminum, something that makes their different development trajectories even more puzzling. Henry further claims that both islands began the independence era with similar standards of living.

Figure 1 about here
However, he continues, if we fast forward to the present we find dramatic differences in the economic performance of the two islands, as Figure 1 below shows. Beginning in 1960 (the eve of independence for both countries) with per capita incomes of $7259 for Barbados and $4419 for Jamaica (both in constant 2005 US$), Barbados in 2010 had a real GDP of $20,464 compared with Jamaica’s $4502 per capita income. More recent IMF estimates indicate an equally sharp contrast: in 2012 Barbados’ per capita GDP, based on Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) was stated to be $25,043 (in constant US$) compared with Jamaica’s at $5915. On most other major social and economic indices it stands well ahead of Jamaica, and indeed the most of rest of the Caribbean and Latin America: labor force participation, unemployment, life expectancy and literacy (See Tables 1 & 2). Of special note is the stark difference in homicide rates: in recent decades Jamaica has had one of the worst crime rates in the world—40.9 per 100,000 in 2013, over 5 times greater than Barbados’ at 8 per 100,000—the total cost of which the World Bank estimated at 3.7 percent of GDP in 2001 and a generally disastrous effect on business and social well-being. (World Bank, 2004: 115-139)

Henry explained these differences primarily in terms of the economic policies pursued by both governments, reflected especially in their different responses to the oil price shocks of 1973 and 1990. He argued that the failed democratic-socialist policies of the Manley regime in Jamaica between 1972 and 1980 delivered a severe blow to the Jamaican economy from which it has never quite recovered (For an excellent analysis of this period see Stevens and Stevens, 1986) while the Barbados regime not only recovered earlier from the oil shocks of the early seventies but, faced with the later oil crisis of 1990, made “disciplined” choices involving its trade unions, government and private sector. These “disciplined policy choices”, he argued, were entirely in keeping with the free-market policy reforms prescribed by the U.S. Treasury, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank, the so-called “Washington Consensus” for growth that emerged in the 1980s. We do not have the space here to get into the details of these policies. In any event, we do not dispute the fact that policy differences play an important role in explaining different economic outcomes; nor do any institutionalists. Both are essential for growth. The important question however, is why was the Barbadian regime able to make the “disciplined” choices that it did, and what role did its colonial past, as well as its past and present institutional structures, play in enabling these policy choices and actions.

A closer look at the economic and institutional performance of both economies since independence tells a more complex story. The Penn data I used to calculate growth rates (see figure 2), shows that Barbados outperformed Jamaica in every decade and, to the degree that growth reflects better policies, would seem to support Henry’s argument.

Figure 2 about here

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1 I use my own tables and figures to highlight the contrast, in part because they are more up-to-date, but also because they utilize the recent refinement of the Real GDP variable by the Penn World Table group, which greatly improves cross-national economic comparisons over time. See Feenstra et al, 2013.

2 Disclosure: the author was special advisor for social policy and development to Prime Minister Michael Manley during this period.
However, World Bank data on the policy performance and institutional effectiveness of both countries seem to cut both ways in regard to the relative importance of institutions and policy. Figure 2 graphs the Bank’s most recent indicators of policy effectiveness and institutional quality in both countries, in addition to those of the high income OECD countries. The chart offers equally strong support for the institutional argument. Barbados institutional strengths are truly remarkable. Not only does it far outrank Jamaica, but on three of the 6 indicators it outranks the major OECD countries (Mainly Western Europe, North America, Japan and Australasia) and ties on a fourth!

Figure 3 about here

Although Henry does not take account of this data, his most likely response to it would be to cite the endogeneity problem mentioned earlier. He could easily argue that these differences are the result of the “disciplined policy decisions” made by Barbadian leaders since independence: good policies lead to good institutions. We are therefore forced to return to the starting point of the modern post-colonial development era and ask whether his claims of institutional similarity and an even starting point hold up.

Two important indicators that immediately raise questions about his claim of initial similarity are found at the end of the colonial period. The first is a statistic for 1960, (2 years before independence in Jamaica, 6 years prior to Barbados’) already noted (See Figure 2): the fact that Barbados began the period of independence with a 64 percent higher GDP per capita: $7260 PPP in 2005 US$ compared with Jamaica’s $4419 (using the nominal income comparison favored by Henry, we find that Barbados’ per capita GDP was already 53% higher than that of Jamaica’s, $3395 US vs $2208.) That real term difference of $2840 (in US 2005$) was quite considerable in the Caribbean of that or any other period; it meant the difference between the poor living in shanty-town hovels (then rapidly growing in Jamaica) or the tidy “Chattel houses” found all over Barbados; between whether children went to bed hungry or moderately fed; between resentful Jamaican workers who felt exploited and ready to sabotage their workplace or Barbadian workers who felt that, at least, they received a livable, if barely adequate, wage (Compare the findings of Carter, 1997 and Dann, 1984, to which we return later). To be sure, initial per capita income at the start of the independence era (or any specified period for that matter) do not necessarily predict later growth outcomes (Glaeser et al, 2004: 25) Nonetheless, they do strongly suggest that there were factors during the colonial period culmination in this important GDP difference.

The second important indicator on the eve of independence, and one that was later to be of enormous, cumulative importance, was the striking difference in educational attainment inherited from the colonial past. As Figure 4 shows, the average Barbadian in 1960 already had more than twice the number of years schooling as Jamaicans, a reflection of the fact that the Barbadian pre-independence government was spending 2.3 times more per student than was the Jamaican government in 1960. As we will show in greater detail later, the nature and extent of literacy rates differed substantially in the mid-forties when more detailed census data on both islands become available. Glaeser et al have pointed out that “educational investment a century ago is a strong predictor of the level of economic development today” (Glaeser et al
2004: p. 23) As we have already noted, they are of the mistaken belief that this undermines the institutional argument when, in fact, it is strong sociological support of it.

**Figure 4 about here**

Indeed, as AJR point out, spending on education constitute one of the most important mechanisms of institutional persistence: “If agents make irreversible investments that are complementary to a particular set of institutions, they will be more willing to support them, making these institutions persist…. For example, agents who have invested in human and physical capital will be in favor of spending money to enforce property rights, while those who have less to lose may not be.” (AJR, 2001: 1377; see also Acemoglu, 1995: 17-33).

The striking differences in these two leading indicators are consistent with the findings of two major economic studies, conducted a year apart, a decade before the end of the colonial era. The Oxford economist K.H Straw (1953:8), in a thorough analysis of the Barbadian economy in 1951, concluded that the island's “natural resources are well-developed and there is no urgent demand for capital equipment to expand primary production,” and that “Barbados cannot be compared with the under-developed countries of Africa or the East,” being already so ahead of the game. In striking contrast, a detailed study of the structure and growth of the Jamaican economy in 1952 found “a vicious circle of national poverty resulting from low productivity; low productivity resulting from (mainly) the small amount of capital available for use in combination with human effort; and this small amount of capital itself resulting from low income and, consequently, a low saving rate” (Thorne, 1955:96).

We are therefore lead us to ask, just what was really going on in the socio-economic history of the two islands, especially in regard to colonial policy as well as institution building and learning?

5. A Brief Historical Sociology of Both Islands

A proper comparison of both islands aimed at teasing out the factors accounting for their differences would require an entire volume; indeed a pretty large one, given the abundance of primary and secondary data on both. In what follows I present a summary of results based on my own earlier archival and later field studies as well as policy work on Jamaica, on contemporary accounts on both islands, and on the published works of others.

5.I. History and Geography

I do not quite agree with AJR that geography has no influence on institutional effects, at least in regard to the Caribbean. [It should be noted that AJR, in other works, have taken geography seriously, as I indicate in the Discussion and Conclusion section] It could be that their variables—latitude, distance from the equator, temperature and humidity—fail to pick up the more fine grained geographic differences that are required when comparing two tropical islands in the same sea such as Jamaica and Barbados. However, as Stuart Schwartz (2015) has recently emphasized, for the Caribbeanist, geography is as important to the understanding of the region’s history, culture and institutions, as it is to the of the Mediterranean of Fernand Barudel and Leroy Ladureie
There is a more complex socio-geographic variable to be considered: the perceived clemency of the climate, whatever its objective geographic measurements. From the late 18th century, in both Britain and Barbados there was the “perception that Barbados was less tropical” (Lambert, 2005: 4). Whatever the reason, two closely related geographic differences were to have major consequences for the colonial institutional history of the islands. The first is that Jamaica is substantially larger than Jamaica. Secondly, and more importantly, Jamaica is an extremely mountainous island with deep, densely forested, hard to reach inland valleys, whereas Barbados is a flat coral island. One immediate consequence of this is that only the fertile coastal regions of Jamaica are suitable for sugar cane production, whereas the entire island of Barbados is. This geographic difference entailed different economic decisions by planters and offered very different opportunities to the mass of the population. The geographer, Bonham Richardson, has pointed out that the distinction between highland and lowland regions had major socio-economic and political consequences in the Caribbean, not least of which was the association of lowland regions with planter control and its absence in highland regions (Richardson, 1997). In Barbados, the entire island was soon under sugar cultivation after the introduction of the slave plantation, and planters relied on imports to feed their slaves (Ligon, 1657/2011; Menard 2006; Watts, 1987). The Barbadian black population was trapped within the confines of the plantation, and because nearly every acre was under cultivation, security was tight throughout the island, all areas of which were easily accessible (Richardson, 1967:134-135; 157-8). In Jamaica most of the land was marginal for sugar cultivation and where not used for coffee and cattle production, the planters made the decision to let the slaves produce their own food on their backlands instead of importing it, giving them days off to do so. This had a major impact. The slave population was on its own for between one and two days each week and used the opportunity to reproduce African horticultural practices and to sell their spare products in Sunday markets, all highly reminiscent of West African markets. This, in turn, formed the nucleus of what Mintz has called a “proto-peasantry” which blossomed after slavery was abolished (Mintz, 1961; Mintz & Hall, 1960). As can be imagined, this encouraged a degree of independence on the part of the Jamaican slaves, although it also meant greater insecurity in their subsistence when compared with the Barbadian system of regular provisions from the slave owners. Thus, after a hurricane destroyed their provision grounds in 1787 some 15,000 slaves died of starvation (Patterson, 1967; Higman, 1976: chapter 6; Sheridan, 1995:48-67; Turner, 1995:34).

Of equal importance, however, is the fact that the mountainous interior of Jamaica offered ideal opportunities for guerrilla warfare. When combined with the high ratio of imported Africans, born into freedom, the result was that Jamaica had one of, if not the highest rate of slave revolts in the history of slave societies. For the first 70 years of its existence a brutal series of slave revolts took place, the First Maroon Wars, culminating in the British elite’s decision to sue for peace and the signing of a treaty which granted the victorious maroons state-within-a state rights to their own political autonomy, something unheard of in the world annals of slavery (Patterson, 1970). This did not stop the revolts, which continued in Jamaica right down to the eve of the passage of the abolition bill when the greatest of all revolts took place, an island-wide conflagration led by a converted Baptist slave (Reckord, 1968).
The British came to regard Jamaica as a dangerous place due to the usual group of tropical diseases that awaited them and took a heavy mortality toll, and to the well deserved reputation of rebelliousness on the part of the slaves. In such an environment, elites are loath to lay down institutions, which assume some permanence of residence. To the contrary, the island was viewed as a hell-hole in which, if one was lucky, a fortune could be made with which to return to the mother country to set up a country residence and buy a borough in the British parliament. The result was an extremely high rate of absentee ownership of estates, which itself resulted in harsh treatment of slaves, since overseers and managers were paid on a commission basis and had little interest in preserving the slave stock (Ragatz, 1931, 1963; Patterson, 1967).

In contrast, throughout the eighteenth century, and up to the abolition in 1834, there was only one slave revolt of any note in Barbados. Although, objectively, Barbados was perhaps no less exposed to tropical diseases than Jamaica, and indeed during the 17th century was regarded as a major source of the diffusion of tropical diseases throughout North America (Sheridan, 1985: 1-41; Menard, 2006: 120-121), the island over the course of the 18th century came to be regarded as more congenial to whites and even as a place in which to restore health. Thus one of its most famous visitors during in the mid 18 century was George Washington who, in 1751, spent two months there with his ailing brother in hope that the island’s climate would cure him of tuberculosis; it didn’t and, in fact, Washington contracted a mild case of small pox!

However, there are a couple objectively real climactic and geological differences between Jamaica and Barbados which exacerbated demographic and social differences. Jamaica lies in the track of major hurricane paths and frequently experiences devastating loss of property and life as a result. Additionally it is in the midst of a major earthquake fault and has experienced some of the worst earthquake disasters in modern history. Thus the earthquake that struck the island in 1692 devoured two thirds of the densely populated city of Port Royal in the ocean with the deaths of thousands; and the earthquake of 1907 that devastated Kingston still ranks as one of the worst of the 20th century. Barbados lies far to the east of the Caribbean, which partly accounts for the fact that, although it has been occasionally battered by hurricanes during the past 3 centuries, its hurricane risk is less than half that of Jamaica’s; it is also safely away from the major earthquake fault of the region. The fact that it is flat also means that the ocean breezes cool the island to a greater degree than is possible in mountainous Jamaica. Thus the reputation of the island as being more congenial to Europeans, and settled life more generally, is not entirely imaginary.

5.2. The slave systems compared

Like all plantation slave systems, Barbados and Jamaica were brutal regimes for blacks. Nonetheless, there were important differences between the two islands. Jamaican planters had little interest in naturally reproducing the black population. They made the economic calculation that it was more profitable to buy young adult male slaves from Africa, work them as hard as possible, and then buy more when they died off.

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3 There were 12 hurricanes in Barbados between 1851 and 2010, compared with 25 in Jamaica; 7 of these were severe, category 3-5 storms in Jamaica compared with 3 in Barbados. See Caribbean Hurricane Network, 2011; Chenoweth, 2003. See also the forthcoming work by Stuart Schwartz(2015)
The result was that males always substantially outnumbered women slaves in Jamaica (which itself worked against reproduction) and the African ratio of the population remained relatively high, constituting over 33 percent at abolition (Patterson, 1967; Craton & Walvin, 1970; Higman, 1984). The Jamaican slave population never reproduced and planters relied on imports both to replace those who died and to rapidly increase the population. Incredibly, more African slaves were imported to this little island over the course of the slave trade than were imported to the entire continent of North and Central America! (Fogel and Engerman, 1974; Vol. 1; Higman, 1984:72-75; Sheridan, 1985: chapters 7-9)

Barbadian planters’ economic calculation led them to a radically different policy of slave rearing, especially during the latter half of the 18th century. To do so, they bought slaves in equal sex ratios, encouraged greater fertility (not very successfully) and, more importantly, reduced infant and child mortality through better nutrition (Kiple, 1984: 104-119; Klein & Engerman, 1978). The result was a demographic structure unique in the Caribbean and indeed in the entire Americas except for the U.S. South: women exceeded men throughout the period of slavery, and the local born (creole) slave population far exceeded that of the declining African segment. (Higman, 1984: 307-314,349, 373) The cultural and institutional consequences of this were in striking contrast to the strong persistence of African influence in Jamaica. According to Beckles:

“...The impact of rapid black creolisation (i.e. locally born) during the eighteenth century upon the slave community was profound. It meant that African culture in Barbados came under greater internal pressure as a result of the diminishing parentage of African recruits. That creole slave would respond to planter stimuli in rejecting things African cannot be dismissed as unlikely. The social culture of Africans was degraded by the white community, and blacks were penalized for adhering too closely to it.” (Beckles, 1990: 52)

Another way of expressing this is to say that black Barbadians were under strong pressure to conform to, and learn, the institutions of the white slaveholder class, in striking contrast to Jamaica where their much greater numbers, proto-peasant time-off, autonomous maroon communities, and the constant inflow of Africans, made possible the emergence of a creole Jamaican culture among the blacks that was profoundly influenced by African culture either in pure form, as in the slash-and-burn hoe cultivation, or in syncretized form, as in its many Afro-Christian religions and folk traditions (Patterson, 1967).

An additional, equally important, factor was the far greater stability of the white elite in Barbados compared with their Jamaican counterpart. I have already noted the high rate of absenteeism in Jamaica. This contrasts strongly with much lower rates in Barbados and striking continuities in plantation ownership. Watson has argued that one of the main reasons for this is that the size of Barbados meant that the average

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4 Contributing to this lower sex ratio is the still unexplained fact that the sex ratio at birth for African ancestry persons is lower than those of whites and Asians. Thus the mere fact that the Barbadian slave population was reproducing would generate this surplus of women. Compounding this is the fact that infant girls have higher survival rates than males, especially under stressful or deprived conditions such as slavery. See Kiple, 1984: 48-49; Kaba, 2008.
size of even the largest plantations was small compared to those of islands such as Jamaica, and hence did not
generate fortunes large enough to support absentee ownership (Watson, 1997: 34). Barbadian whites were
far more committed to residence in Barbados, seeing the island as their permanent home rather than
yearning for return to absentee leisure in Britain. As two contemporary observers wrote, Barbadian whites
"found it possible to forget that England is home and...glory in the title of Barbadians. They possess a real
nationality with characteristics neither English, Irish nor Scotch" (Sturge and Harvey, 1838: 152). Perhaps the
best reflection of this, and another striking contrast with Jamaica – indeed yet another unique feature of
Barbados compared with all the other Caribbean slave societies—was the presence of white women. As early
as 1715, white women outnumbered white men in Barbados and continued to do so throughout the period
of slavery. In Jamaica, like other Caribbean islands, there was always a severe shortage of white women, who
constituted no more than 40 percent of the white population in 1780 (Beckles, 1993: 71-72).

The institutional and broader cultural consequences for the two islands were considerable—in regard to marital rates and stability, the number of locally born whites, religious life and the general moral
tone of the society. There was less need for white men to compete with blacks for sex or to rape black women,
although there is ample evidence that this happened, albeit on a much lower scale than in Jamaica
(Newman, 2007:169-172. Indeed, there were so many white women that it was felt necessary to discourage
the destitute among them from having intimate relations with black men; they did so, interestingly, not by
passing anti-miscegenation laws, but by denying access to the poor relief rolls for any white woman
suspected of “unruly sexuality” (Jones, 2007: 5). Whether or not they succeeded is hard to say, but contemporaries were generally of the view that the greater presence of white women had a stabilizing effect
on the white community in Barbados. The more stable tradition of marriage among whites also meant greater
consolidation of British institutions, the island from the period of slavery being 'little England’ due to “the
prevalence of English comforts and refinements” (Sturge and Harvey, 183; 152). Watson is correct in his
overall assessment that “the presence in Barbados of a permanent white elite contributed a great deal to the
formation and shaping of the character of the island... They gave, and still give, the island a conservative air
which, despite negative aspects, contributed to the stability of society and institutions on the island.”
(Watson, 1997:41) This contrasted with Jamaica where there was far greater institutional instability among
both whites and blacks, not to mention considerably more tension between masters and slaves as a result of
greater physical and sexual exploitation (Patterson, 1967; Butler, 1995; Beckles, 1993; Burnard, 2002).
Burnard has argued that, in spite of the mortality risks and rebelliousness of the slave population of Jamaica,
young Britons were still more eager to go there than to North America, not only because of the potential to
strike it rich, but because they enjoyed the weak institutional constraints, especially the sexual exploitation
of black and colored women, and the perverse pleasure of dominating black male slaves. The main reason for
the failure of settlement was the fact that Jamaica, along with most other Caribbean islands, but to an even
greater degree, were “killing grounds for white immigrants” (Burnard, 2002: 80). Between 1719 and 1758,
36 percent of all indentured servants arriving in the island died within 5 years. Newly arrived Europeans
died at 4 times the rate of newly arrived Africans of the same age. Furthermore, even native born whites
suffered high mortality and those who attempted to establish families experienced demographically disastrous infant mortality rates, with the great majority of children dying. Even those atypical immigrants who somehow managed to establish families left no lasting legacy since their descendants tended not to successfully reproduce (Burnard, 2002: 80).

Another important difference in racial composition and relations between Barbados and Jamaica was the large number of extremely poor whites in Barbados, the so-called Redlegs (previously Red shanks). They constituted more than half of the population of whites, descendants of the indentured servants of the first decades of the colony. Later they found employment during slavery mainly as militiamen protecting the plantations but, as we will see, their condition took a severe turn for the worse after emancipation, with important consequences for race relations in the island (Sheppard, 1977; Keagy, 1972).

5.3. Post-Emancipation Developments

Developments after slavery was abolished (1834-1836) reinforced differences already established during the era of slavery. The abolition of slavery and the shift toward free trade in Britain, combined with absentee ownership, all had disastrous consequences for the plantation system in Jamaica. Many plantations were simply abandoned; others were sold off cheaply. A major factor in their decline was the withdrawal of the great majority of the ex-slaves to the mountains and inland valleys, where they either squatted on their former provision grounds or, with the aid of sympathetic missionaries, pooled their resources and bought up plantations which were then sub-divided into peasant lots. Thus emerged in full bloom what had already started during slavery: a large peasant class that wanted to have as little as possible to do with the remaining planter economy, although they retained interest in aspects of Euro-Jamaican culture. In addition to becoming self-sufficient farmers, they consolidated the creolized African traditions inherited from slavery and formed the basis of a syncretic Afro-Jamaican culture with its own institutions of religion, marriage and family, farming, folklore and music (Warner-Lewis, 2002). These African influenced traditions were strongly reinforced by new arrivals from Africa after emancipation in the form of slaves rescued by the British navy from slave ships attempting to take them to the still flourishing slave societies of the Spanish islands (Schuler, 1980).

We should be careful, however, not to interpret the growth of the peasantry as a process of complete separation from that of the elite culture. Patterson (1975) has referred to this movement as one of segmentary creolization and pointed out that, like peasant cultures elsewhere, it remained open to the influence of the urban high culture. Thus, adherence to their Afro-Jamaican folk religion did not prevent the peasants from involvement with the dominant churches and faiths, especially the Anglican and Methodists churches, in much the same way that Chinese peasants participated in both their local faiths, so called popular religion, and the state cult and institutional sanjiao or three-teachings (Daoism, Buddhism and Confucianism) of the dominant culture. (See Patterson, 1975: 316-322) In like manner, the folk songs, dances, proverbs and popular attitudes of the peasantry were largely syncretisms of British (especially Irish), African and locally generated cultural patterns (Austin-Broos, 1997: chapters 2-6; Warner-Lewis, 2002; Moore & Johnson, 2002).
It would also be inaccurate to assume that the peasants completely withdrew from the state and viewed it as illegitimate. As Paton has shown in her study of 19th century penal developments, their attitudes were far more complex. While acknowledging that the state and its courts favored the rich and white, and in addition, having their own Afro-Jamaican system for resolving disputes, the peasants nonetheless participated in the formal judicial system: they frequently sued each other, often over private quarrels, packed the courts when in session, and cheered the decision of judges they considered just, and even turned over escaped convicts. At the same time, they were willing to attack unjust decisions and freed prisoners they considered unfairly imprisoned as well as punish those they thought had been mistakenly freed (Paton, 2004: 156-158).

The planters who remained after slavery were to limp along economically during most of the post-slavery decades until the late nineteenth century when the system revived, partly as a result of the shift toward banana production (On post-emancipation developments in Jamaica, see Eisner, 1961; Curtin, 1955; Hall, 1959, 1978; Holt, 1992). Their biggest problem was labor. Some ex-slaves did grudgingly offer their labor to the planters but the latter, chronically used to servile labor, hardly paid a living wage. Instead they turned, like their counterparts in Trinidad, Guyana and Cuba, to indentured labor from India and China. The effort was a failure. About a third of the Indians who came went back home and the British Colonial Office was soon accusing the Jamaican planters of “gross breaches of faith,” in their dealings with the indentures. (Hall, 1959:109; Look Lai, 2004). The Chinese soon fled the plantations and set up small grocery shops to serve the peasant population (Patterson, 1975; Lee, 1979). The planters thus had no choice but to rely on a volatile pool of wage laborers, supplemented by peasant farmers who worked occasionally during the harvest to earn the cash they needed for supplies and other commodities they were unable to produce themselves.

The ex-planter's, their descendants, and allies formed the second socio-cultural complex of what the historian Philip Curtin (1968) has called “Two Jamaicas”: an Anglo-Jamaican middle class and elite group with a culture focused on a creolized version of British institutions and customs. An important element of this group was the colored middle class which had emerged during slavery from the progeny of white planters and their concubines (Hall, 1959; Campbell, 1976; Holt, 1992; Ryan, 1991). While not large by Latin American standards, they became an important buffer in a slave system in which black slaves out-numbered their white masters 12 to 1. They were able to leverage their position into the attainment of full civil liberties (achieved at the same time as the small Jewish population) before the end of the period of slavery; the wealthier among them owned a significant amount of property. Obsessed with the color of their skin, they strove hard to express their loyalty to the white elite, not only in their tradition of successful men marrying up (including marriage to white women, since there were never any laws against intermarriage in the islands) but in their zealous pursuit of British culture.

Ironically, the main carriers of British culture and institutions in the island were not the remnant of the white planter class, who tended to end their children’s education after high school, sometimes before, incorporating them in the family business, but the colored elite and middle class who soon came to dominate the professions and what little intellectual and artistic life there were. At the bottom of this group were the
more dark-complexioned (though usually with a bit of white ancestry) petty bourgeois who manned the lower end of the island’s bureaucracy as well as its teaching and nursing professions, policemen, mid-sized farmers and skilled craft occupations. Their culture was also solidly Anglo-Jamaican, focused on the Anglican, Methodist and Baptist churches. This lower middle class group constituted the backbone of stable life in rural Jamaica, outside of the peasantry, and were the main intermediary between the peasantry and plantation working class, on the one hand, and the colored and white elite on the other. To the degree that Anglo-Jamaican culture and the declarative knowledge of its institutions penetrated the peasantry and plantation working class, it was via this group in their roles as teachers, parochial counselors, nurses and civil servants. (Heuman, 1981; Ryan:1991: 67-91) The Anglo-Jamaican sector constituted no more than 22% of the total population during the 19th century, of whom the whites were a declining fraction, from 4% in 1834 to 1.7% in 1921.

Developments in Barbados could not have been more dissimilar. As Engerman has noted, “Barbados was regarded as the major success of emancipation, as it maintained a plantation system, had productive labor, and increased output immediately upon emancipation and continued to do so into the twentieth century.” (Engerman, 2007: 51) What is most striking about the post-emancipation development of Barbados was the pitiless, unyielding, unified and ultimately successful efforts of the white elite to maintain as much as possible of the old order without crossing the line of re-enslaving the black population. Working strongly in their favor was something mentioned earlier: the fact that nearly every acre of cultivable land in the island was under the control of the planters. Nigel Bolland has pointed out that land availability alone cannot fully explain the varying patterns of labor control after emancipation; although in most cases it was the critical factor, the domimative strategies of the ruling class were also very important(Bolland, 1981). Obviously learning from what they observed in Jamaica, the Barbadian elite acted as a single body in preventing the abandonment or breaking up of plantations and subsequent sale to the ex-slaves. The prevention of the emergence of a peasantry was the explicit goal. When a planter faced financial distress, others prevented him from selling to the blacks by buying up his property and keeping it intact.(Butler, 1995:74-91; 109-120). Thus the vast mass of the ex-slave population had no choice but to work on the plantation, the urban area of Bridgetown offering only limited and precarious employment.

Reinforcing this was the notorious Masters and Servant Act, better known as the Contract Law, passed by the Legislature immediately after the end of slavery in 1838. Workers were allowed to live on the plantation and occupy cottages owned by the planter. Notice was required for termination of employment, at which point the worker had to leave his home, including the garden plots which were cultivated to supplement their meager income. Workers could be imprisoned for insubordination or disorderly behavior and many plantations employed a private police force to apply the law. Outside the plantation a well-trained,
publicly funded police force vigilantly maintained law and order, including discretionary arrests on the charge of vagrancy for anyone found idly wandering the streets with no good reason. While the harsher aspects of the law were modified by the imperial authorities (the rule against vagrancy was disallowed by the Colonial Office, and notice of intent to quit by the laborer was reduced from a year to one month) the Contract Law succeeded in reducing the Barbadian worker to a condition of tenantry, strongly reinforced by the threat of starvation for anyone who was summarily dismissed by the plantation owners. The rapid growth of the black population after slavery, making Barbados one of the most densely populated countries in the world by about the middle of the 19th century, simply strengthened the planters' hand. The law was not repealed until 1937, a century after its passage (Beckles, 1990: 103-135). It is significant that similar Masters and Servants laws existed on the books in other islands, including Jamaica, but in Jamaica it was largely a dead letter, given that the mass withdrawal of labor to the peasant sector gave workers the upper hand in their relations with the planters. (Hall1959:19-20) The more aggressive behavior of those Jamaicans who did offer their labor, and the existence of large areas of the island without a public police force, made any attempt to apply the law futile, if not dangerous.

So confident was the Barbadian elite of their control of the Barbadian working class that it was the only Caribbean island not to abolish its system of elite representative government in the latter half of the 19th century in favor of direct “Crown Colony” rule from Britain out of fear that they were being taken over by the increasingly educated colored groups. The Barbadian Assembly remained in place until the 1950s of the last century, a 300 years history of legislative continuity. Another expression of their self-confidence, appeared much earlier: the remarkable fact that the island’s police force was composed entirely of Afro-Barbadians by 1842, a mere 4 years after the final abolition of slavery (Newton, 2007:184-5;197).

Faced with this repressive situation, Barbadian workers were limited to three options: remain on the plantation and work as efficiently as they could so as not to run the risk of homelessness and starvation; acquire an education so as to be able to pursue one of the limited number of occupations in the urban areas or the skilled work required by the plantation; or migrate. These were not mutually exclusive; indeed education was seen not only as the means toward attaining one of the limited number of skilled jobs but, more importantly, as a facilitator of migration. Thus, from very early after slavery there developed what Beckles called “a cult of education among the older generation who insisted upon their children’s acquisition of literate skills.” (1990: 105) The desire for their children to gain an education strongly motivated the older ex-slaves to work hard on the plantations in order to earn the extra income needed to pay for school fees. Responding to this educational demand were the free people of color, among whom “popular education was among the most significant areas of civic involvement” during the apprenticeship period and after slavery. (Newton, 2007:159)

The educational practices of the whites also enhanced the prestige of education among the blacks. Unlike Jamaica, the planter elite had developed a moderately well functioning educational system for themselves; in 1834 there were already 213 schools in the island, which with a white population of 15,000 meant that there were more such institutions per capita (1 to 70 whites) than anywhere else in the Caribbean.
and perhaps in the entire New World except New England. These schools were, of course, highly segregated because, like planters everywhere, the Barbadians felt strongly that education would alienate the blacks from their allotted role of workers. The fact that the leaders of the sole slave revolt in the island in 1816 were literate simply reinforced this prejudice. Nonetheless, while limiting educational opportunities, the planters did grudgingly vote some funds for elementary education, partly under pressure from the imperial authorities, but also out of recognition that a modicum of the right kind of education would make for more efficient workers. This was supplemented by the work of the churches. By some miracle, this patchwork of barely supported educational structures worked; and certainly more efficiently than in the other islands. In 1844, only 6 years after the end of slavery, there were 56 church-organized schools, mainly Anglican, and 149 private schools with a total enrolment of 7,452 students. In addition, adult education was offered in Saturday, Sunday and evening schools (Planning Research and Development Unit, 2000). By the middle of the 19th century, Barbadian blacks were the most literate in the Caribbean. When educational opportunities were substantially increased by the imperial authorities in the last third of the 19th century, Barbadians were in a better position to take advantage of them than any other group. A report of 1933 stated that the Barbadian educational system (along with that of Trinidad) was “a class apart” from the other islands of the Eastern Caribbean (Mayhew Report, 1933) and MacMillan, writing in the mid-thirties, observed of Barbados that “the self-respect and industry of its coloured people are testimony to the efficacy of education in making economic existence possible in difficult conditions, and to the desire of the Negroes to use the opportunities afforded them” (Macmillan 1936:132) Macmillan’s observation was confirmed by the 1946 Census of Barbados, the first in which a literacy question was asked: 91 percent of the population over 10 years of age was able to both read and write, with a total illiteracy rate of only 7% (the difference was accounted for by the semi-literate, those who could read but not write); the white rate being 98 percent, mixed race or coloreds 94 and blacks 90 percent (Census of Barbados: Table 38, p.27). By contrast, the Census of Jamaica of 1943 shows that only 74 per cent of the population 10 years and older could both read and write (Census of Jamaica, 1943: Table 63, p. 120). The racial breakdown in the Jamaican census was given only for the population 7 years of age and over, and it shows that only 72% of the black population was literate, compared with 86% of coloreds and 97 percent of whites (Census of Jamaica, 1943:Table 54,p.108). What stands out in these figures is not only the substantially higher proportion of the population that was literate in Barbados, but the much smaller gap between the different ethno-racial groups: there was only an 8% point difference between blacks and whites in Barbados, compared with a 25 points difference between blacks and whites, and a 14 point difference between blacks and the mixed-race group in Jamaica.

A third striking difference in the educational profile of the two colonies at this period concerns the gender gap. In Barbados, males were more literate than females, while the opposite was the case in Jamaica: only 5.97% of males were illiterate, compared with 8.3 % of females in Barbados (Census of Barbados 1946: Table 38,p.27), while in Jamaica 28 percent of males were illiterate compared with 23 percent of females (Census of Jamaica,1943: Table 54,p.108). Furthermore, the gender gap was greatest in the black population: 31 percent of Jamaican black males over 7 were illiterate compared with 25% female. One likely reason for
both the higher rate of illiteracy as well as the nature and extent of the gender gap in Jamaica was the high proportion of the population in the peasant sector, nearly all of whom were black. It was long reported that a substantial number of Jamaican peasant children were either kept out of school on one or two days each week to help on the farm and preparing for market day (Saturdays) or entirely removed from school prematurely. In this regard, boys were considered more valuable for their labor and hence removed at greater rates than girls, which explains both the nature and extent of the gender gap in literacy (Bryan, 1991: 116-121). The absence of a significant peasant sector in Barbados meant that this incentive for disproportionately removing boys from schools did not exist. To the contrary, education, as we already noted, was seen as the only path to both physical and social mobility for the working classes, and little difference was made by parents in encouraging boys and girls to get an education.

The strong commitment to education among all classes has persisted and grown in modern times. When Greenfield conducted his anthropological research in the middle of the late fifties of the 20th century, he found that even among cane-cutters “the first major responsibility of a father to his children is to see that they receive a school education” (Greenfield, 1966:104). This contrasts sharply with the disorganized familial patterns of the Jamaican sugar regions where mothers and children are often abandoned by their fathers (Clarke, 1957; Cumper, 1954:156) Furthermore, the pattern on peasant parents withdrawing their male children from school has persisted, although to a lesser degree after independence.

One of the many positive consequences of the higher rates of education in colonial Barbados was the much greater labor participation rates of both genders, a pattern that has persisted to this day. As Table 2 shows, not only is the total participation rate higher in Barbados, most of the difference in rates between the two islands is explained by the substantially lower participation of women in the Jamaican labor force, in spite of the fact that women continue to be more educated than men in the island. Already far behind Barbados in its overall level of literacy, Jamaica further fails to utilize the more educated half of its population, its women. Not surprisingly, as Table 2 indicates, it scores and ranks far below Barbados in the United Nations Gender Inequality index. These differences, far from being the product of present policies, are all deeply rooted in the colonial histories of the two islands; from as early as the 1860s Barbados had one of the highest female participation rates in the world. In fact, between 1860 and 1921 women substantially outnumbered men in the labor force, with a sex ratio of 895 in 1851 which fell to a low of 669 in 1921, perhaps the highest female participation rate ever recorded by any society during peace time (Roberts, 1955:279). The reason for this unusual labor force gender pattern was the other main means of survival for Barbadians: emigration.

Outmigration proved to be the main means by which Barbadians escaped the entrapment on the plantation after slavery. As Melanie Newton notes, migration had always been “an expression of freedom” and “post-1834 migration patterns echoed those of the slavery era, when they were a defining characteristic of freedom for ‘masterless people’ such as free Afro-Barbadians...” (Newton 2008: 10-11) Both pull and push factors worked in their favor. By the 1860s “flight from Barbados to avoid starvation was the predominant feature of the decade” (Beckles, 2003:108). At the same time, by the middle of the 19th century Barbadian
workers had acquired a reputation for being the most educated, disciplined and hardworking in the region, even though the lowest paid at home, and by the second half of the century their “propensity to emigrate was well known” (Richardson, 1997:162). It was not long before employers in other regions came to recruit them. As Roberts (1955) has pointed out, between 1860 and 1921 there was an outward movement of nearly 150,000 persons, resulting in a net out-migration of 103,000: “But for emigration on a relatively large scale, Barbados, already very densely settled in 1844 (with 740 persons per square mile), might by now (1955) have reached a disastrous state of over-crowding, relief from which would have been possible only by widespread starvation, disease and death” (Roberts 1955:246). The migration not only reduced the rate of growth of the population but later led to a decline. With their usual ruthlessness, the planters tried to restrict their movement, but were prevented by the imperial authorities who actively promoted emigration. Attempts to ban labor recruiters were only marginally successful (Richardson, 1985: 100-104). Thousands of Barbadians spread out over the region, and with the building of the Panama Canal came a major new opportunity for mobility through out-migration. Migration to Panama and the “Panama money” remittances sent back home came at the same time that the Barbadian sugar industry faced a major economic crisis at the turn of the 19th century. For the first time, a significant number of planters were forced to sell off their plantations or face bankruptcy. Returning migrants, and those in receipt of their remittances, avidly grasped the opportunity to become freehold landowners (Richardson, 1985:170-232). It is significant, also, that the land bought by black Barbadians was not used to create a subsistence economy (as had happened in Jamaica) but rather to produce cane, in this way integrating the newly prosperous blacks even more into the formal money economy(Richardson, 1985:194-196).It was from this newly emerged class of relatively prosperous freeholders and more progressive members of the colored middle class that the nationalist leaders of the second third of the 20th century were to emerge(Beckles, 1990: Chapters 7-8) 

There was one other important respect in which late 19th and early 20th century Barbados was unique and which was important for the learning of British institutional procedures. Rarely mentioned in traditional histories of the island was the application of what Enloe (1980:26-27) has called the “Gurkha syndrome” to Barbadian blacks by the British imperial authorities. One peculiar feature of British imperial history was the practice of identifying certain colonial groups as naturally well endowed in certain qualities the British considered useful for both the maintenance and expansion of the empire. This happened mainly in Asia, prototypically with the Gurkhas of Nepal who, especially after the Indian mutiny of 1857, became stereotyped as a fearless, martial race, and were recruited to serve as mercenaries by the East India Company army and later by the British imperial government as the Gurkha Rifles. In classic self-fulfilling manner, the Gurkhas, after selective recruitment and special training, became the fearsome and loyal warriors of British imperialist imagination. The same self-fulfilling principle was applied to other groups such as the Sikhs, Pashtuns, Punjabis, Mahars and Rajputs as well as the Karens and Kachins of Burma. (Enloe, 1980; Caplan 1995) 

The British applied this imperial tactic primarily to one group outside of Asia: black Barbadians. To be sure, thousands of African born slaves were recruited and trained as soldiers to man the lower ranks of
the British West India Regiments throughout the Caribbean during the period of slavery, but there was no conception of these Africans as a superior category of blacks; to the contrary, the alien and “uncivilized” background of the recruits were the qualities most prized in them, and free blacks could not be induced to join these regiments because of the low status of the soldiers (Buckley, 1979). The approach was entirely different toward the Barbadians recruited to imperial service during the post-emancipation period. From early in the 19th century, British colonial authorities became convinced that West Indians were immune to the illnesses that plagued white troops in Africa and had begun to consider using them as "low level imperial agents in Africa." (Newton, 2007:200) While other West Indians, including Jamaicans, were so employed earlier in the century, there was an increasing shift toward Barbadians later on. The Barbadians themselves, it is important to note, were active agents in this imperial venture. Indeed, as early as the 1840s, long before the British began to focus on them, elite Afro-Barbadians “saw themselves as defenders of Africa in the British Empire and as potential vanguard of British civilization on the African continent” (Newton, 2007:196). What emerged by mid-century was a peculiarly “Afro-Barbadian racial consciousness (that) combined imperial nationalism with a discourse of imperial civilisationalism” (Newton, 2007:197). The Barbadians, initially, had boldly decided to bend British imperial power and culture toward their own ideological ends of liberating Africa from slavery and backwardness. In 1847, some 103 Barbadian blacks founded the Barbadian Colonization Society and informed the colonial office that they were ready to emigrate to Africa in order to help the British suppress the slave trade there and civilize the masses (Newton, 2007: 274). Later, their more immediate goal was to escape the unwavering power of the white elite, especially in their reluctance to broaden the property qualifications for the franchise.

As impressed by the disciplined work ethic, education and lack of rebelliousness of Barbadians as were employers in other islands, the British imperial authorities by the latter half of the 19th century decided that Barbadians were the "smart" and loyal blacks, and proceeded to train and use them in its imperial expansion and consolidation in Africa, the Caribbean and Central America as they had done with groups such as the Sikhs and Gurkhas. Two historians of British imperialism had this to say about this practice in their discussion of the British imposition of order in the Bahamas during the 1890s: “The men eventually recruited for the constabulary (in the Bahamas, 1891) were Barbadians—the West Indian counterpart of the ‘martial races’ of India—who similarly served in the police forces of the colonies in the eastern Caribbean and in mainland British Honduras.” (Andersen & Killingray, 1991: 78) Descriptions of young recruits in 1892 by the British inspector reflected the imperial bias: they were “young, intelligent, and of good character, presenting favourable material;” another report described them as “literate, as might be expected of the superior class from which they [were] drawn” (quoted in Tinker 2011:39) Although resented by black Bahamians, the Barbadians were greatly favored by the white oligarchy, and before long came to dominate the black professional classes and were a “key catalyst for educational reform in the Bahamas, especially from the 1920s through the 1960s” (Tinker 2011: 39).

Barbadians were also a critical component of the conquest and colonization of what became British Honduras (now Belize) supplying not only the troops but the middle and lower ends of the imperial
bureaucracy. Barbadian troops were also used in the conquest of Ghana with the scramble for Africa at the end of the 19th century, manning the ranks in the fiercely fought Anglo-Ashanti wars. Barbadians were used not only as advance troops but as missionaries and school masters all over the Caribbean and in the pacification and Christianization of West Africa. As early as 1850 a black Barbadian became the main organizer of an Anglican mission to what is now Gambia, followed 5 years later by another mission, under the auspices of the Anglican Church, to Rio Pongas in the same country which lasted for over a century.

The reputation of Barbadians as dependable and efficient workers carried over into modern late-imperial practice. Thus, during the post-war economic boom in Europe, thousands of West Indians and people from the Indian sub-continent migrated to Britain to fill unmet labor needs. With the exception of one group of post-colonials, the migrants all arrived on their own initiative, to increasingly unwelcoming hosts. The one exception were Barbadian migrants. London Transport, one of the largest employers of labor in Britain, actually sent representatives to Barbados to actively recruit laborers there to work in the London transportation system.

One major consequence of Barbados' distinctive colonial history was that a single cultural system emerged in Barbados. It was one, to be sure, that was marked by sharp class variants and racial segregation. Nonetheless there was nothing approaching the bi-cultural segmentary creolization which developed in Jamaica. An ethnographic study of rural Barbados near the end of the last century found that small Barbadian homes "imitated the design elements that they observed in plantation homes on a smaller scale in their own village or tenantry homes," and within the homes, especially of older black Barbadians, walls were decorated with photographs of the British royal family side by side with plaques displaying religious sayings such as "god is my copilot." (Gmelch and Gmelch, 1997: 14-15). An earlier ethnographic study of family life in Barbados found that the matrifocal family that predominated among the lower classes did not originate in the conditions of slavery (as was true of Jamaica) but was a "variant of English culture," specifically, the ancient British institution of trothplight, brought to the island by the whites in the 17th century, which permitted cohabitation that could only culminate into marriage with the ownership of property. (Greenfield, 1966: 163-165). Greenfield concluded his now classic ethnography of the island as follows:

"Barbados, though inhabited by the descendants of Africans, is English in culture. The Barbadian family, then, as a cultural phenomenon, is to be traced to and understood within the English frame of reference. Neither Africa nor the institution of slavery can account for the forms of the family to be observed in Barbados. The English influence ties the island and its institutions to another cultural tradition. Within that tradition, Barbados and the behavior of its inhabitants are both explicable and understandable." (Greenfield, 1966:174)

A distinctive feature of post-emancipation Barbadian society, especially in contrast with Jamaica, was the existence of a large group of extremely poor whites in the island. In 1834 there were 8000 of them, constituting over a half of the white population of 12,797 (Jones, 2007:16). After abolition a crisis emerged as to what to do with them. Deeply racially prejudiced, they refused to work on the plantation alongside blacks.
One seemingly obvious role for them was the occupation of policemen in the force, founded in 1845, to which they were initially hired, but remarkably, the white elite soon rejected them in favor of freed blacks who were held to be more competent. There was also no place for them in other skilled occupations or small business’s since these were monopolized by blacks and mixed race persons soon after emancipation (Newton, 2008:154). After this, the group moved to the rural areas where they scratched out a living on garden plots, occasionally on the dole, and as paupers, often begging and stealing from their black neighbors. They came to constitute the lowest level of Barbadian society, viewed with contempt by the white elite and the blacks who outcompeted them from “almost every field where free laborers were wont to exercise their skill and industry” (Sturge and Harvey 1838:133). They added that, “from their idle and dissolute habits they are more degraded than the Negros but are proud of their caste as whites.” The Barbadian white elite came eventually to view them as “a class of degenerates who had fallen from white grace,” and were indifferent to occasional attempts to “re-whiten” them (Jones, 2007:20). Attempts to export them from the island largely failed.

This racial situation was unique throughout the British Caribbean and the United States. In the other British and French Caribbean islands, being white offered special opportunities for mobility and every effort was made to prevent the tarnishing of the white brand by having any number of them below the status of blacks: “privilege was a function of whiteness or gradations of whiteness.” (Keagy, 1972: 27). In the US, where there was a large poor white population, as is well known, the white elite deliberately played off whites against blacks by emphasizing the racial superiority of all whites, no matter how poor, thereby building a bond of solidarity which was the foundation of the herrenvolk democracy of the Jim Crow South (see the classic account by Morgan, 1975). The Barbadian white elite felt no need to socially or psychologically elevate the poor white majority in maintaining their own herrenvolk colonial democracy, nor did they feel their own sense of racial superiority in any way threatened by the presence of the poor whites: “the class structure of Barbados evolved more directly from equating economic standing with social rank. If a poor white in Barbados enjoyed less economic success than a man of color, he was axiomaticall beneath him socially” (Keagy, 1972:27). To be sure, there were pockets of poor whites in other islands, including Jamaica, but these very small and isolated communities destined to die out or be absorbed in the broader community over the course of the 20th century. Only in Barbados did a large segment of the white population constitute, in the view of both elite whites and all blacks, the very bottom of the social order, both in class and cultural terms, “despised, pitied, economically deprived, conspicuous, introverted and isolated” (Keagy, 1972:42).

As might be imagined, this unusual situation strongly influenced the black Barbadian view of race, class and culture. It clearly demonstrated that, however economically oppressive and racially exclusive were members of the white elite, however great their assumption of racial superiority, economic interests and institutional efficiency trumped race in their dealings with all members of the society. Nothing could have made this clearer than the white elite rejection, en masse, of former white militiamen in favor of black and colored Barbadians to work as policemen and as artisan and skilled workers. The lesson Barbadian blacks learned from the condition and status of the Redlegs was that what placed them at the bottom of the social order were their cultural and institutional inferiority, and that with the acquisition of such knowledge, it was
possible to outperform them and move up the social ladder. They also learned, conversely, that however racist were the white elites in enslaving their ancestors and perpetuating the harsh plantation capitalism that oppressed them, race nonetheless was clearly secondary in explaining their condition, and therefore an appeal to anti-white racial ideology as a solution to their condition was bound to miss the mark. We shall return to this in the coda to this paper.

6. Decolonization and the Institutionalization of Democracy

We have emphasized throughout this paper the distinction between the declarative and procedural knowledge of institutions, simply knowing the institutional rules of the game as distinct from knowing how to work or play it. We now briefly discuss one other area where this distinction was, and remains of greatest import when comparing Jamaica and Barbados.

Outwardly, the decolonization movements of both islands were strikingly similar. Beginning with labor riots on the plantations as a result of the depression era of the thirties when the price of sugar plunged to record lows leading to massive unemployment and unacceptably low wages, a nationalist movement emerged in both islands led by moderate members of the colored middle classes (Post, 1978; Monroe, 1972; Chamberlain 2010). After an initial phase of riots largely in response to depression level layoffs and wages in the plantations, both islands became models of gradualist transfer of power from Britain, moving seamlessly from parliamentary systems dominated by the white elites to self-government with increasing growth of the electorate, to final independence. When the British flag was drawn in the 1960s all that was left to be done was the transfer of the last remnant of power held by the Governor over foreign affairs.

Both islands entered independence with two-party parliamentary systems scrupulously modeled on the British, with constitutions that codified thinly localized versions of British law. Indeed, most laws remained on the books exactly as they had been written by the colonial government and remained in place even after Britain had changed its own version of them. From very early on, however, the way Jamaicans played the institutional game of parliamentary democracy differed radically from Barbadian practice. The leaders of one of the two main political parties in Jamaica, in order to ensure perpetual election to their constituency, developed a pattern of political clientelism focused on the provision of apartments in housing projects and jobs in, or for, government, most sinecures or contracts. The system was iniquitous in conception in that large numbers of persons were removed from their shanty town dwellings and replaced by loyal constituency leaders who made sure that residents voted for the constituency representative. The unfortunate consequence was that in urban Jamaica election seasons became periods of violence, since the loss of their representatives would entail loss of homes and jobs. Local political gangs thus emerged to protect what they had secured and to prevent the election of opposition members. This became known as the garrison system, and before long, guns were introduced to “protect” the housing projects that formed the core of constituency voters. In retaliation, displaced members of the opposition party also armed themselves. Thus election periods became seasons of violence, though confined mainly to the urban areas (Stone, 1973; 1983)

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To make matters worse, starting in the early eighties, the cocaine drug lords of Colombia found the political gangs and the geographical location of Jamaica to be ideal for the establishment of transshipment zones for cocaine to the U.S., especially after the overland route through Mexico became too risky. The fact that there was a long tradition of both internal and external trading of marijuana (called ganja in creole) in the island made the country even more attractive to the Colombians. In short order, Jamaica became a major drug trans-shipment center, as much as a third of all cocaine entering the U.S. passing through the island, from where it was transported to either Puerto Rico or the Bahamas.

This development was disastrous not only in the inevitable escalation of violence that came with the vast sums of money that poured into the island, but for the democratic system. Most of what became drug gangs were originally political gangs. Their leaders now wealthy, the tables were turned on the politicians who changed from being patrons to being clients and tools of the drug dons, as they came to be called. With their hordes of drug money the dons became the virtual government leaders of the slum areas they controlled, providing welfare services and even the enforcement of rough justice in the protection of what was now their constituencies. The politicians of these urban lower class constituencies became dependent on these dons to deliver votes. (Sives, 2010; Gunst, 2003)

In spite of this distortion of the urban democratic process, it would be going too far to claim that the Jamaican state lacks legitimacy. As Gilley (2006) points out, student of state legitimacy have long observed that voters distinguish between the state and its governments, and this is certainly the case in Jamaica where strong disdain for the politicians of opposing parties is not reflected in the deligitimization of the state. Not only do people vote in numbers that surpass turnout rates in America, but state functions such as the independence week celebrations elicit mass participations, with thousands of Jamaicans returning home for the event. Jamaicans are also fervently nationalistic. Furthermore, Jamaica has a vibrant civil sphere and extremely competitive and free press. It is noteworthy that there has been a marked decline in electoral violence in the island since the early nineties, brought about in large part by civil society activists who successfully instituted electoral reforms to protect the democratic process, as well as by the political parties themselves (Sives, 2010:118-142). More like India than its West Indian sister states, a rambunctious, slightly tattered though genuine democracy thrives in Jamaica and its state has mass support and legitimacy.

Turning to Barbados, the contrast could not have been greater. The last decades of transition to independence in Barbados was a model of gradualism in both its economic and political institutions. The strong and highly effective state structure that the colonial elite had built over the centuries was gradually taken over by the emerging non-white leaders who substantially expanded expenditure on infrastructural growth, especially in education, housing and health, as well as facilities favoring tourism (Howard, 1989:24-27). While the extent of expenditure, especially on social infrastructure was new, it is important to note that the capacity of the decolonizing and post-colonial Barbadian state was something inherited from the colonial past with its strong tradition of colonial autonomy and self-rule by the plantocratic-merchant elite. By the late 19th century the British colonial office had opted for a hands-off policy when dealing with Barbados, the island being the only Caribbean colony not subject to crown colony government in the general move towards
direct rule. As Howard correctly describes it, by the 1930s Barbados was “not a colonial government but a national autocracy which at times challenged colonial authority” (Howard, 1989:2). Unlike the colonial and post-colonial autocracies of Latin America, it was an autocracy that ruled with hardnosed, and sometimes callous efficiency in preserving the plantocratic and later planter-merchant capitalist system in ways that promoted the shared objectives of the elite. In striking contrast with the Jamaican colonial elite, the Barbadians from very early solved the collective action problem of free riders (Olson, 1965) in the provision of public goods that benefited the system and their class. We already saw this in the rigorously pursued policy of preventing distressed planters from selling land to the ex-slaves so as to prevent the emergence of a peasantry which they correctly saw as a threat to the plutocratic system. We find another indicator of this in the late colonial period when the tax ratios of the islands are compared. Starting with the introduction of the income tax in 1921 the island had a higher ratio than Jamaica and nearly all of the other colonies of the region. By 1956 its tax ratio was 18.7 compared with 12.6 in Jamaica and 13.4 in Trinidad; in 1964, two years before independence, but 2 years after Jamaica became independent, the Barbadian tax ratio stood at 23.1 compared with Jamaica's 17.3 (Howard, 1989:118).

Thus what the decolonizing black and colored leaders inherited was a strong state with the institutional capacity to exercise a remarkable degree of control over the “disposition of purchasing power in the economy” (Howard, 1989:118). Decolonization was simply a matter of taking control of this institutional structure and utilizing it toward the new end of benefiting the greater Barbadian population, emulating its previous managers in the art of effectively running the system. Howard writes:

“The period 1953-1964 was an era of rapid growth, where capital expenditure grew at a compounded annual rate of 15.8% and current expenditure at a rate of 9.1%. This period was characterized by a deepening of the economic infrastructure as well as a rapid expansion in the cost of maintaining the colonial administration. Toward the end of the period new initiatives were taken in areas of housing, education, road building and the provision of social amenities during the transition to political independence” (Howard, 1989: 120).

What was true of the management of the economy was even more the case in the take-over and management of the political system. To use the terminology of Gerring et al ((2005), the “accumulated stock of democracy” was long and deep in Barbados, albeit one that was of the herrenvolk kind, confined to the elite. The centuries old parliamentary system—one of the longest-lasting in the history of parliamentary governments—which the white elite had fiercely defended, nurtured and built up in the exclusive service of their class, was adopted in its entirety by the decolonizing leadership, with the crucial difference that now the electorate was expanded to the entire adult population and its leaders derived from the formerly excluded classes. The new leadership preserved everything of value in the system they inherited, right down to its rituals, building on the stock to create one of the world’s most admired democracies. Barbados, as a result, has become a global model of parliamentary democracy. Freedom House regularly ranks it among the top democratic nations, very often above several of the major West European nations and occasionally even higher than the U.S.! Unlike Japan and other near one-party democracies, governments have changed places
regularly over this period. Debates in the Barbadian parliament vie with the British House of Commons for its caustic wit and civility. To the best of my knowledge there has not been a single fatality in Barbadian politics during the near half a century of its existence.

What is true of its parliamentary system holds also for all the major institutions of government. In light of the institutional and socio-cultural history just reviewed, we can better interpret the World Bank indicators of quality of governance shown in figure 3 above. Barbados ranks over the 90th percentile of countries in voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law and control of corruption. On all these measures except voice and accountability, Jamaica ranks just about the 50th percentile, passable in global terms, but far below Barbados. Our review of the institutional history of both islands now makes it clear that this difference is not the result of post-independence policies, but continuities of developments that have their roots deep in the colonial past of both islands.

7. The Problem of Off-Shore Centers

At this point, we must consider one possible objection to our argument. Barbados belongs to the group of countries with offshore financial centers (OFCs). First established in the Bahamas in 1936, these centers are typically found in small economies, many of which are located in the Caribbean, some of them sovereign states, others dependencies of the former imperial powers. Their main legitimate goals are to provide international banking and other financial services to non-residents who are exempted from income and other taxes and enjoy minimal regulation and no currency controls. Regulatory standards and transparency varies widely in these countries, and their role as tax havens has come under increasing scrutiny in recent years, especially from the United States (Brei 2013). Although several large countries, including the US, provide such services, the IMF has proposed that a defining feature of such countries or jurisdictions is that they provide "financial services to nonresidents on a scale that is incommensurate with the size and functioning of [their] domestic economy" (Zorome, 2007: 7)

Brei (2013:4) estimates that a total of $4.6 trillion of international funds flow in a "round-tripping" process from and back to the metropolitan centers, especially the U.S., primarily to reduce income tax payments. The IMF also estimates assets and liabilities at U.S.$ 2.7 trillion and 3.2 trillion respectively, constituting 8 percent of world’s cross-border holdings in 2009 (Schipke, 2011: Slide 5). Remarkably, 60 percent of these funds reside in the broader Caribbean region (Schipke, 2011; Brei,2013:4). The non-sovereign Caribbean, which remains dependencies of the former imperial powers, Britain and the Netherlands in particular, hold most of the Caribbean funds. Of the sovereign Caribbean states that have OFCs, Barbados and the Bahamas are the most important. Significantly, Jamaica does not have an OFC worth speaking.

The presence of an OFC in Barbados and its absence in Jamaica poses two questions for our analysis: First, what has been the impact of its OFC on the economic growth and relative success of Barbados? If the effect is substantial, this would largely invalidate our analysis since a wholly exogenous, post-independence factor, having nothing to do with differing institutions, cultures or histories, will have been the primary, or a
major, cause of the difference between the two islands. Second, even if its OFC sector does not contribute in an all-determining way to Barbadian success (as is clearly the case in places like the Cayman), but is nonetheless an important factor, would this bolster the argument that policies trump institutions because the presence of the OFC sector is the result of these policies?

At first sight, it appears as if there is a high correlation between the presence of OFCs and better macro-economic indicators (see Brei 2013: Table3). Caribbean countries with OFCs have, on average, substantially greater GDP per capita income than those without this sector-- $21,362 vs $3950. They also have somewhat lower external debt/GDP ratios and inflation rates. Quite apart from the fact that correlations do not indicate causal relations, however, a closer examination of the comparative macro-economic data presented by Brei brings into question Brei’s own view that Caribbean countries with OFCs are doing better. Bermuda’s per capita income of $84,460 (considerably higher than the US’ $51,748 and all the advanced European countries) and Cayman’s of $43,717, are largely meaningless, reflecting the tax haven status of these countries and the wealth of a tiny fraction of their populations. In fact, it is best to remove them from the comparison since they are not independent economies but extensions of the UK, which controls their financial sector and regulatory systems and, in the case of Cayman and the Turks and Caicos Islands, their police forces. If there was any doubt about this, it was made startlingly clear on December 11, 2012, when the Royal Cayman Police Service, unceremoniously arrested the Prime Minister, McKeeva Bush, on charges of corruption and theft, three days after former Turks and Caicos Islands Premier, Michael Misick, who had been on the run, was arrested by the Brazilian authorities on an extradition order by the British government relating to corruption charges filed three years earlier (Miami Herald, 12/11/2012). If we confine our analysis to the sovereign states, only Barbados and the Bahamas truly stand out. On most other measures, the OFC countries have worse indicators and, as such, we disagree with Brei’s conclusion from his own data that the spillover effects of OFC are generally positive. Significantly, the real growth rates of the non-OFC countries reported by Brei are substantially better than their OFC counterparts even including the Cayman Islands and Bermuda; excluding these islands, the non-OFC countries are way ahead, with the Dominican Republic and Trinidad and Tobago the stellar performers of the region. This interpretation is consistent with the findings of Leo-Rey Gordon (2008:19) of the Jamaican Development Bank, who found that the presence of OFCs in the Caribbean "has not had a positive impact on key financial indicators such as private sector credit to GDP, loan-to-deposit interest rate spread, net interest income and capital to assets ratio," the main reason being that the international companies in the OFC countries are not allowed to do business with local residents or make loans to local banks. Gordon’s study was in tune with an earlier IMF country report on the Eastern Caribbean which concluded that the tax incentives offered by these economies had no impact on the level of foreign direct investment (Goyal et al 2005).

In spite of the unimpressive performance of the other OFC states, it may nonetheless remain the case that Barbados’ exceptionalism (along with the Bahamas’) can be attributed to the management of its offshore industry and the contribution of this sector to the other sectors of its economy. So exactly what effects have its OFC had on its broader economy? Answering this question is difficult, which is hardly surprising given the
secretive nature of OFC transactions. In 1999, the Central Bank of Barbados attempted to assess the offshore sector’s (including both the manufacturing and OFC sub-sectors) contribution to the island’s economy, (Doyle & Johnson, 1999:96). In spite of the already billion-dollar magnitude of its offshore industry, the bank was only able “to explore threats to the future viability of the sector,” due to “the severe data constraints encountered” (p.96).

Data availability improved sufficiently in recent years to allow the IMF and other researchers to make a better assessment of the impact of OFCs on the domestic economy. The main effects are derived from the following: income from direct employment by OFCs, spillover benefits to the domestic service sector, especially tourism and restaurants, and to infrastructure, especially telecommunication and transportation, as well as income from taxes and fees (Schipke, 2011; for more details on the nature of these financial services and fees see Zomore 2007:7). In addition, the domestic economy also benefits from an increased number of specialists such as fund managers, accountants and high level specialists in finance (Brei, 2013).

For 2008 (see Table 3), the IMF study (Schipke, 2011) found that in Barbados there were total assets of US$50 billion, constituting 1300 percent of the island’s GDP, and that 11 percent of government revenues were derived from the sector, amounting to 4% of GDP. A total of 3500 persons were employed in the sector, constituting 2.5% of the labor force. Total contribution of the sector to the country’s GDP (taking account of private sector contributions) was 7.8%, which was in line with the sector’s contribution to the GDP of the Bahamas (estimated at 7.4-9.2%).

Table 3. about here

This is certainly a non-trivial contribution, and may even have been important in buffering Barbados over the rocky economic period it has experienced since the start of the global 2008 recession. However, given the vast sums involved, the OFC’s effect on the Barbadian economy is at best, modest. It certainly cannot be said that Barbados’ relative success is due primarily to this exogenous, post-independence sector, and as such, it in no way invalidates our comparison.

This brings us to our second question: is the presence and modest contribution of the OFC to the Barbadian economy another indication of the priority of good policies over institutions, especially in light of the absence of an OFC in Jamaica? The answer is an emphatic no. The comparative data on OFCs quickly

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6 There was a sharp drop in private capital inflows in 2013 and an alarming slide in foreign reserves; a widening of central government deficit to 9.8 percent; stagnation and decline in its all-important tourist industry; its debt/GDP ratio soared from 60 percent in 2009 to 94 percent in 2013; and the government was forced to cut 3000 workers, 13%, from the public sector. In all, the economy has contracted 0.6 percent since 2008. (IMF, Feb. 2014a) In December 2013 Moody’s downgraded the island’s government bond rating by 2 notches to Ba3 status. Ironically, Jamaica has been weathering the external shock somewhat better, with GDP growth of 1% in 2013/14, increased international reserves and improved current accounts. While also downgrading its credit rating, Jamaica was the only Caribbean country with a positive rating outlook assigned to their current rating. The crime rate has also declined. However, the economic and social situation is still precarious and, on most indicators, Barbados remains in far better shape than Jamaica. (IMF 2014b)
make it clear that their presence has little to do with the policy effectiveness or even the level of corruption in the host country. Looking first, at the Caribbean region, we find, on the one hand, that better run economies with well-established reputations and relative lack of corruption such as the Dominican Republic and Trinidad and Tobago do not have, or have encouraged, OFCs while, on the other hand, the Cayman Islands, Bahamas, and Turks and Caicos Islands and Antigua and Barbuda have all had thoroughly corrupt leaders. It is noteworthy that the arrest of Cayman’s Prime Minister did not make the slightest dent in the 1.76 trillion US dollars of international claims in the territory (6% of total international claims) (Brei, 2013:10). The same holds for Panama, another thoroughly corrupt country beloved by OFCs whose Corruption Perception Index dropped from 73rd to 102nd between 2010 and 2013 even as its OFCs soared (Gibney, 2014). When we broaden our scope to consider all OFCs globally, the weight of the evidence strongly indicates that good domestic policies in the host countries have little to do with their presence. To the contrary, it has been shown in a well modeled and thoroughly documented paper by Rose and Spiegel (2007) that two bad “institutional features” account for OFCs: “Being either a tax haven or a money launderer has an economically and statistically strong effect in raising the probability of being an OFC,” which confirmed the findings of their previous bilateral results “that sinful countries are strongly associated with offshore financial centres” (p.1318). To be sure, Barbados falls at the good, non-corrupt and collaborative end of the range of countries with OFCs, and it is a reasonable assumption that Jamaica’s reputation as a violent place with a history of radical politics would discourage an inflow of OFC funds, should its government attempt to attracts such funds, but both these reputations, as we have already seen, are deeply rooted in the islands’ colonial past.

8. Does capitalist development require inclusiveness? What the Jamaica-Barbados comparison makes clear

In a valuable contribution to this debate, Peter Evans (2006) has defended the AJR approach by pointing to their broader interpretation of the role of institutions in later works, and at the same time, compared this broader view to the comparative work of Mahoney’s (2001,2003) on Central America, on which they draw. We do not have the space here to explore this analysis in any depth; however, we can show that the Caribbean comparison is highly relevant to Evans’ meta-comparison since it casts some doubt on his conclusions and suggested revisions, as well as AJR’s departure from their classic 2001 paper in their claims regarding capitalist development and inclusiveness. For the sake of brevity, we will draw on Evans’ accurate summaries of these comparative works in what follows.

Evans notes, correctly, that AJR’s later work substantially broadens their understanding of the institutions of private property in their later claim that democratic rights and growing inequality are critical aspects of the term. Thus he cites their later definition of private proper as “a cluster of (political, economic and social) institutions ensuring that a broad cross-section of society has effective property rights,” (AJR,

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Among the worst offenders are countries such as Liberia, Andorra, Liechtenstein, the Marshall Islands, Monaco, Bahrain, the Cook Islands, Vanuatu, Antigua, and Dominica (Rose and Spiegel 2007:1311) For a complete list of OFC jurisdictions identified by the IMF and the Financial Stability Forum see Zorome, 2007. P.23, Table.10
2002:17, cited in Evans, 2006:4 with emphasis added by Evans) and further, that societies in which a “small fraction of the population” monopolizes property cannot be said to have the institution of private property, even if such rights are fully secure among the elite (AJR 2003:5, cited in Evans 2006: 4).

In work published subsequent to Evans’ meta-analysis, A and R (2012) have developed this line of reasoning to an even greater degree. Thus, they note that relatively small differences between eastern and western Europe prior to 1346 were magnified by the critical juncture of the Black Death leading to the breakdown of extractive institutions in the former and the rise of inclusive ones, but to the very opposite trajectory in Eastern Europe, resulting in the new serfdom of its formerly relatively free peasantry (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012:96-110). “To be inclusive, a precondition for economic development, economic institutions must feature secure property, an unbiased system of law, and a provision of public services that provides a level playing field in which people can exchange and contract; it also must permit the entry of new businesses and allow people to choose their careers” (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012: 74-75). However, they also add that inclusiveness requires “secure property rights and economic opportunities not just for the elite but for a broad cross-section of society.” (A & R: 75) Interestingly, they refer to early Barbadian slave society as a classic case of a non-inclusive regime: “Despite well-defined, secure, and enforced property rights and contract for the island’s elite, Barbados did not have inclusive economic institutions, since two-thirds of the population were slaves with no access to education or economic opportunities, and no ability or incentive to use their talents or skills” (A & R 2012: 75).

Our comparison of Barbados and Jamaica raises serious doubts about this broadened view of the preconditions for successful economic growth. We are not questioning whether democratization and greater equality, following political decisions at critical junctures, is not one important trajectory in the path to capitalist development—A and R as well as Mahoney are persuasive on that count. However, this is only one path—the most successful and felicitous for the masses, to be sure—but there are equally successful trajectories, and Barbados, both during the period of slavery (along with its fellow West Indian slave societies) as well as after the period of slavery (unlike its West Indian counterparts) fully exemplifies one version of this alternate, authoritarian route.

Barbados presents a case of extreme land monopolization and herrenvolk elite rule that successfully pursued a capitalist path in its plantocratic and later planter-merchant capitalist system. Its elite, unlike those of Latin America, created and sustained a system of exclusive parliamentary rule (herrenvolk democracy) that protected and cherished the institution of private property. Its colonial system has to be judged as a highly successful case of elite capitalism, along with other such systems as American slavery during the 19th century and South African until the end of apartheid (Fogel and Engerman, 1974; Fredrickson, 1982). Much as we would like it to be otherwise, there is nothing in the nature of capitalism that requires the distribution of its fruits to a broad base of the population or the broadening of the franchise. Capitalism is thoroughly promiscuous in regard to the political regimes in which it is embedded. All that it requires is a single-minded commitment to the institution of private property. That is the central thesis of AJR (2001) and it is only this unvarnished version that this paper defends.
9. Discussion and Conclusion

This comparative institutional, and broader socio-cultural history of Jamaica and Barbados, far from undermining the institutionalist position, actually strengthens it. There is no way to explain the dramatic differences in economic outcomes in the two islands solely, or even primarily, in terms of different policies. It is not our argument, to repeat, that policies do not matter. However, we need an explanation of why often similar policies work so well in Barbados and not in Jamaica, given that, apart from the seventies, their economic strategies have not been all that different.

We have shown that the attempt to undermine the institutionalist argument by claiming that Barbados and Jamaica began their independence era with similar institutions and economic assets collapses in the face of the socio-historical record. The assumption of similar level of development based on equally well functioning institutions at the end of the colonial era turns out to be false. The Barbadian economy was already well ahead of its Jamaican counterpart at the start of the independence era, by every measure, including GDP per capita, the result of more efficient management as well as a highly disciplined population with far greater human capital, which was educationally, psychologically and culturally appropriate for the construction of a modern capitalist economy.

Jamaica, we hasten to add, was also rich in other forms of human capital at the end of the colonial era, resulting from its vibrant bi-cultural system. Scholars, such as Dawson, badly misinterpret the economic and cultural situation in the island in the claim that the two creole cultures are separate and hostile to each other. The island’s peasant economy, like peasantries everywhere, was engaged with the broader economy, and Thorne was emphatic that “there is no important section of the Jamaican population which is completely outside the price and money system” (Thorne, 1955:1). In fact, what has emerged, especially in the post-colonial period, is a remarkably creative tension and interpenetration between the island’s traditional cultures, ethnicities, and classes. In sharp contrast with Barbados, Jamaica’s elite and middle classes are among the most diverse in the region, composed of blacks, whites, mixed race groups, Chinese, Lebanese, Syrians and East Indians. There is also far greater ethno-racial integration at all but the bottom level of the society (which is nearly entirely black). So vibrant is the urban lower class culture of the island, that there has been an unusual recent growth of slum tourism in which young travelers from all over Europe and Japan head, not for the beaches, but the urban shanty-towns with their compulsive dancehall culture, the chronic violence of these communities notwithstanding. It is striking too, that in spite of the frequent expression of racial pride in the Afro-Jamaican past and current culture, race has never acted as a barrier to political leadership. Indeed, one of the island’s founding fathers, Alexander Bustamante, was somatically white, though culturally black, and for many years the leader of one of the two parties and Prime Minister for many years, Edward Seaga, was a white Jamaican of Lebanese ancestry. For all its raucous celebration of Africa (mainly Ethiopia), the Afro-Jamaican peasant past, and the black "ragamuffin" urban street culture of its shanty-towns, there is very little active racial separation in Jamaican public life. Though they worship a black god and consider Ethiopia heaven, the Jamaican constructed Rastafarian religion has nonetheless made room for
Twelfth Tribe persons to join them, i.e. whites, and it is not uncommon to see white women married to Rastafarian Dreads. The religion has long diffused transnationally with branches as far away as Japan. The traditional Afro-Jamaican syncretic creeds of the 19th century have also gone through major transformations, and there has been a massive infusion and adaptation of American Pentecostal Christianity (Austin-Broos, 1997). The beneficial consequence of this more complex cultural matrix is that Jamaica has become a major player in the international community in cultural affairs, especially popular music, and sports, its male and female athletes dominating the world in track events. Unfortunately, this abundance of cultural capital and creativity seems not to play as well in the generation of an efficient capitalist economy, although it certainly gives expression to the island’s problems.

Barbados’ more unified cultural system is accompanied, ironically, by a far less diverse and more racially segregated social order. The island is still largely constituted by the two major racial groups that have been entwined with each other for over three and a half centuries. After a long history of one group dominating the other, a more complex class system has emerged in which elite whites continue to dominate the economy while blacks and mixed race groups control the nation’s political, administrative, educational and artistic sectors; beneath both groups is the anomalous population of Redlegs, over 40 percent of whites, who are a kind of white underclass, a situation wholly peculiar to Barbados. The two racial groups maintain a respectful distance from each other, meeting where necessary to conduct the nation’s business, but voluntarily living apart. The system effectively solves Olsen-type collective action problems with remarkably little accumulation of distributional coalitions.8 Most blacks from other Caribbean islands, however much they may admire Barbados’ economic and political success, find this social arrangement distasteful and suffocating, especially Jamaicans, who love to point out that Barbados’ only claim to international success in sports is in the once very British game of cricket.9 However, British elite whites, and increasingly upper class white Americans, find the Barbadian social system extremely congenial, and this, as we argued earlier, has partly accounted for the growth of a flourishing offshore banking sector and expatriate white community, enabled by nimble legislative maneuvering.

In conclusion, our study while broadly supporting AJR and, more generally, the new institutionalist position, strongly suggests four modifications. The first is that the distinction between declarative and procedural institutional knowledge and practice is crucial. Barbados has outperformed Jamaica because it acquired from its colonial institutional and broader cultural history not just the declarative knowledge of British institutions, but also the procedural knowledge, the know-how, of how to play the institutional game. Cognitive scientists have demonstrated that procedural proficiency in one domain usually has strong carry-over effects to others (Forster and Liberman, 2007:215). Having learned to play the institutional games of British colonial culture so well (as disciplined, productive workers, lower and mid-level colonial

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8 A remarkable example of the different major groups acting in accord took place in 1991 when the government, the white dominated private sector, and the unions all collectively resisted the IMF’s pressure to devalue the currency by agreeing to an alternate protocol in which public sector workers accepted an 8% pay cut with the union’s blessing, and employers agreed to stabilize prices, lower profit, and open their books to the unions.

9 Barbados for a long time dominated the West Indian team, especially during the team’s heyday of world dominance from the mid- seventies and early nineties. Of the 100 greatest cricketers in the history of the game, Barbados has the highest per capita number of members.
administrators, soldiers, policemen, artisans and other skilled workers, Anglicans, diligent pupils, schoolmasters, missionaries, lawyers and other professionals, and not least of all, cricketers) it was natural for Barbadians to carry over these procedural skills to running the institutions they finally inherited with independence, as well as effectively implementing policy.

Once account is taken of the declarative-procedural distinction, several otherwise puzzling cases of institutional similarity and sharply different economic outcomes between pairs of countries are easily explained. While Jamaicans have, and declaratively know, all the institutions which Barbadians also inherited, they have simply not mastered the skills necessary to run them efficiently. Perhaps the best indicator of this is the explanation of what two authors from the Bank of Jamaica call Jamaica’s growth puzzle (Thomas and Serju, 2009). The island, it turns out, has no shortage of investment capital. Indeed, in the first decade of this century, Jamaica had one of the highest rates of investment as a proportion of GDP in the Caribbean and Latin America—averaging 28.8 percent and as high as 34.8 per cent in 2005, significantly higher than Barbados' rate of 18.8 percent during the same period—yet registered a marginal growth of only 1.3 percent between 1990 and 2005, and even worse since then. They explained the puzzle by pointing to the poor “quality of labor inputs, capital efficiency, (self-induced) adverse shocks, low capacity utilization and debt.” Thus, over 70 percent of the labor force had no training and had never passed any kind of examination. This, however, is not a failure of policy. Indeed, the World Bank has even praised the Jamaica government for its "successful focus on education policy and a strong household demand for education" reflected in high and increasing public spending on education which went from 3.4 percent of GDP in 1992/93 to 6.1 percent in 2001/3, well above the Latin American and Caribbean average of 4.5 percent. (World Bank, 2004:102) The country knows what to do, with no end of expert advice on educational policy, has the educational institutional structure to do it, and the funds to implement these well articulated policies; it has simply bungled the execution of these policies, lacking the know-how or procedural knowledge of how to make its educational institutions work: thus 30-40 percent of grade 6 leavers are functionally illiterate and its national secondary school pass rate is worse than all the other Anglophone Caribbean islands (World Bank, 2004:99, 109), and far below that of Barbados which by 2002 boasted one of the highest literacy rate in the world (99.7%), higher even than those of the United States and the former colonial power, Britain! (CIA, 2014)

However, the problem of poor procedural knowledge lies not only with inept government administrators and teachers. Nearly as incompetent have been the island’s entrepreneurs in managing the country’s private sector institutions. Comparing Jamaica with Barbados and the Dominican Republic, two Bank of Jamaica economists concluded that Jamaica “was not an efficient user of capital.”¹⁰ One factor contributing to this inefficiency was the near collapse of the banking system in Jamaica during the nineties due to the utter incompetence and corruption of its bankers, and the catastrophically ill-advised decision of the government to bail out the banking system, a self-inflicted calamity that cost the economy 40 percent of GDP and accounted for 58% of the decline in GDP between 1997-1998(Thomas and Serju, 2009: 44-45), not

¹⁰ The IMF estimated that the island’s manufacturing sector operated at 50-60 per cent of its capacity, its electricity industry at an abysmal 43.2 percent.
to mention massively increasing the government’s monumental debt burden.

The second conclusion is that our comparison illustrates the point, made earlier, that formally similar institutions may perform very different functions. In Jamaica, the plantation was a largely destructive force. It corroded familial and other social relations among workers, and created a tradition of deep hostility between managers and workers, resulting in a strong distrust of authority on the part of workers from the plantation belt (Carter, 1997:24). These attitudes, when taken over to the urban areas and modern factory have proven to be extremely problematic, as Carter (1997) documented in his study of Jamaican worker attitudes: “Because of defective objective authority structures,” he found, “and a consuming urge to ‘get even’ with the system, work organizations are saturated with workers leaning on the doom of their organizations. Over 67 percent of workers interviewed ...stated emphatically that they know that they are underproducing, but that they do not intend to produce any more, for, given present circumstances, they are already overproducing”(Carter 1997:23-24). In striking contrast, the plantation system in Barbados turned out to have been an effective institution for the disciplining and enculturation of the Barbadian work force to capitalist work norms, even though, of course, all Barbadians from post-emancipation times were eager to see their children move up and away from the sugar estates. At about the same time that Carter conducted his survey among Jamaican workers (between 1974 & 1988), Dann studied the quality of life among Barbadian workers in the full range of occupations (1980-81) and found extremely high job satisfaction among them (comparable to that of British workers), and that “a person’s job is reckoned to be a salient domain in the overall quality of life”(Dann, 1984:120-121).

Our third conclusion is that geography does matter. Thus, we have seen that although Barbados and Jamaica shared the same tropical climate and distance from the equator, the more rugged and mountainous terrain of Jamaica with its variety of tropical micro-climates, in sharp contrast with Barbados’ terrain, offered different opportunity sets to both elites and masses in the two societies. As we have seen, this had major sociocultural and institutional consequences for both groups. We noted further, that the subjective perception of geography also mattered. Initial endowment, as Engerman et al (1991) have argued, did make a difference. However, that difference worked its way almost entirely through the institutional structures of the plantation systems that emerged in these two colonial societies (On which see Beckford,1972) Furthermore, as the case of Belize indicates, a ruling class with sufficient ruthlessness and institutional manipulation can circumvent geographic factors such as a low people-land ratio that would seem to favor labor (Bolland, 1981).

In fairness to Acemoglu and Robinson, we should point out that while they may have under-played geographical factors in the AJR (2001) paper in order to foreground the importance of early institutions for later outcomes, in other works they have clearly indicated the importance of geography, most notably their study of the rise of Western Europe, in which location on the Atlantic coast and access to its sea lanes were shown to be critical variables. Their position is that geography is important but its effects are always mediated through institutional processes (Acemoglu, personal communication) a position with which I fully agree.
Finally, my comparison suggests a refinement of AJR's classification of colonies. In addition to extractive and settlement colonies, I suggest a third category of what may be called colonial herrenvolk democracies. These are systems in which West Europeans established permanent settlements and, like their American and white Commonwealth counterpart, fully transferred the institutions of private property, parliamentary democracy, the rule of law and functioning judiciaries, but differed in two crucial respects: they constituted a racial minority, and they applied the benefits of the institutions mainly to themselves, with the exception of relatively small coopted groups of natives, immigrants and mixed race persons. (on which see Van den Berghe, 1972:18; Vickery, 1974; Fredrickson, 1982) The extreme instance of this type of society is South Africa, but included in the category are the other Southern African colonial states of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), and the British Caribbean colonies. The distinctive feature of this category of colonies is that the existence of fully functioning West European institutions, lasting in some cases for centuries as in Barbados and South Africa, had at the very least, a demonstration effect for the mass of the excluded population. People acquired some declarative knowledge of these institutions and, more importantly, saw how effective they were, in economic, legal and political affairs for the ruling minority. Because people usually desire what the elites possess, especially when the thing desired is ruthlessly denied to the mass of people, these western imperial institutions became highly desired social goods. Thus, in spite of its long tradition of lower class agitation, an attitude survey of Jamaicans at the end of the colonial era found that the "typical lower class attitude was... one of emulation or aspiration to the standards of life and behavior exhibited by the privileged classes." (Mau, 1968:103) This, in turn, meant that upon independence the new native rulers already had in place the institutions critical for development, as well as a strong preference for them. However, what they often did not have, and what was to become a source of variation within such post-colonial states, was the procedural knowledge of running these institutions. The post-colonial success of such states was largely determined by the degree of pre-colonial institutional learning among segments of the subaltern classes. The near collapse of these institutions in Zimbabwe and Zambia represents one post-colonial extreme. In South Africa, the colored, Asian and educated African groups, as well as the large if declining white population remaining, have provided a sufficiently large body of persons with the procedural knowledge of these institutions to ensure continuity of the capitalist system, although the transition has not been without its problems. In the Anglophone Caribbean we find a similar variation, although the degree of institutional learning in the region has been far greater among a larger segment of the population than in any of the African cases. Barbados, we have argued, may well present the most unusual case in this category of Herrenvolk colonial democracies, wherein the procedural knowledge of the metropolitan institutional culture was assimilated to an unusual degree by the subaltern population.

CODA

The Barbadian experience may at first sight seem like a standard case of Gramscian cultural hegemony (Gramsci, 1971:12-14;181-182; cf Williams, 1977: 108-114), ---the "'spontaneous' consent given
by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group' -- especially when compared with Jamaica's subversive working class (Carter, 1997) and its muscular, globally influential popular culture (Cooper, 1995, 2012; Hope, 2012). However, our analysis suggests that something more complex was at play in the institutional and broader cultural interactions between the white elite and the colored and black classes of the island, what may more properly be called a counter-hegemonic strategy of subaltern cultural appropriation. The Caribbean region is unusual in the degree of subaltern resistance to the political and cultural hegemony of the white ruling classes: there were more slave and post-emancipation revolts in this region than any comparable area of the world, including the only case of a successful slave revolt in world history, as well as a large number of creole cultures and languages that explicitly reject, or syncretically transform, the cultures of the elites (Dubois, 2005; Rodrigues, 2006; Patterson, 1970; Mintz, 1974). However, a high price was paid for this tradition of violent resistance and classic counter-hegemonic cultural rejection, reflected most notably in Haiti which, not long after its glorious successful slave revolt, began its steep descent into extreme impoverishment, illiteracy and tyranny (Dubois, 2012). The Barbadian subaltern classes, alone among the exploited peoples of the Caribbean, appeared to have arrived at the decision, not long after their failed Busia slave revolt that the best response to oppression was not to get angry but to get smart. By the middle of the 19th century we find them fully committed to the assimilation of literacy and the broader Euro-Barbadian cultural traditions of the elite and especially the imperial overlord. Not long after emancipation, all segments of the Afro-Barbadian leadership came to the conclusion that there could be no better model of a successful group than one which was on the way to conquering half the world, and no system more worthy of emulation that its institutions. "People of color," writes Newton (2007:209-210), "both former slaves and pre-emancipation free people, venerated British law," and were convinced of its role as "the impartial arbiter between white and non-white Barbadians." They were also, she found, fully committed to the classical economic liberalism of the day, especially to free trade and private property. In line with this, they shared the elite view that a strong and buoyant sugar industry was the only path to prosperity in the island.

Remarkably, this view appeared to have been equally shared by the mass of the Barbadian working classes. We also find a clear recognition among them that, in their small and overpopulated island, own-account, subsistence peasant cultivation would be a disaster (as was already evident in Haiti), and capitalism and its institutions were the only ways of surviving beyond starvation levels in. As we have seen, when, at the turn of the 20th century the more prosperous among them had the resources and the opportunity to buy land, they rejected peasant farming in favor of producing for the plantation economy. We have also seen that, from the early post-emancipation period, working class black Barbadians began to out-compete the mass of poor whites as workers, artisans and as lower and mid-level clerks, to such a degree that the poor whites were reduced to a condition of economic irrelevance and chronic penury. Colored Barbadians also rapidly acquired competency in the professions, especially the all-important institution of law, so much so that by the late 19th century the white elite, on its own initiative, appointed a colored lawyer, Conrad Reeves (Beckles 1990:126-
127) as Chief Justice of the island, so clearly had he outclassed everyone else, even as they persisted in their exclusive domination of the island's polity and economy.

Barbadians of all classes recognized, further, that the appropriation of the institutions of the ruling class also meant the assimilation of its myths, sports, ceremonies and other informal norms and practices that invisibly sustained them (see Meyer and Rowan, 1977). Mastering the game of cricket, beating the British at their own game and becoming world leaders at it, was not just a powerful act of symbolic appropriation, but the assimilation of all the deeply embedded cultural accoutrements that went with the game, which rapidly became “a national institution, surpassing all else in importance as recreation, spectator sport, social activity and natural competition” (Carrington et al, 2003:58; Sandiford, 1998:7). Like the white cricket clubs, those patronized by blacks and coloreds "believed that the principles of the cricketing culture were admirable guidelines for social behavior and held these up as standards to be emulated by an oppressed and mostly landless working class... Combermere, the school of the black middle classes, did not question these values, but mimicked them in a manner which suggested profound acceptance” (Beckles, 1990:150; see also Sandiford 1998:106-145; cf. Patterson, 1995 on cricket and violence in Jamaica). Cricket to the Barbadian is not just a metaphor, as C.L.R. James (1963) has famously argued. It is, in the words of a black Barbadian scholar, “the mirror of the society's soul. It reflects the society’s ethos, aspirations, dreams and mores in a way in which no other single activity does or can do” (Sandiford, 1988:153). To all Barbadians, this noblest of British games, upon whose fields the procedural arts of empire had once been groomed, was, and remains, a symbol that stands for itself (Wagner, 1989).

There was nothing subservient about the Barbadian appropriation of the ruling class' institution and broader cultural system. Nearly all commentators on the character of black and colored Barbadians were struck by their dignified, transparent and upright bearing. A widely traveled British woman's first impression of black Barbadians near the close of the 19th century was typical: "on landing at Barbados, the bold bearing, the gay-hearted insouciance, and the air of insolent independence of the native Barbadians strike at once. The women walk erect, clad in spotless white dresses and colored turbans, and with swinging gait and statuesque pose, they carry all burdens on their heads. They look you straight in the face out of their bold black eyes, as if to say, "I am black, but I am as good as you any day, if not better” (Hart, 1900, 331; on the character of the Afro-Barbadian bourgeoisie during the 19th century see Newton, 2008:174-195). A half a century later, the Oxford economist, K.H. Straw (1953:8), wrote that the Barbadian working class “compared with most of the rest of the Caribbean territories, is of a high standard, the people being proud, dour, steady and not easily excited.” When pushed to extremes, of course, the Barbadian masses showed themselves quite capable of political resistance (Beckles, 1984, 1989, 2003), especially by the very effective method of arson: burning the cane fields just prior to harvest was a canny and largely risk-free form of protest that registered forcefully with the plantocratic class (Beckles, 2003:76). But these physical methods were always a last resort for Barbadians, who saw clearly that with the ruling class' superior military might, backed up by the imperial power of Britain, the odds were too heavily stacked against them for any reasonable chance of success, not to mention the loss of institutional and cultural capacity in the event of an Haitian-style political conflagration.
This was a very different view of counter-hegemony from that of Gramsci and his followers (for a modern restatement of which, see Frank, 2007). Barbadians refused to accept existing relations as the natural order of things, but they rejected any notion of a “revolutionary consciousness” that called for the replacement of the institutional and broader cultural weapons of the ruling class with something radically different, such as the black, proletarian consciousness that emerged among the lumpen-proletariat of Jamaica (Stone, 1973; Brown, 1979; Thomas, 2004), a major strand of which deliberately rejects literacy in favor of a boisterous, “vulgar” orality (Cooper, 1995) which is great for pop music but a decided obstacle to learning, reflected in the dismal performance of Jamaica’s public schools. Instead, Barbadians, especially after emancipation, came to realize that in an extremely asymmetric contest, the only effective strategy for the weaker party was to appropriate and use the power of the stronger party to their own ends. This, in essence, was the strategy of subaltern cultural appropriation. The strategy was facilitated by the peculiar status of the poor white or Redlegs population of the island, which, as we have argued earlier, encouraged black Barbadians to the view that race was not the all-determining factor explaining their condition; rather it was their lack of institutional and cultural knowledge and know-how. While fully recognizing the presence of racism, they saw that, in non-intimate affairs, the white elite judged performance by the coldblooded standards of a capitalist system in which institutional competence, private property, the dictates of the market and the efficiency principle, were paramount. Barbadians thus avidly seized every opportunity at what Raymond Williams (1977: 114) called the “authentic breaks” in the hegemonic system, without being confounded by soothing ideologies of compensatory ethno-racial consciousness. This is in sharp contrast with Jamaica, where the close correlation of class and color (nearly all whites being upper class and almost all lower class persons being black11), was, and remains, a constant temptation to explain and view their condition through the lens of color and race.

Not by physical force then, nor by ideological compensation, but by capturing, mastering, and deploying to their own ends the institutional power of the ruling class and the broader cultural framework within which it was embedded, would they ultimately triumph. And it is their remarkable success at this counter-hegemonic cultural strategy that explains why Barbados became the first, and still remains the only, black majority society to enter the ranks of the advanced countries of the world.

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11 Which is consistent with the fact that the elite and middle classes are now predominantly black and brown.


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### TABLES AND FIGURES

**Table 1. Selected Macro-Economic Indicators, Jamaica and Barbados, c 2012**

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jamaica</th>
<th>Barbados</th>
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<td><strong>Output &amp; Expenditure</strong></td>
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<td>Real output-side GDP &amp; Growth Rate, 1960-2010</td>
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<td>Total Debt: % GDP</td>
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<td>Foreign Direct Investment: % GDP</td>
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<td>Labor Force Participation rate: Total/Male/Female</td>
<td>T: 63.3% M: 71.0% F: 56.1%</td>
<td>T: 71.3% M: 76.7% F: 65.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
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<td>Inflation</td>
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<td>TFP level at Current PPPs (in mill. 2005US$)</td>
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Data Sources: World Bank, *World Development Indicators*; IMF Country Profiles, Barbados, Jamaica; Penn World Tables (8.0)

*Not including NIS (i.e. National Insurance Scheme funds). If included, debt is 118.2%. See IMF 2014 *Country Profile, Barbados*

**Table 2. Selected Social & Demographic Indicators, Jamaica and Barbados, c 2012**

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jamaica</th>
<th>Barbados</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Population(Mil)</td>
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<td>Density(Sq. km)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Growth rate</td>
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<td>36.5/42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy / Education</td>
<td>-5.3</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age / Dependency</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration</td>
<td>$175.6</td>
<td>$744.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homicide Rate per 100,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Spending Per Capita</td>
<td>.730/85</td>
<td>.825/38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDI Index / Rank</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Annual Crime Rate 2000-2012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Inequality Index / Rank</td>
<td>.458/87</td>
<td>.343/61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3. Caribbean Countries: Selected Indicators of Economic Contribution of OFC, 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Antigua &amp; Barbuda</th>
<th>Bahamas</th>
<th>Barbados</th>
<th>St.Kitts &amp; Nevis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total assets (US$ billions)</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(In percent of GDP)</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Government revenue from sector</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(In percent of total revenue)</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(In percent of total labor force)</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment in the sector</strong></td>
<td>271</td>
<td>1,163</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(In percent of banking sector employment)</td>
<td>......</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>..........</td>
<td>......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(In percent of total labor force)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average salary in sector (US$)</strong></td>
<td>9,630</td>
<td>74,200</td>
<td>......</td>
<td>......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Ratio with domestic sector)</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contribution of sector to GDP (in percent)</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.4-9.2</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>......</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*IMF Staff estimates based on contribution of this sector to revenue flows, employment and services


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**Figure 1. GDP (Output & Expenditure), 1960-2010**

- Barbados GDP Output
- Barbados GDP Expenditure
- Jamaica GDP Output
- Jamaica GDP Expenditure

Data source: Penn World Tables (8.0): Variables RGDPo and RGDPe
**Figure 2. Real Output-side GDP per capita Change, 1960-2010**

Data source: Penn World Tables (8.0): Variable RGDPo

**Figure 3. Governance Indicators: High Income OECD, Barbados & Jamaica (Percentile Rank: 0-100)**

Data source: Kaufman et al, World Bank(2013)
Data source: World Bank: Barro-Lee Data Set; UNDP data on educational attainment
