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# Conflict and Scandal in the British Caribbean, 1680–1720

by

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degree of  
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## **Declaration**

I declare that the thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, for any other degree or professional qualification. I confirm that, except where states otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

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## Abstract

The white community in the British Caribbean was riven by conflicts and scandals in the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century, a transformational period in both Caribbean colonial history and British imperial history. Examining the themes of colonial taxation, financial conflicts, factional politics, constitutional disputes, piracy, illegal trade and colonial violence, this thesis is an attempt to identify the tensions and structural problems in Caribbean colonial society, together with the accompanying political scandals. It also aims at providing a Caribbean perspective for understanding the British empire through tracing the extension of fiscal-military state and constitutional legacies in the colonies.

In order to examine interrelated themes in the Caribbean colonies, this thesis combines thematic analysis with case studies of three Caribbean colonies: Barbados, the Leeward Islands, and Jamaica. Each case centres on the story of governors and the political elites which either supported or fought against them. A main argument of this dissertation is that the instability in the Caribbean white society was caused by ambiguous metropolitan policies, deep structural problems in the nature of metropolitan rule in the region, and the changing power of, and relations between, planter and merchant elites. Conflict and scandal enable us to understand not only the divisions but also the unity of Caribbean society. The many tensions in the colonies were testament to the existence of opposed forces, and how those forces counterbalanced one another. Last but not least, whilst inheriting old problems of constitutional tensions and financial disorders from the mother country, the Caribbean white community also developed some new ones during the process of colonisation, and the tensions between English and Creole culture shaped colonial society in the spheres of politics, economy and social ideology.

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## Abbreviations

BL	British Library
CSPC	<i>Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies.</i> Originally published by His Majesty's Stationery Office, London. Access through British History Online.
CTB	<i>Calendar of Treasury Books.</i> Originally published by His Majesty's Stationery Office, London. Access through British History Online.
CTP	Council of Trade and Plantations
EHR	<i>The English Historical Review</i>
JBTP	<i>Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations.</i> Originally published by His Majesty's Stationery Office, London. Access through British History Online.
LTP	Lords of Trade and Plantations
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
THJ	<i>The Historical Journal</i>
WMQ	<i>William and Mary Quarterly</i>

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The British Caribbean – or, more specifically, the white community which dominated the economics and politics of Britain’s Caribbean colonies – was divided by conflict during the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century. Through the examination of deep tensions within the white community, and instances of malfeasance by politicians resulting in scandals, this thesis will explore key issues which animated the unstable politics of the Caribbean. For one thing, the extension of fiscal-military state and constitutional legacies have huge impacts on the disputatious Caribbean societies. Colonial revenue and financial disorders caused the inhabitants’ resentments about paying taxes twice and misuse of money by the metropole and its colonial agent, the governor. Maintenance of army in the Caribbean led to worries about arbitrary administration and the danger of corruption. Ideological disagreements about the nature of colonies, meanwhile, triggered disputes over the constitutional role of local assembly and the overwhelming gubernatorial authority. For another, the Caribbean white community was divided by factionalism and competing interests itself. Planters and merchants were at loggerheads with each other over debt issues due to the fragile credit system of the Caribbean societies. The enterprises of piracy and illegal trade enabled political enemies to attack each other with the accusations of misusing power and violating domestic instructions. Verbal squabbling would also escalate into physical conflicts, for colonists did not hesitate to use violent methods when they thought their liberty and interests were threatened.

Through analysis these issues in the cases of Barbados, the Leeward Islands, and Jamaica, the thesis will identify the essential problems of the flawed colonial system and structural problems embedded in the Caribbean colonial societies. The unsettled boundary between the executive and legislative power brought disputes regarding public authority and private interests. Making use of the purse strings, colonial assembly attempted to gain political independency, to extend their authority in

colonial affairs, and even to encroach on the powers assigned to the governor and council. In this situation, governors accused the assembly of pursuing private interests under the pretence of the public good, while the assembly responded by charging governors with using the name of the king's prerogative to gain personal advantages. The flexibility of British colonial policies gave rise to ambiguity during the enforcements, leaving grey areas and the possibility of manipulations. Inconsistencies between political theory and political practice also caused disputes, with colonial politicians interpreting policies according to their own interests.

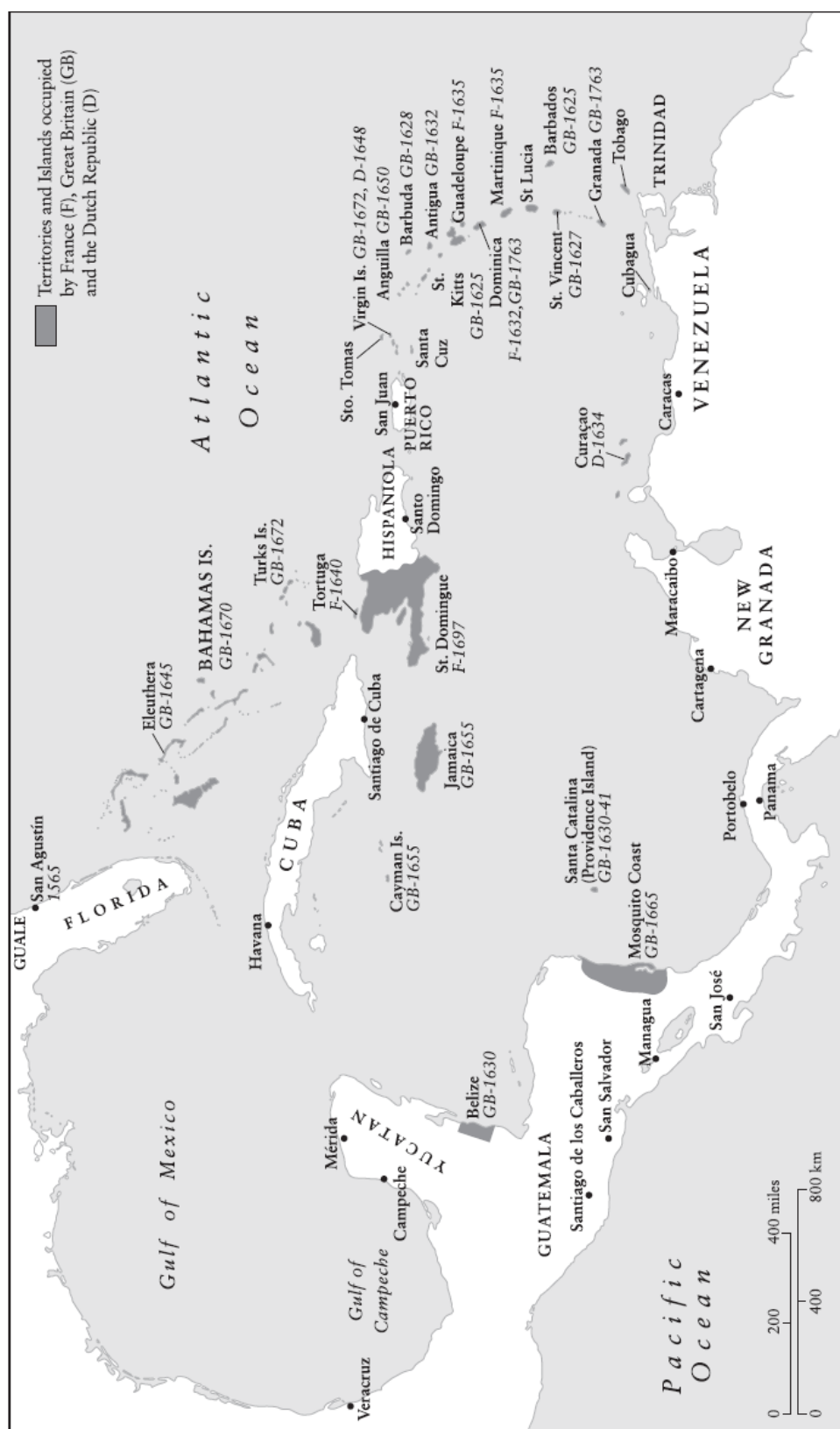
Governance issues in the colonial Caribbean and the tensions within the white elite have been relatively neglected in comparison to the American colonies, which have received abundant scholarly attention.<sup>1</sup> Frederick Spurdle does provide a valuable examination of the development of legislatures and executives in Barbados, Jamaica, and the Leeward Islands, together with a discussion of some key political issues, such as colonial finances, public works, appointment of officials, and constitutional debates between the governor and the assembly.<sup>2</sup> However, Spurdle's work appeared decades ago and mainly focused on institutional history. Studies of the Caribbean have, for understandable reasons, been focused on issues related to the nature of immigration societies and to the slavery issues that distinguished Caribbean colonies from other British colonies.<sup>3</sup> It is obviously true that Caribbean society was

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<sup>1</sup> For recent works, see Jerry Bannister, *The Rule of the Admirals: Law, Custom, and Naval Government in Newfoundland, 1699–1832* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003); Mary Sarah Bilder, *The Transatlantic Constitution: Colonial Legal Culture and the Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Steven Sarson, *British America, 1500–1800: Creating Colonies, Imagining an Empire* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2005); Brendan McConville, *The King's Three Faces: The Rise & Fall of Royal America, 1688–1776* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Stephen Foster (ed.) *British North America in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Thomas P. Slaughter, *Independence: The Tangled Roots of the American Revolution* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Frederick G. Spurdle, *Early West Indian Government: Showing the Progress of Government in Barbados, Jamaica and the Leeward Islands, 1660–1783* (The Author, 1964).

<sup>3</sup> For example, Hilary Beckles, *White Servitude, Black Slavery in Barbados, 1627–1715* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989); Hilary Beckles and Verene A. Shepherd (eds.), *Caribbean Slave Society and Economy: A Student Reader* (New York: New Press, 1991); Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan (eds.) *The Slaves' Economy: Independent Production by Slaves in the Americas* (London: Frank Cass, 1991); Keith A. Sandiford, *The Cultural Politics of Sugar: Caribbean Slavery and Narratives of Colonialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,



Map 1. The Caribbean, c. 1700

Based on Guillermo Céspedes del Castillo, *América hispánica, 1492–1898* (1983), map xiv; The New Cambridge Modern History, Vol. XIV, Atlas (1970) pp. 229 and 230. Cited from John Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic world: Britain and Spain in America, 1492–1830*, p. 225.

2000); Verene A. Shepherd and Hilary McD. Beckles (eds), *Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World: A Student Reader* (Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 2000); Trevor Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire: Thomas Thistlewood and His Slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Randy M. Browne, *Surviving Slavery in the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020).

materially supported by the institution of slavery, which was the cornerstone of the plantation system, and also true that the introduction of slavery involved social tensions and disputes. However, the main factors that caused instability in Caribbean society at the turn of the seventeenth century did not arise from slavery, but to a large extent were issues arising from the fundamental circumstances of the small but sophisticated white Caribbean community, which dominated every aspect of the society.

The period between 1680 and 1720 witnessed a profound change in the fiscal, military, and diplomatic spheres, both in England and in the Caribbean colonies. Domestically, the Glorious Revolution and the later settlements confirmed the Protestant succession and the sovereignty of the crown-in-parliament. Diplomatically, the War of Spanish Succession restricted France's powers and marked England's arrival as a major European power.<sup>4</sup> These changes in the internal character and external fortunes of England were closely linked with developments within colonial societies. This was also a period of great achievement for the whites in the Caribbean, when the large plantation became dominant, the West Indies flourished economically, and the relations between planters and merchants shifted profoundly.

The development of a fiscal–military state, which has been explored by historians such as John Brewer, Patrick O'Brien, Philip A. Hunt, and recently by Aaron Graham and Patrick Walsh, was accompanied by increasing taxation and growing military force, as well as by the improvement of administrative capacity at the imperial level.<sup>5</sup> The fiscal and military innovations of the mother country had huge impacts on the colonies. Christopher Bayly has examined the impacts of the British fiscal-military state on colonial India and the East India Company, as well as

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<sup>4</sup> John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money, and the English State, 1688–1783* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 138–39.

<sup>5</sup> Brewer, *The Sinews of Power*; Patrick O'Brien and Philip A. Hunt, 'The Rise of a Fiscal State in England, 1485–1815', *Historical Research*, 66 (1993): pp. 129–76; Aaron Graham and Patrick Walsh (eds), *The British Fiscal-Military States, 1660–c.1783* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016);

tracing the repercussions among the indigenous population.<sup>6</sup> From the colonial perspective, the fiscal-military state intensified imperial control and regulation of colonial affairs, particularly in the spheres of colonial trade, legislation, and taxation, and also intensified the tensions between metropole and periphery. For example, the issue of trade regulation became a trigger of conflict in colonial societies. Because domestic policies were never consistently enforced in the Caribbean colonies, provincial politicians were given many opportunities to pursue their personal interests, which in turn contributed to political scandals, as discussed in Nuala Zahedieh's research into colonial economic regulation, commercial activities, and rent-seeking behaviours of colonists.<sup>7</sup>

Scholars have also paid much attention to the role of taxation in the formation of fiscal-military state. Excise and land tax, for example, have been explored by historians such as J. V. Beckett, Colin Brooks and Paul Langford.<sup>8</sup> Michael Braddick's work on the social and political dimensions of taxation provides very informative discussion about the scale of taxation and its significance to the structure of public finances in the early modern time.<sup>9</sup> Patrick O'Brien has examined the way Britain's taxation system operated to support its navy and army forces and the range of taxes available to the state.<sup>10</sup> This body of work is important because revenue was

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<sup>6</sup> Christopher Bayly, 'The British Military-Fiscal State and Indigenous Resistance: India, 1750–1820', in Lawrence Stone (ed.), *An Imperial State at War: Britain from 1689 to 1815* (London: Routledge), 1994, pp. 322–354.

<sup>7</sup> Nuala Zahedieh, 'The Merchants of Port Royal', *WMQ*, 43 (1986); Nuala Zahedieh, 'Regulation, Rent-seeking, and the Glorious Revolution in the English Atlantic Economy', *Economic History Review*, 63 (2010). Zahedieh has also provided in-depth discussion of London and colonial commercial activities from an Atlantic perspective; see, for example, Nuala Zahedieh, *The Capital and the Colonies: London and the Atlantic Economy, 1660–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> J. V. Beckett, 'The Land Tax or Excise: The Levying of Taxation in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century England', *EHR*, 100 (1985): pp. 285–308; Colin Brooks 'Public Finance and Political Stability: The Administration of the Land Tax, 1688–1720', *THJ*, 17 (1974): 281–300; Paul Langford, *The Excise Crisis: Society and Politics in the Age of Walpole* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

<sup>9</sup> Michael J. Braddick, *Nerves of State: Taxation and the Financing of the English State, 1558–1714* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996).

<sup>10</sup> Patrick O'Brien, 'The Political Economy of British Taxation, 1688–1815', *EHR*, 41 (1988), pp. 1–32.



also a problematic issue in the Caribbean colonies from their foundation. For one thing, colonial people worried about the misuse of their money either by the mother country or by the governor; for another, money bills were always used as bargaining chips by inhabitants in their negotiations with governors, negotiations which were closely linked with constitutional rivalries in the islands.

The colonies took a stance which combined defence of their constitutional independence with an assertion of their participation in the metropole's ideological and cultural heritage. The domestic theory of colonial subordination was resented by provincial inhabitants, who proclaimed their English identity and privileges, as well as their right of establishing representative governments. The constitutional tensions between England and her colonies have also been examined by several scholars of British imperial history and American history.<sup>11</sup> Jack Greene traces the development of transatlantic constitutions and examines the processes of negotiation and mutual accommodation that occurred in the relations between the mother country and the American colonies.<sup>12</sup> Daniel Hulsebosch, through a case study of New York, discusses the evolution of British constitutional ideologies in the American colonies during the eighteenth century.<sup>13</sup> Craig Yirush's work also explored how the political ideas inherited from home evolved in the American colonies, but with particular focus on the fate of the ideas of English rights, the monarch's prerogative, liberty in the colonies, and the impact of domestic political events, such as the Restoration and Glorious Revolution, on American colonies.<sup>14</sup> However, historians have paid little

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<sup>11</sup> Arthur Berriedale Keith, *Constitutional History of The First British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930); Mary Sarah Bilder, *The Transatlantic Constitution: Colonial Legal Culture and the Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Ken MacMillan, *The Atlantic Imperial Constitution: Centre and Periphery in the English Atlantic World* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

<sup>12</sup> For example, see Jack P. Greene, *Peripheries and Centre: Constitutional Development in the Extended Politics of the British Empire and the United States, 1607–1788* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1986); Jack P. Greene, *Negotiated Authorities: Essays in Colonial Political and Constitutional History* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994).

<sup>13</sup> Daniel J. Hulsebosch, *Constituting Empire: New York and the Transformation of Constitutionalism in the Atlantic World, 1664–1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

<sup>14</sup> Craig Yirush, *Settlers, Liberty and Empire: The Roots of Early American Political Theory*,

attention to the situation of the Caribbean, in particular in the early part of the eighteenth century, even though constitutional tensions animated the politics of these colonies.<sup>15</sup> While claiming their British identity and constitution, Caribbean people established their own tripartite administrative systems consisting of governor, assembly, and council. This was an imitation of the political structure of the mother country, with the three components corresponding to the crown, the House of Commons and the House of Lords respectively. The domestic debate about legislative authority was also replicated in the Caribbean, manifest in governors' complaints about the encroachment of the assembly, and in the latter's counter-accusations of arbitrary government.

The period between 1680 and 1720 encompassed an important stage in the development of the social order of the Caribbean colonies, and the socio-economic development of the West Indian colonies has been a widely-discussed topic among historians. Frank Wesley Pitman's work offers an early investigation of social and economic institutions in West Indian society, addressing the topics of sugar, capital, slavery, and trade.<sup>16</sup> Richard Sheridan's work analyses the formation of plantation society and discusses British West Indian trade within the context of the Atlantic economy.<sup>17</sup> Richard Dunn's examination of Barbados, based on the statistics of Barbados' population in 1680, shows that the planters dominated colonial government.<sup>18</sup> In fact, this period not only witnessed the rise of the planter communities, but also witnessed growing tensions between them and the merchant groups. These two groups both enjoyed economic and political advantages, but

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1675–1775 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

<sup>15</sup> One exception is Agnes Whitson, whose work focuses on early constitutional developments in Jamaica. See Agnes M. Whitson, *The Constitutional Development of Jamaica, 1660 to 1729* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1929).

<sup>16</sup> Frank Wesley Pitman, *The Development of the British West Indies, 1700–1763* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1917).

<sup>17</sup> Richard B. Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery: An Economic History of the British West Indies, 1623–1775* (Barbados: Caribbean University Press, 1974).

<sup>18</sup> Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624–1713* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972).

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divided into different factions, competing to promote their interests.

Recent study on the West Indian socio-economic development has been extended to new fields and new perspectives. For example, Susan Dwyer Amussen points out that colonial expansion in the Caribbean was more than a matter of migration and trade; it was also a reflection of cultural exports from England that influenced the Caribbean social order and political systems.<sup>19</sup> Trevor Burnard's work explores the rise of the plantation system and planter elites in the American and Caribbean colonies from both Atlantic and imperial perspectives, emphasising the economic motivations for the shift to large-scale plantations, which gradually replaced smallholdings.<sup>20</sup> Christine Walker offers the first systematic study of female colonists in Jamaica who employed slaveholding as a means of advancing themselves socially and financially on the island.<sup>21</sup> All these studies contribute to our understanding of Caribbean plantation society, and the socio-economic developments they examine are closely linked with the potential for instability in Caribbean society and for conflict within the white community, with which the present thesis is centrally concerned.

One of the principal reasons for the disputatious character of Caribbean society was the existence of complex interpersonal relationships and of social tensions within the white elite due to divergent economic interests and differing political ambitions. Sarah Barber offers the most recent and extensive analysis of the planter community, offering an in-depth discussion of issues such as territory boundaries, natural resources, populations, identities and slavery, and highlighting the 'disputatious' character of the Caribbean.<sup>22</sup> Interpersonal networks within the white community are addressed in Barber's discussion, although the topic is not considered at great length

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<sup>19</sup> Susan Dwyer Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society, 1640–1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

<sup>20</sup> Trevor Burnard, *Planters, Merchants, and Slaves: Plantation Societies in British America, 1650–1820* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

<sup>21</sup> Christine Walker, *Jamaica Ladies: Female Slaveholders and the Creation of Britain's Atlantic Empire* (University of North Carolina Press, 2020).

<sup>22</sup> Sarah Barber, *The Disputatious Caribbean: The West Indies in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

even though complex interests and interpersonal networks contributed to the formation of factions, which usually combined public claims with private pursuits, increasing the prevalence of disputes in Caribbean societies. As Bernard Bailyn notes, colonial factions ‘sometimes imported British opposition rhetoric to legitimate their resistance to royal demands’, and he maintains that already by the 1730s, colonial politics had become ‘latently revolutionary’.<sup>23</sup> In view of the way Caribbean inhabitants used constitutional ideologies adopted from the home country in their struggles against royal governors, Bailyn’s line of argument is reasonable. However, this behaviour started to occur earlier than Bailyn recognises. In addition, colonial people did not only use oppositional language to resist royal governments, but also used public weapons to achieve other political ends and to attack political enemies, giving rise to disputes and to scandals about people’s public roles and private interests.

In summary, the three main Caribbean colonies, Barbados, Jamaica, and the Leeward Islands, were influenced by the economic, political, and social development of the mother country, and the socio-economic changes within colonial societies contributed to the emergence of quite complex and somewhat fragile political cultures, as well as to the scandals which issued from them.

## **Scandal and Public Communication**

The term ‘scandal’ has been used since as early as the seventeenth century, with differing meanings in different historical and discursive contexts. Ari Adut, examining a modern scandal, identifies three necessary constituents: there must be a real or perceived transgression; the story must be publicised; and there must be an

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<sup>23</sup> Bernard Bailyn, *The Origins of American Politics* (New York: Vintage, 1970), pp. 160-61; Mark G. Hanna, *Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire, 1570–1740* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), p. 4.

interested public.<sup>24</sup> Adut's approach to the phenomenon of scandal is sociological, focusing on public attention and the public's reactions as a scandal spreads. Graeme Moodie similarly emphasises the constitutive importance of public involvement, stating that there are three 'major requirements' of a scandal: 'an exposé or informer, channels through which to communicate the message, and an audience or public which finds the information to be scandalous'.<sup>25</sup> With regard to the period to which the present thesis relates, the role of the public in scandal is recognised in Patricia Bonomi's exploration of the life of Cornbury, who was governor of New York from 1701 to 1708. Bonomi charts the development of Grub Street's gossip culture and the development of a climate of slander; these were constitutive contexts within which Cornbury's conduct was constructed as 'scandalous'.<sup>26</sup>

According to these recent approaches to scandal, a public audience is a crucial element of political scandal, and scandal is always linked with the dissemination of rumour and gossip, although a connection to publicity was not necessarily an important feature of scandal in the colonial Caribbean due to the limited means by which news could spread and the limited audience for it, as will be discussed later. Public involvement can indeed often be important in the context of scandal because public opinion can exert pressure on political institutions, and because politicians have frequently used scandal to influence people's attitudes or even to manipulate public opinion in ways that are favourable to their political ends. For example, sexual scandals have been deployed by activists to create linkages between personal issues and larger political issues, to mobilise public opinion, and to pressure elected representatives.<sup>27</sup> Anna Clark and Nicholas Dirks maintain that scandal functions to

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<sup>24</sup> Ari Adut, *On Scandal: Moral Disturbances in Society, Politics and Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>25</sup> Graeme C. Moodie, 'On Political Scandals and Corruption', *Government and Opposition*, 15 (1980), p. 216.

<sup>26</sup> Patricia U. Bonomi, *The Lord Cornbury Scandal: The Politics of Reputation in British America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

<sup>27</sup> Anna Clark, *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of the British Constitution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 4-10.

open up politics by revealing corruption and by making political debate accessible to a wider audience.<sup>28</sup> Clark argues that ‘scandals [have] inspired debates over the nature and composition of public opinion’, noting that if a government does not respond to scandals, public opinion judges that it is not serving the public good.<sup>29</sup> In her analysis of the case of Warren Hastings between 1786 and 1795, she argues that Edmund Burke was not able to secure the conviction of Hastings because he did not mobilise popular opinion, and that this ‘deprived him of a potent weapon’.<sup>30</sup>

But whilst it appears undeniable that public opinion necessarily has some role in political scandals, recognition of that fact leaves unaddressed many specific questions about the relations between public opinion and the development of political narratives in particular instances of scandal. We may admit the truth of generalisations about the need for governments to respond to people’s concerns, lest they suffer loss of public support and confidence, but there are difficulties in determining the precise nature and extent of the effects of public opinion on the development of political events. Historians have, with Habermas, discerned the emergence of the public sphere in early modern England was centred on printed media and the coffee houses, both of which were far less developed in the West Indies than in the metropole.<sup>31</sup> Adam Fox’s analysis of the circulation of rumour and seditious words at the lower levels of society in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England seems more illuminating as a model for understanding scandal in Caribbean society, where public conversation about politics was fuelled by a hunger to discover the latest information about affairs within the state, including people’s

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp. 2-3; Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

<sup>29</sup> Clark, *Scandal*, p. 8.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>31</sup> Steve Pincus, ‘“Coffee Politicians Does Create”: Coffeehouses and Restoration Political Culture’, *The Journal of Modern History*, 67 (1995), pp. 808-11; Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. by Thomas Burger with Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA, 1989).

personal lives and sexual misdemeanours, and current allegations about behaviour that breached community norms.<sup>32</sup>

However, our familiarity with the dynamics of scandals that have occurred in recent times should not lead us to anachronistically overlook the fact that public dissemination of scandal was less extensive and also less necessary in the pre-modern era. The Caribbean scandals during the early modern period raise questions about the extent to which scandalous stories need to be publicised and about the importance of public involvement. Compared with the scandals that spread in the mother country, Caribbean ones operated in a much more constricted public sphere. In the early eighteenth century, the effects of public communications such as protests and petitions on domestic political discourse were limited, partly due to the great distance between the central government and the colonies. Moreover, newspapers started in the Caribbean colonies only at the end of the 1710s. In 1717, Jamaican Governor Nicholas Lawes wrote to the Board of Trade, suggesting the establishment of a printing press in Jamaica under the superintendence of the governor: ‘it would be of great use, and benefit for publick intelligence, advertisements, and many other things. But to prevent abuses, that might attend such a liberty, there should be but one, and that to be licenced by the Govr. for the time being.’<sup>33</sup> This proposal was soon acted upon. According to Frank Cundall, the *Weekly Jamaica Courant*, dated 1718, was the first Jamaican newspaper, and probably also the first newspaper in the Caribbean area. It included a proclamation from the king ordering reprisals against the king of Spain, which was followed by news of Livorno, Paris, and England, and by Jamaican news as well as some advertisements.<sup>34</sup> The *Barbados Gazette* came later. This was set up in 1731 and aimed at circulating political news and information. It also

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<sup>32</sup> Adam Fox, ‘Rumour, News and Popular Political Opinion in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England’, *THJ*, 40 (1997), p. 600.

<sup>33</sup> *CSPC, Vol 30, 1717–1718*, pp. 50–68, Sir N. Lawes to the CTP, 1 Oct. 1717 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol30/pp50-68>].

<sup>34</sup> Frank Cundall, *A History of Printing in Jamaica from 1717 to 1834* (Kingston: Institute of Jamaica, 1935), p. 5.

included some moral essays and poetry which illustrate the character of elite life and its commonalities with the culture and sensibilities of the mother country.<sup>35</sup> So, for most of the period under study, the islands did not have a newspaper press to speak of and Caribbean news was only sometimes inserted into the London-based press.

Pamphlets may have had more influence on public communication, although their appearance was sporadic. Printed pamphlets were used to publicise inhabitants' accusations against governors in political disputes in the colonial Caribbean, but these were often published in London, where their primary audience was located, and their metropolitan readers may have had little appreciation of the details of scandals in far-flung overseas colonies. Examples of such pamphlets, published in London, include *A Representation of the Miserable State of Barbadoes* (1719), which articulated complaints about the misbehaviour of Governor Robert Lowther (examined in chapter 5); *The Groans of Jamaica* (1714), which expressed 'grievances' and revealed 'oppressions' perpetrated by Governor Archibald Hamilton that provoked contentions and animosities in the colony (examined in chapter 4); and *Some Instances of the Oppression and Male Administration of Col. Parke* (1713), which attacked the government of Daniel Parke in the Leeward Islands (examined in chapter 3).<sup>36</sup> There were also cases of governors fighting back in print. Examples include *The History of Col. Parke's Administration* (1717), written by Parke's agent, George French, to defend his reputation, and *A Vindication of the Late Governor and Council of Jamaica* (1716), which defended Hamilton.<sup>37</sup> Another type of pamphlet which featured in political scandals in the Caribbean was concerned with specific issues or disputes in the colonies. For instance, when Richard Dutton, governor of

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<sup>35</sup> Phyllis J. Guskin, "'Not Originally Intended for the Press": Martha Fowke Sansom's Poems in the Barbados Gazette', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 34 (2000), p. 64.

<sup>36</sup> *A Representation of the Miserable State of Barbadoes* (London, 1719); *The Groans of Jamaica, Expressed in a Letter from a Gentleman Residing There, to His Friend in London* (London, 1714); *Some Instances of the Oppression and Male Administration of Col. Parke, Late Governor of the Leeward Islands* (London [1713(?)]).

<sup>37</sup> George French, *The History of Col. Parke's Administration* (London, 1717); *A Vindication of the Late Governor and Council of Jamaica* (London, 1716).



Barbados, was in dispute in 1684 with a merchant, Samuel Hanson, the latter published a pamphlet entitled *The Case of Samuel Hanson, Merchant and Planter in Barbados*, accusing the governor of illegally imposing fines and other instances of misbehaviour.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, during the factional tensions surrounding the Barbadian Paper Act 1706, the council president, William Sharpe, published a pamphlet entitled *The Case of William Sharpe Esq* to defend himself against scandalous accusations.<sup>39</sup>

Colonial inhabitants were certainly concerned about the episodes and issues recounted in the pamphlets, but their voices were too distant to directly influence the decision-makers in London, although they did sometimes present their concerns through petitions and by correspondence with the homeland. As a result, politicians in the colonial governments were not greatly interested in mobilising public opinion, but tended to focus more on the attitudes of those above them, especially in the Board of Trade, which they sought to influence through political lobbying, correspondence with domestic institutions, and presentation of official reports. Through communication departments of the domestic government, colonial politicians might manage to get governors they disliked recalled, or to have a political enemy suspended from office. Sending accusations to England became an effective weapon for them, although sometimes those accusations were claimed to be false or scandalous. In this context, then, scandal reverberated in governmental circles as much as public ones.

## Scandal in Caribbean Legal and Political Discourses

The nature of scandal is historically variable, and the specific historical character of scandal in the early modern Caribbean needs to be recognised. It is of value to refer here to the definition of scandal in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, according to which

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<sup>38</sup> Samuel Hanson, *The Case of Samuel Hanson, Merchant and Planter in Barbados* ([London(?)] 1684).

<sup>39</sup> William Sharpe, *The Case of William Sharpe Esq* (London, 1712).

‘scandal’, a term originating in the medieval period, can be used to refer to damage to personal reputation; to refer to rumour, slander and gossip injurious to reputation; or also to refer to a bad influence within the community, including a grossly discreditable circumstance, event, or condition of things, or a person whose conduct is a gross disgrace to his class, country, or position.<sup>40</sup>

There are three elements which merit particular attention in the Caribbean discourse of political scandals. Firstly, the use of scandal in relation to magistrates (mostly governors, sometimes government officials); secondly, discourses concerning inappropriate behaviour; and thirdly, the negative impacts of scandal, whether on people’s reputations or careers, on the authority or functioning of government, or on the welfare of the public. While sexual scandals influenced politics by blurring the line between people’s private and public lives, and by using the former to symbolise issues or attitudes of relevance to wider political debates, political scandals more directly undermined the legitimacy of people in authority by presenting their political misconduct, whether actual or merely alleged.<sup>41</sup> Scandal in the Caribbean was not deployed with the primary purpose of manipulating public opinion but was rather used as a weapon to undermine the reputations of people within the ruling hierarchy – though inevitably the public identities of the protagonists of scandalous narratives, and the negative perceived impacts of their alleged misdeeds on the public, contributed to the development of scandals.

In the early modern period, the local elites’ claims to political power often rested on claims about their social and moral qualities. Accusations that they lacked the necessary personal qualities for rule were therefore attacks on their ‘natural’ authority.<sup>42</sup> As John Thompson maintains, ‘scandals are struggles over symbolic power in which reputation and trust are at stake’.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, gossip and scandal

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<sup>40</sup> ‘Scandal’ in *OED* [consulted at: [www.oed.com/view/Entry/171874](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/171874)].

<sup>41</sup> Clark, *Scandal*, p. 208.

<sup>42</sup> Michael J. Braddick, ‘Civility and Authority’, in David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (eds), *The British Atlantic World, 1500–1800* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 114.

<sup>43</sup> John B. Thompson, *Political Scandal: Power and Visibility in the Media Age* (Cambridge:

could be effective as political weapons to undermine people's reputations.<sup>44</sup>

Anthropologists theorise scandal as an instrument of political competition which involves the manipulation of information and the interpretation of events, as can be seen in factional fighting.<sup>45</sup> Scandal was sometimes used by weaker parties to attack stronger ones, but at other times it served to reinforce existing power relations.<sup>46</sup>

Scandal in the Caribbean colonies mattered because it undermined magistrates' reputations, careers, and lives, and had negative impacts on public affairs. In the colonies, people used scandals to undermine their political enemies in the eyes of the Board of Trade, the secretary of state, and the crown. Governors were particularly vulnerable and were frequently attacked for misuse of power, arbitrary administration, and self-seeking behaviour. Through these accusations, inhabitants attacked governors' reputations and undermined the perception that they possessed moral qualities fitting them for the exercise of authority, thereby disrupting their work or getting them removed. Colonial scandals sometimes also had effects on domestic politics. For example, in 1693 gifts of shares in the East India Company were used to gain parliamentary support for the renewal of the company's charter. Two years later, a parliamentary investigation was conducted into this scandal, which led to the dismissal of the speaker of the House of Commons, the impeachment of the lord president of the council, and the imprisonment of the governor of the East India Company.<sup>47</sup>

It was common for politicians in the Caribbean to describe accusations levelled against themselves as 'scandalous'. Their use of the word 'scandal' or 'scandalous' was intended to convey that the accusations were false and libellous. For example,

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Polity Press, 2000), p. 245, cited in Callie Wilkinson, 'Scandal and Secrecy in the History of the Nineteenth-Century British Empire', *THJ* (2021), p. 12.

<sup>44</sup> Joanne B. Freeman, *Affairs of Honour: National Politics in the New Republic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), xx.

<sup>45</sup> Sally Engle Merry, 'Rethinking Gossip and Scandal', in Donald Black (ed.), *Toward a General Theory of Social Control* (2 vols, London: Academic Press, 1984), I, pp. 284-85.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Dirks, *Scandal of Empire*, p. 8.

the pamphlet mentioned above, *A Representation of the Miserable State of Barbadoes*, was described as ‘scandalous’ by Robert Lowther, the governor against which its accusations were aimed.<sup>48</sup> In Jamaica, Governor Henry Morgan complained that he and his government were ‘scandalously slandered’ by their enemies.<sup>49</sup> Political institutions also used the term ‘scandal’ to express their support for a person accused of misconduct. For example, when it came to the charges against Governor Lowther, the grand jury of Barbados stated in an address to the king that ‘we have just cause to believe that Mr. Walker late of our Island has been a chief Agent in the raiseing, contriving and carrying on the late scandalls against our Governour’.<sup>50</sup>

It is also noteworthy that, legally, speaking scandalous words against a public person (initially the king or a nobleman) was a crime. Common punishments for spreading scandal included being removed from public office, fines, and even imprisonment, and these were legitimised by reference to domestic laws and legal traditions. The law of treason was established as early as 1352, making it an offence to ‘act, write or speak in a manner tending to the overthrow of royal authority’.<sup>51</sup> The medieval English statutes of *Scandalum Magnatum* forbade the spreading of ‘false news’ or tales concerning the king or the magnates of the realm.<sup>52</sup> And the law was progressively extended to cover those who held public office. In 1606, Edward Coke, the attorney general of England and Wales, distinguished between libel ‘against a private man’ and that ‘against a magistrate or public person’, maintaining that the latter was ‘a greater offence; for it concerns not only the breach of the peace, but also the scandal of Government; for what greater scandal of Government can there be than

<sup>48</sup> CSPC, Vol 32, 1720–1721, pp. 1-21, Gov. Lowther to the CTP, 29 Mar. 1720 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol32/pp1-21>].

<sup>49</sup> CSPC, Vol 10, 1677–1680, pp. 623-35, Sir Henry Morgan to LTP, 12 Nov. 1680 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol10/pp623-635>].

<sup>50</sup> CSPC, Vol 31, 1719–1720, pp. 185-205, Gov. Lowther to the CTP, 7 Aug. 1719 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol31/pp185-205>].

<sup>51</sup> Fox, ‘Rumour, News and Popular Political Opinion’, p. 599.

<sup>52</sup> Philip Hamburger, ‘Development of the Law of Seditious Libel and the Control of the Press’, *Stanford Law Review*, 37 (1985), p. 668.

to have corrupt or wicked magistrates'.<sup>53</sup> A further step was taken in 1705 when Lord Chief Justice Holt ruled that speaking words against the reputation of an official, even if true, constituted seditious libel. Governors could therefore not only declare that the accusations against them were false libels, but also use the law against scandalous speech to punish their enemies.

In colonial discourse, the notion of scandal was similar to that of sedition, and the oral or written expression of 'scandalous libel' or 'scandalous words' against governors was regarded both as a criminal act of defaming the magistrates and as an attack on the government. During Anne's reign, some Barbadian councillors were removed for 'presenting ... [the governor] with a scandalous libel'.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, a Jamaican councillor, Samuel Barry, was suspended by the governor, the Duke of Albemarle, for speaking scandalous words about him in 1688.<sup>55</sup> Fines and custodial sentences were also common. For example, in Governor Granville's Barbados, a councillor, Lillington, petitioned the queen in 1705 after he was put into custody and forbidden from making a defence to a charge of 'having spoken scandalous and seditious words against the Governor'.<sup>56</sup> In Jamaica, when Parson Gilbert, the rector of St Dorothy's, published a satire in 1684 about the arbitrary government of the previous governor Thomas Lynch, he was described by the lieutenant governor Hender Molesworth as a 'most scandalous libel', and 'unworthy of a Christian', and Gilbert was fined £300 and imprisoned for twelve months.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Case de Libellis Famosis, 77 Eng. Rep. 250, 5 Coke 125, cited in Hamburger, 'Development of the Law of Seditious Libel', p. 694.

<sup>54</sup> *CSPC, Vol 24, 1708–1709*, pp. 123–41, Messrs. Sharpe, Walker and Beresford to the CTP, 2 Nov. 1708 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp123-141>].

<sup>55</sup> *CSPC, Vol 12, 1685–1688*, pp. 523–39, Gov. the Duke of Albemarle to LTP, 16 Apr. 1688 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol12/pp523-539>].

<sup>56</sup> *CSPC, Vol 22, 1704–1705*, pp. 629–40, Order of Queen in Council, 11 Oct. 1705 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol22/pp629-640>].

<sup>57</sup> *CSPC, Vol 11, 1681–1685*, pp. 765–69, Lieu-Gov. Molesworth to William Blathwayt, 3 Feb. 1685 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol11/pp765-769>].

The words ‘scandal’ and ‘scandalous’ could be used to refer to events or circumstances that had, or potentially had, a bad influence on society. For example, in 1681 Richard Dutton considered it the ‘greatest scandal’ to a Christian government that there had been no jail delivery for three years.<sup>58</sup> And the president of the Barbados council, William Sharpe, complained in 1714 that the public credit of the island was ‘to a scandalous degree low’.<sup>59</sup> Similar usages of the words can be found in other Caribbean islands: the governor of Jamaica, the Earl of Inchiquin, complained in 1691 that one of the Jamaican sessions was ‘scandalous’, since ‘at least two-thirds of them sit up drinking all night, and before they are cool next morning vote whatever is put into their hands’.<sup>60</sup> Another Jamaican governor, Archibald Hamilton, was accused in 1716 of giving some important offices to people of ‘scandalous character’.<sup>61</sup> And in the Leeward Islands, when discussing the debts the colony owed to masters of the provision ships, Governor Daniel Parke did not hesitate to use the word ‘scandal’ to express his shame and worry.<sup>62</sup>

From these examples we can see that ‘scandal’ in the colonial context was used to describe discreditable circumstances and injurious words or deeds, or to point to the untruth of an allegation. The cases might not be very widely disseminated and public involvement was not always at stake. In political practice, scandalous

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<sup>58</sup> ‘[W]hat is the greatest scandal to a Christian government, there has been no gaol-delivery for the last three years, for the freeing of the innocent or the punishment of the guilty, who lie both in a miserable condition’. Ibid., pp. 65-80, Gov. Sir Richard Dutton to Sir Leoline Jenkins, 14 June 1681 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol11/pp65-80>].

<sup>59</sup> ‘I have summoned the Council and Assembly to meet the first of May, when I shall earnestly recommend to them the falling upon the most vigorous measures for promoteing trade, and for advancing the publick credit, which is to a scandalous degree low’. *CSPC, Vol 27, 1712–1714*, pp. 325-37, Wm. Sharpe, President of the Council of Barbados, to the CTP, 27 Apr. 1714 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol27/pp325-337>].

<sup>60</sup> *CSPC, Vol 13, 1689–1692*, pp. 517-27, Gov. Lord Inchiquin to LTP, 12 Aug. 1691 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol13/pp517-527>].

<sup>61</sup> *CSPC, Vol 29, 1716–1717*, pp. 76-101, Mr. Secretary Stanhope to the CTP, 19 May 1716 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol29/pp76-101>].

<sup>62</sup> ‘yt. ye country was so much in debt, yt. people have offered to take 40 p.c. less then what ye real debt was, and particularly Masters of ships who have supply’d ye publick wth. beef and other provissions, wch. was a very great scandal to ye Island’. *CSPC, Vol 23, 1706–1708*, pp. 680-701, Gov. Parke to the CTP, 8 Mar. 1708 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp680-701>].

accusations were used by political enemies, or by islanders and traders who wanted to protect their profits, as a way of defaming political officials and governments.

## **The Framework of Caribbean Colonial Government**

Caribbean colonies at the turn of the seventeenth century were places where different interests intertwined and conflicted. They were locations of financial and constitutional contentions, cultural and ideological disputes, sophisticated interpersonal relationships, and rough-and-tumble factional politics. All of these phenomena produced conflicts and scandals in the white community. It will be helpful to begin with an analysis of the framework of Caribbean administrations, which were the central platforms on which the interlinked contentions and disputes were played out.

England expanded her interests in the Caribbean during the 1620s and 1630s, with settlements in Barbados and in the four islands of the Leewards, Antigua, St Kitts, Nevis, and Montserrat. Jamaica was conquered by England in 1655, when Oliver Cromwell sent General Robert Venables to seize Santo Domingo.<sup>63</sup> After the early stage of settlement, a tripartite administrative system was established in the Caribbean colonies: the assembly had authority in relation to pass legislation, raise taxation, and to share in administration of public finance; the governor, as head of the government and representative of the king, was responsible for appointing officers, introducing laws, and commanding military forces; the council served as an advisory body for the governor, acting as the upper house of the legislature and assisting the governor in other administrative affairs. Colonists also developed courts for different types of offences, ecclesiastical, civil, criminal, naval, trade, and prize.<sup>64</sup> The

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<sup>63</sup> George Metcalf, *Royal Government and Political Conflict in Jamaica, 1729–1783* (London: Longmans, 1965), p. 3.

<sup>64</sup> Ken MacMillan, 'Imperial Constitutions', in H. V. Bowen, Elizabeth Mancke, and John G. Reid (eds), *Britain's Oceanic Empire: Atlantic and Indian Ocean Worlds, c. 1550–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 77–78.

establishment of representative government was largely modelled on the political framework at home. It allowed colonial inhabitants greater autonomy than their domestic counterparts, leading to continuous constitutional rivalries between the legislature and the executive.

### The Assembly

The Caribbean colonies established their assemblies within a few decades of their settlement: the Barbadian assembly was first summoned in 1639, and was regularly established from 1641; the assemblies of St Kitts and Antigua were summoned in the 1640s, and those of Montserrat and Nevis in the 1650s; and the first Jamaican assembly was called in 1664, with the intention of controlling local taxation and supervising government expenditure.<sup>65</sup> During the early days, the representatives did not sit as a separate body, but sat together with the council and governor to pass laws; however, the larger colonies soon adopted bicameral legislatures, with the lower house sitting separately from the governor and council.<sup>66</sup> Thereafter, the colonial assemblies went through bitter struggles to establish their independent authority and status as local parliaments.<sup>67</sup>

According to the crown's instructions, the assembly was to be summoned by writ of the governor, and its election was to be based on local parishes: most parishes had two representatives, but some important ones, such as Kingston in Jamaica, had three. Therefore, the Barbadian assembly usually consisted of twenty-two members, and the

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<sup>65</sup> Jack P. Greene, 'Liberty and Slavery: The Transfer of British Liberty to the West Indies, 1627–1865', in Jack P. Greene (ed.), *Exclusionary Empire: English Liberty Overseas, 1600–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 52; Keith, *Constitutional History*, p. 45; Edward Kamau Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770–1820* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 8.

<sup>66</sup> Michael Kammen, *Deputies & Libertyes: The Origins of Representative Government in Colonial America* (New York: Knopf, 1969), p. 11; Greene, 'Liberty and Slavery', p. 53.

<sup>67</sup> Jack P. Greene, 'Competing Authorities: The Debate over Parliamentary Imperial Jurisdiction, 1763–1776', in Philip Lawson (ed.), *Parliament and the Atlantic Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), p. 47.



Jamaican assembly consisted of thirty to thirty-five. The situation in the Leeward Islands was more complex, however, for each of the four islands had its own assembly. In 1680 Governor William Stapleton created a general assembly, consisting of the major planters of each island, but the plan of forming a federal legislature did not work as well as he hoped – the islands resented one another and were even unwilling to cooperate in their mutual defence.<sup>68</sup>

The most important function of each island's assembly was to initiate legislation for raising money. Introduced by the assembly, bills would (as in the British parliament) go through three readings, during which time the opponents had opportunities to wreck the bill by calling divisions, counter-petitions, or deferring discussion.<sup>69</sup> After three readings, bills would go to the council and then to the governor for amendment and signature. After the approval of the governor, the acts became formal legislation, though they still needed the consent of the mother country. The acts could be enforced for up to two years without consent from London, or until communication of a refusal of consent was received. Colonial legislation was sometimes blocked by the domestic institutions. If, for example, a law passed by a colonial assembly was deemed to be repugnant to the laws of England, the Board of Trade and the Privy Council would declare it void.<sup>70</sup> In order to lessen metropolitan interference with colonial law making, assemblies in the colonies sometimes passed acts that were valid for only two years, so that their validity would expire before they could be rejected by the mother country (the large distance between the Caribbean colonies and England, and the inefficiency of communication between them, assisted colonial legislators in implementing this tactic). One instance of this triggered a crisis in Jamaica in 1677, when the Lords of Trade was surprised to discover that the

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<sup>68</sup> C. S. S. Higham, 'The General Assembly of the Leeward Islands', *EHR*, 41 (1926), p. 195.

<sup>69</sup> Aaron Graham, 'Jamaican Legislation and the Transatlantic Constitution, 1664–1839', *THJ*, 61 (2018), p. 334.

<sup>70</sup> Alison Gilbert Olson, 'Parliament, Empire, and Parliamentary Law, 1776' in John Greville Agard Pocock (ed.), *Three British Revolutions: 1641, 1688, 1776* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), pp. 291-92.

Jamaican assembly had secretly passed a Revenue Act in 1675, which had not been sent with other acts for the consent of the mother country, and which determined that the money formerly granted to the king was to be raised for the use of the island. As a result, the Lords of Trade decided to limit the legislative power of the Jamaican assembly by requiring that no law should be consented to by the governor until it had been approved by the Crown, and they also demanded that no assembly should be called without the king's direction, as it had done in Ireland. Although this proposal failed in the end, it caused bitter constitutional tensions in Jamaica, and strengthened the resolve of some provincial politicians in fighting for independency.<sup>71</sup>

Elections of assembly members were frequently a trigger of disputes and accusations of manipulation. Sarah Barber comments that 'writs were issued, voters canvassed, and results disputed'.<sup>72</sup> In Jamaica, the assembly summoned in 1688 by the Duke of Albermarle was regarded as an illegal one, and the legitimacy of the acts passed by that assembly was therefore questioned. Subsequently, the perpetual revenue act passed by that assembly was deemed void. There were also complaints about misconduct in the processes of elections. For example, in 1715 the assembly elected under Governor Archibald Hamilton of Jamaica was referred to by his enemies as 'most corrupt and unfair'; they argued that the election was manipulated by the governor and his faction through control of the polls and concealment of election information.<sup>73</sup> In Barbados, Governor Bevil Granville was accused by opponents of sending guards to prevent freeholders from voting for his enemies, although the governor's agent claimed that the real situation was the opposite.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Whitson, *Constitutional Development of Jamaica*, pp. 75-79.

<sup>72</sup> Barber, *Disputatious Caribbean*, p. 108.

<sup>73</sup> CSPC, Vol 29, 1716–1717, pp. 76-101, Representation of the Assembly of Jamaica to the King, 19 May 1716 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol29/pp76-101>].

<sup>74</sup> CSPC, Vol 22, 1704–1705, pp. 395-428, Eleven Affidavits presented to the CTP by the Gentlemen who appear against Sir Beville in behalf of the Absenting Members of Assembly, 2 Mar. 1705 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol22/pp395-428>].

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## The Council

Together with the governor, the council acted as the upper house of the legislature and formed the highest court of appeal in the colony. The council usually consisted of twelve councillors, who were usually appointed on the instruction of the crown.<sup>75</sup> If there were vacancies, councillors could also be recommended by people of the colony – by governors or other colonial politicians, or even by other inhabitants.<sup>76</sup> The council was the advisory body of the governor and, like governors, councils were frequently challenged by assemblies in constitutional disputes, in particular in the sphere of financial issues. For example, an assembly might seek to deny a council's power to amend money bills; this was a factor in constitutional tensions in Jamaica. Furthermore, although the council was supposed to support the governor in defending the crown's prerogatives and executive authority, what usually happened was that the big planters and merchants who made up the council divided into cliques, and both the assembly and the council became the playthings of factions. Governors on several occasions complained about councillors and their allies in the assembly causing disorders in the government.

## The Governor

As the representative of the crown, the authority of a governor extended to almost every aspect of colonial politics. He was the head of the executive, who exercised judicial and legislative authority with the assistance of the crown-appointed council. In the military sphere, he was commander-in-chief and vice admiral. In the judicial sphere, he was chancellor and judge of appeal in the Court of Errors and presided over

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<sup>75</sup> Leonard Woods Labaree, *Royal Government in America: A Study of the British Colonial System before 1783* (New York: Ungar, 1964), p. 100.

<sup>76</sup> *CSPC, Vol 25, 1710–1711*, pp. 137–52, Petition of Merchants trading to Jamaica to the Queen, 26 July 1710 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol25/pp137-152>]. In this case, some merchants trading to Jamaica successfully petitioned the queen to appoint John Blair as a councillor.

the Court of Ordinary and the court of trials for piracy. In the legislative sphere, the governor had the power to veto laws, and the power to summon, prorogue, or dissolve the assembly, which gave him some ability to change its membership. In the financial sphere, he could control expenditures and appropriations by warrant with the council.<sup>77</sup> And in addition to all these powers, the governor had the right to declare martial law and the right to appoint and dismiss officials such as judges and militia officers.<sup>78</sup>

Bernard Bailyn and Andrew O'Shaughnessy have pointed out that that the restrictions placed on the crown in England after the Glorious Revolution did not apply to colonial governors, for they were not responsible to anyone in the islands.<sup>79</sup> However, as a middleman between the crown and colonial inhabitants, a governor was subject to pressure from both sides, and his authority could be challenged in many situations. Royal governors were deeply affected by the shifting of power in English politics and by changing imperial policies. For instance, as will be discussed in chapter 5, when Viscount Bolingbroke, the Tory leader and supporter of Jacobite rebellion, was serving in the office of secretary of state for the Southern Department in 1714, he replaced 'honest' men with those of Jacobite principles, including in the colonial governorships; accordingly, Robert Lowther was recalled from the governorship of Barbados.<sup>80</sup> Another example of the impact of domestic politics was the arrest and return to the mother country of Sir Henry Morgan. Morgan had won the reputation of 'national hero' for his successful raid on the Spanish ports of Portobello and Panama, but the tide turned for him when England decided to prevent privateering

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<sup>77</sup> Labaree, *Royal Government in America*, p. 99.

<sup>78</sup> Metcalf, *Royal Government and Political Conflict*, pp. 17, 25; Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), p. 117.

<sup>79</sup> Bailyn, *Origins of American Politics*; O'Shaughnessy, *Empire Divided*, p. 117.

<sup>80</sup> As Lowther mentioned in 1720, 'the true reason of that recall was, that the then Ld. Bolingbroke might meet with no resistance in delivering up the Island to the Pretender. No complaints were lodged against me before my leaving England May, 1715'. *CSPC, Vol 32, 1720–1721*, pp. 1–21, Gov. Lowther to the CTP, 29 Mar. 1720 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol32/pp1-21>].

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and to promote peaceful trade with the Spaniards.

While exposed to the shifts of English politics, a governor's daily contacts were with the people of the colonies, and their co-operation and good will were necessary to his success in office.<sup>81</sup> Governors were hedged in by dominant planter and merchant elites in the colonies. The absence of a royal bureaucracy ensured that local governors became overwhelmingly dependent on these local elites, who adopted and passed down to subsequent generations their official colonial roles. However, as the representative of the crown and as an official wielding power that affected many aspects of daily life on the islands, the governor was usually the main constitutional enemy of the assembly. A governor in the Caribbean, like all other royal governors, was appointed by order of the king in council. His commission was drafted on the recommendation of the secretary of state, and his instructions came from the crown.<sup>82</sup> It is noteworthy that the commission was published openly while the instructions were secret; this naturally caused suspicion and annoyance on the part of the colonists.<sup>83</sup> As Edward Long wrote in his eighteenth-century *History of Jamaica*, 'A man, armed with *secret* orders and institutions, comes, like an assassin, with a dagger concealed beneath his cloak; and his smiling countenance is justly regarded as a cover to some villainous design.'<sup>84</sup> A competent governor was always aware of the need to diminish people's hostility and win the support of the inhabitants, but this was not easy to accomplish.

According to Leonard Labaree, there were three categories of people likely to be appointed as colonial governors. The first was those who had been born or had lived in the colonies and were familiar with colonial issues. The second was men who had military or naval backgrounds; these people held positions of civil authority chiefly to

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<sup>81</sup> Labaree, *Royal Government in America*, p. 131.

<sup>82</sup> Keith, *Constitutional History*, p. 187.

<sup>83</sup> Metcalf, *Royal Government and Political Conflict*, p. 17.

<sup>84</sup> Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica: Reflections on Its Situation, Settlements, Inhabitants, Climate, Products, Commerce, Laws and Government* (reprint, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002, of orig. edn, 3 vols, London: T. Lowndes, 1774), I, p. 39.

enable them better to maintain their military leadership. The third category, which probably contributed the greatest number of governors, consisted of Englishmen whose political connections at home accounted for their appointment; these people had usually held offices in England, and viewed political office as a property right rather than a public trust.<sup>85</sup>

The governors appointed in the Caribbean between 1680 and 1720 mostly belonged to a least one of these three categories, and frequently to more than one. For example, Governor Archibald Hamilton in Jamaica served in the navy for a long period before he gained the governorship due to the support of the Duke of Marlborough; Governor Christopher Codrington the Younger in the Leeward Islands was both a military commander and also an inhabitant of the colony; and Governor Mitford Crowe in Barbados served as MP for Southampton between 1701 and 1702 and, though not resident in the colony, had long-established connections with the island and had served as its agent in 1700.

It was a common complaint of governors that they were attacked for defending the crown's prerogative. But to assert that the scandals attaching to governors were merely outcomes of tensions between the metropole and the periphery would be to oversimplify the issue. Given the backgrounds of colonial governors, there was no shortage of reasons for them to be vulnerable in disputes and tensions in the colonies, and liable to suffer attacks from colonial inhabitants on the grounds of tyrannous conduct or other misbehaviour.

Governors who were residents of the colony usually had their own private interests and complex interpersonal relations with other members of local elites; their impartiality was therefore always open to doubt. Governors with military backgrounds tended to be regarded as potential tyrants by the inhabitants due to their connections with the army, especially during constitutional conflicts between the legislature and executive. And those who gained their positions due to political

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<sup>85</sup> Labaree, *Royal Government in America*, pp. 37-41.

connections at home were also prone to accusations of misconduct because they tended to consider the office as their private property and to use the position as a means of self-advancement and self-aggrandisement. Nicholas Dirks discusses the cases of Robert Clive and Warren Hastings in East India in the mid and later eighteenth century, pointing out that both men stated that they had simply combined making money with their careers as governors, as was quite normal within the financial system of colonial India at that time.<sup>86</sup> In Barbados, Governor Richard Dutton was believed ‘has gained not less than 9,000*l.* by this Government, there being 12,537*l.* that he has received, as the public accounts show, besides private gifts, which are known only to himself’.<sup>87</sup>

Ambiguous rules relating to the behaviour of governors, combined with some grey areas in colonial finance, contributed to disputes; there was uncertainty around governors’ rewards and receipt of gifts, and confusion relating to the distinction between public and private money. Governors’ receipt of presents was a normal occurrence in colonies, and colonial people granted presents for many reasons. Gift-giving in the colonies had its cultural background in the motherland.<sup>88</sup> The French sociologist Marcel Mauss theorised gift-giving as a way to create social bonds, and identified an obligation to reciprocate on the part of the recipient.<sup>89</sup> In early modern England, there were many gift-exchange practices, both in politics and in people’s daily lives. For the crown, a gift was an important symbol of favour and generosity. In the political sphere, however, gift-giving behaviour in the early modern time was part of a system of exchange. When people gave something, they wanted something in return. For example, people might send gifts to officials to obtain speedier service, or

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<sup>86</sup> Dirks, *Scandal of Empire*.

<sup>87</sup> *CSPC, Vol 11, 1681–1685*, pp. 694–713, Sir John Witham to the Earl of Sunderland, 31 Oct. 1684 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol11/pp694-713>].

<sup>88</sup> Mark Knights, *Trust and Distrust: Corruption in Office in Britain and Its Empire, 1600–1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), pp. 374–451.

<sup>89</sup> Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* (London: Routledge, 2002). See also Felicity Heal, *The Power of Gifts: Gift Exchange in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

to get a favourable outcome. Gift-giving was therefore linked to corruption and was a major reason for political scandals both at home and abroad. According to Bruce Buchan and Lisa Hill, people during this period tried to distinguish between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ gifts: gifts of the latter kind were ‘given to win official favour, not by the customary giving of gifts to one’s patron, but by the typically secret gift of money (though not exclusively) in exchange for service’, and in early seventeenth-century England, a secret payment of money or the giving of some other gift to public officers, whether judges, churchmen, lawyers or scholars, was understood as ‘bribery’.<sup>90</sup> Linda Levy Peck also argues that in seventeenth-century England, charges of corruption were ‘extended to activities beyond the statutory definitions to include certain kinds of gift-giving, the sale of titles, non-judicial office and monopoly’.<sup>91</sup> The problem posed by gift-receiving lay in the lack of clear boundaries: the lines between personal relations and public responsibilities, and between a permissible size of gift and an improper size, were not clearly marked.

Officials both at home and overseas were easily attacked for their gift-receiving behaviour. In her discussion of Lord Cornbury’s case at the beginning of the eighteenth century, Bonomi refers to the financial and social circumstances which contributed to the scandal, noting the blurred lines between gifts and bribes and between private and public interests, and the lack of a suitable salary for the governor.<sup>92</sup> Indeed, gifts and the receiving of gifts was a grey area for Caribbean administrations. One reason for this was that it was normal for governors to use their own money to take care of public affairs. In this situation, governors also took for granted that they could use their authority to make money and receive gifts. If they used their own money to support colonies, it seemed quite reasonable to governors that they could also make money from their position. Moreover, governors might have

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<sup>90</sup> Bruce Buchan and Lisa Hill, *An Intellectual History of Political Corruption* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 111-12.

<sup>91</sup> Linda Levy Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption in Early Stuart England* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), p. 10.

<sup>92</sup> Bonomi, *Lord Cornbury Scandal*.



a real need to recoup their expenditures, and they therefore often sought other ways to increase their incomes. A governor's rewards were not only received as salary. They also received perquisites, allowances, and pensions.

In the Caribbean, gifts were given by assemblies as compensations to those who had sacrificed their interests, as recompense to those who had used their own money for public affairs, and as support for those in financial need. Governor Dutton of Barbados wrote to the Lords of Trade and Plantations in 1685: 'I confess that, not knowing I should be guilty of any fault, I received a thousand pounds of it a month before the king's order came to my hands. Without it I and my family should have been in a wanting condition, for everything is very dear and I was put to great expense before I left England.'<sup>93</sup> It is noteworthy that although he attacked Dutton's conduct in receiving gifts, Dutton's enemy Edwyn Stede also complained to the Lords that his position was very expensive, and petitioned to be allowed to receive the £1,000 given him by the council and assembly: 'Apart from the ordinary expenses of the Government, I have deemed it my duty to stimulate loyalty by observing the days of the King's birth, accession, coronation, restoration, and all such days with the greatest splendour and magnificence that this place could afford.'<sup>94</sup>

Caribbean people regarded gifts as the cost of purchasing a governor's friendship. In many situations, governors were told that if they cooperated with the assembly, or with certain local interests, they would gain profits and presents greater than their salary. Governor Daniel Parke, whose case will be discussed in chapter 3, criticised his predecessor's behaviour of receiving gifts. Parke reported that 'every time ... [the assembly] met, they made him [the former governors] a present, and therefore he let them do what they pleased', and he stated that he would himself have been treated in the same way by the assembly if he had been compliant: 'if I

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<sup>93</sup> *CSPS, Vol 12, 1685–1688*, pp. 8-27, Sir Richard Dutton to LTP, 29 Mar. 1685 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol12/pp8-27>].

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 182-200, Lieu-Gov. Stede to LTP, May 19 1686 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol12/pp182-200>].

would have humoured them in their unreasonable desires, then I should have my house-rent well payd, and have a handsome present'.<sup>95</sup>

Another cause of disputes was the flexible attitude of the Board of Trade towards gift-giving. In 1701, the Board proposed to the king to agree that Governor Grey in Barbados might receive gifts from the assembly because the expenditure he had 'been obliged to make in supporting the dignity of that Government, has exceeded his Salary'.<sup>96</sup> In 1702, however, in order to decrease governors' dependence on assemblies' gifts, the Board proposed to the queen to forbid governors' 'receiving of any presents or gratuities' for 'the better enabling them to support the dignity of the Government'.<sup>97</sup> Whatever instructions and directions were given by London, the enforcement of policy was not easy. Governors were always able to find excuses to receive money from assemblies. In 1716, Antigua passed an act which granted £1,000 in Antiguan currency, rather than £400 sterling, to Governor Walter Hamilton, to cover his public expenditures, and this was approved by the crown.<sup>98</sup>

In the circumstances outlined, gift-giving was liable to lead to violation of domestic policies and to corruption scandals. Governor Bevil Granville of Barbados, for example, was attacked in 1705 for receiving presents from the colonial inhabitants, including some granted by the assembly under the name of reimbursements and provisions for his reception and accommodation. Many other Caribbean governors suffered similar accusations of receiving gifts, including Granville's successor, Mitford Crowe, and the later governor of Barbados, Robert Lowther.

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<sup>95</sup> *CSPC, Vol 24, 1708–1709*, pp. 287-300, Gov. Parke to the CTP, 4 May 1709 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp287-300>].

<sup>96</sup> *CSPC, Vol 19, 1701*, pp. 670-78, CTP to the King, 12 Dec. 1701 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol19/pp670-678>].

<sup>97</sup> *CSPC, Vol 20, 1702*, pp. 226-49, CTP to the Queen, 17 Apr. 1702 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol20/pp226-249>].

<sup>98</sup> *CSPC, Vol 29, 1716–1717*, pp. 251-63, Rowland Tryon and William Nevene to the CTP, 28 Apr. 1717 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol29/pp251-263>].

## The Divided White Caribbean Community

The foregoing analysis of the basic framework of Caribbean governments provides a general idea of the institutional problems that caused disputes and conflicts in the colonies. However, the situation was further complicated by divisions at the social level within the white community, particularly within the elite groups which dominated Caribbean societies. In 1700, a Prussian envoy sent a letter from London to Berlin, mentioning four ‘principles’ which governed the concerns of Englishmen, these being ‘the religion of this country, the liberty of the individual, the trade which enhances the value of their produce, and the cultivation of their lands’.<sup>99</sup> These were principal areas of concern in the colonial Caribbean as well, because colonial inhabitants inherited norms, traditions and ideologies from the homeland, and because there was ongoing interplay between domestic and colonial societies.

Although Caribbean colonies were established by modelling domestic society, and Barbados even had the nickname ‘little England’, overseas islands were regarded as lacking the complexity and social differentiation of the mother country and the full range of social and institutional means by which local societies sustained themselves.<sup>100</sup> However, driven by development of the sugar industry and the plantation system, and with a political apparatus drawing on English values and practices, Caribbean society developed its own social orders and elite culture. Over a long period, big Caribbean planters and merchants dominated colonial political institutions, legislatures and judiciaries; this was at the expense of middling and smaller planters, as well as of non-whites.<sup>101</sup> In Barbados, between 1675 and 1685,

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<sup>99</sup> B. L. Add MSS 30,000D, f. 363: F. Bonet to the Elector of Brandenburg, 17 December 1700; trans. in Geoffrey Holmes and W. A. Speck (eds), *The Divided Society: Party Conflict in England 1694–1716* (London: Arnold, 1967), p. 19, cited in W. A. Speck, *The Birth of Britain: A New Nation, 1700–1710* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), pp. 2–3.

<sup>100</sup> Braddick, ‘Civility and Authority’, p. 126.

<sup>101</sup> Hilary McD. Beckles, ‘The “Hub of Empire”: The Caribbean and Britain in the Seventeenth Century’, in Nicholas Canny (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume I: The*

109 of the 175 big planters held offices, and the most powerful positions, such as councillor, assemblyman, judge, and regimental commander, were reserved for colonists of the highest economic and social standing.<sup>102</sup> In other Caribbean islands, the political institutions were also under the control of people with large properties. On the one hand, these elites stood together, defending a commonality of interests in claiming their identity and privileges, and sharing adherence to an ideology of localism and self-government; on the other, they were divided into numerous factions arising from competing economic interests, differences of political sympathy or religious conscience, and personal rivalries, as will become apparent below.

In the early days of colonial settlement, individual holdings of land tended to be small, especially before sugar became the main crop, and trading activities were therefore dominated by merchants. The planters in the islands had to rely on the fortuitous arrival of ships bringing stores and provisions; the merchants made the running.<sup>103</sup> The passage of the navigation acts placed the planters at the mercy of the English and island merchants, and as early as 1655 they were expressing resentment about the position in which they found themselves.<sup>104</sup> In 1661, the planters complained that the merchants, ‘having us in their power that wee can send our sugars noe where else, they give us what they please and soe having the market in themselves to send it for other countryes, they sell it for what they list, and make us simple planters only the propertie of their gaine, and sell the poor for bread and the rich for shoes’.<sup>105</sup>

The sugar revolution profoundly transformed this situation, and the economic and social orders of the Caribbean. Sugar plantations were first introduced in the Caribbean in the 1640s, and within forty years Barbados was cultivating sugar across

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*Origins of Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 227.

<sup>102</sup> Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, p. 98.

<sup>103</sup> K. G. Davis, ‘The Origins of the Commission System in the West India Trade: The Alexander Prize Essay’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 2 (1952), pp. 92-93.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>105</sup> P.R.O., C.O. 1/5, no. 70. Further evidence of the conflict between planters and merchants is to be found in C.O.1/23, no. 20, cited in Davis, ‘Origins of the Commission System’, p. 102.

every acre of its land. The sugar revolution also occurred in other English islands in the West Indies, including Jamaica after its conquest in 1655, which greatly increased cane production in the area.<sup>106</sup> The revolution transformed the islands' small-scale production of staples to the production of sugar, the manufacture of crude sugar and the export of rum. Correspondingly, the labour force shifted from being composed of white indentured servants to being made up of slaves from Africa.

This economic revolution in the Caribbean had a considerable impact on the social structure of the local societies. Growing sugar was much more lucrative than the growing of tobacco, cotton, and indigo, but its requirements for capital and labour pushed small freeholders off their land and stimulated the growth of big plantations as well as the rise of landed elites. In Barbados, for example, by 1680 the planter elite comprised 175 individuals from 159 families, with 6.9 per cent of all landholders owning 53.4 per cent of the island's land.<sup>107</sup> Instead of relying on the merchants, the planters during this period began to consign their goods to their agents or factors, who were responsible for distributing cargoes, paying port duties, and monitoring sales.<sup>108</sup> In other words, they began to assume control of the selling of their produce. Meanwhile, land concentration became a problem which worried Caribbean governors, because it meant the concentration of slaves, who were regarded as a potential threat to the security of white communities.

The threat from large populations of slaves and the increasing gap between white and black populations were growing problems. In Jamaica, the total population in 1662 was 4,207: 3,653 whites and 554 black slaves. By 1673 the number of enslaved Africans had increased to 7,768, exactly equal to the number of whites. By 1693 the estimated population of whites had slipped to 7,365, while the number of enslaved

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<sup>106</sup> Nuala Zahedieh, 'Economy', in David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (eds), *The British Atlantic World, 1500–1800* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 58–59.

<sup>107</sup> H. V. Bowen, *Elites, Enterprise and the Making of the British Overseas Empire, 1688–1775* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 141–42.

<sup>108</sup> Christian J. Koot, *Empire at the Periphery, British Colonists, Anglo-Dutch Trade, and the Development of the British Atlantic, 1621–1713* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), p. 130.

Africans had rocketed to over 40,000.<sup>109</sup> The Jamaican assembly launched several schemes to increase white population, but in vain. For example, when in 1715 Governor Archibald Hamilton of Jamaica sought to promote a ‘Deficiency Act’, which obliged planters to keep a certain number of white men in proportion to their negroes, he was opposed by big planters who controlled most of lands in the island.<sup>110</sup> As for Barbados, the number of slaves also witnessed a growth from about 20,000 in 1655 to 41,970 in 1712, and the ratio of whites to slaves grew gradually from about 1:1 to about 1: 3.5.<sup>111</sup> The Barbados assembly also made several attempts to stem the growth in the number of slaves. For example, an act was passed in 1701 to restrict the emigration of white people and to encourage the importation of white servants, but, as in Jamaica, such efforts had little effect.<sup>112</sup> In the Leewards, there were about 8,300 white inhabitants and 22,200 slaves in 1700, which means the ratio of whites to slaves was about 1: 2.5, a relatively small one. But after a few decades in 1748, the number of slaves almost tripled while the white still stayed at 8,000, and the ratio grew substantially into about 1: 7.85.<sup>113</sup> Although not frequent, riots and revolts related to slavery happened both on the American continent and in the Caribbean islands.<sup>114</sup> Between 1673 and 1694, Jamaica experienced six slave revolts, and there were two smaller conspiracies to revolt in 1702 and 1704.<sup>115</sup>

The growing number of slave population and the accompanying danger of slave revolts caused disputes in the colonies. One governor, Daniel Parke of the Leeward

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<sup>109</sup> Burnard, *Planters, Merchants, and Slaves*, pp. 68-69.

<sup>110</sup> *CSPC, Vol 28, 1714–1715*, pp. 141-61, CTP to Mr. Secretary Stanhope, 25 Apr. 1715 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol28/pp141-161#highlight-first>].

<sup>111</sup> Patricia A. Molen, ‘Population and Social Patterns in Barbados in the Early Eighteenth Century’, *WMQ*, 28 (1971), p. 289.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 288.

<sup>113</sup> Richard B. Sheridan, ‘The Formation of Caribbean Plantation Society, 1689-1748’, in Peter J. Marshall (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume II: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 400-01.

<sup>114</sup> Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982); Michael Craton, ‘The Passion to Exist: Slave Rebellions in the British West Indies 1650–1832’, *Journal of Caribbean History*, 13 (1980).

<sup>115</sup> Burnard, *Planters, Merchants, and Slaves*, p. 65.

Islands, tried to resolve this problem by abolishing the land grants made by his predecessor Christopher Codrington, but as chapter 3 will show, his career and his life ended violently at the hands of rioting inhabitants. In Jamaica, the threat of slaves had often been used by governors and domestic departments as arguments in favour of the maintenance of an army. According to the Board of Trade, the slave population was much bigger than the white, and ‘if the regiment were absolutely recalled, the Island would be much less able to resist the said negroes in case of an insurrection’.<sup>116</sup> This opinion was shared by some Jamaican inhabitants: ‘the Negroes, on the Island, being upwards of Eighty Thousand, and the White Men not above Two Thousand, may at any time rise and destroy the White People’,<sup>117</sup> and ‘if it appear to be of no advantage to the Island to have the Regiment continued, it may be recalled; but if on the contrary it be necessary for the safety and defence of the said Island, it may be kept there’.<sup>118</sup> However, maintaining an army on the island increased people’s worry about arbitrary government, which echoed country ideology at home, and more importantly, it triggered disputes about who should pay for the quartering expenditure, which will be discussed in chapter 4.

The flourishing of the planter class also promoted the burgeoning of sophisticated interests that divided the Caribbean communities and caused tensions within the white elites. As Bernard Bailyn has argued, there was a ‘milling factionalism that transcended institutional boundaries and at times reduced the politics of certain colonies to an almost unchartable chaos of competing groups’.<sup>119</sup> The causes of the divisions were various. For example, there were financial disputes between the planters and merchants in the sphere of wealth accumulation, debt

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<sup>116</sup> *CSPC, Vol 27, 1712-1714*, pp. 302-25, CTP to Lord Bolingbroke, 9 Mar. 1714 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol27/pp302-325>].

<sup>117</sup> ‘A View of the Proceedings of the Assemblies of Jamaica’, in *Occasional Papers on the Assiento, and the Affairs of Jamaica* (London, 1716), p. 15.

<sup>118</sup> *CSPC, Vol 27, 1712-1714*, pp. 295-302. Lord Bolingbroke to the CTP, 26 Feb. 1714 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol27/pp295-302>].

<sup>119</sup> Bailyn, *Origins of American Politics*, p. 64.

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collection and public credit. London merchants frequently complained about their difficulties in collecting debts from colonial planters, while the latter developed a series of strategies to delay, freeze, or shrink their debts. In Jamaica, planters petitioned against the monopoly of slave trade by domestic merchants and their agents. There was also competition between provincial merchants and metropolitan ones. In 1731, London merchants made complaints about provincial laws which laid lower import duties on the ships and goods of the inhabitants of some provinces than on those of other British subjects. In consequence, the Board of Trade proposed an additional instruction to all governors strictly forbidding the passage of any laws for preferential duties.<sup>120</sup>

In addition to divergent economic interests, there were also profound divergences in religious sympathies and political ideologies, which were interrelated and closely linked with the interactions between the metropole and the periphery. Religion played a part in factious politics due to conflicts of economic interests. In Jamaica, the privateering faction lead by Sir Henry Morgan ‘cursed’ the dissenters and criticised their enemy, Thomas Lynch, the leader of the trade faction, for his overfamiliarity with them and his policy of toleration. Politicians were also attacked by their enemies for their religious backgrounds. In Barbados, William Holder, the speaker of the assembly and chief judge of common pleas appointed by Governor Granville, was attacked by his political enemies for his Quaker background, and the rumour circulated that he was never baptised. This occurred during the planter–merchant rivalries in 1706 over the Paper Act, a case which will be discussed in chapter 2.

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<sup>120</sup> Labaree, *Royal Government in America*, pp. 61-62.



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## The Fiscal–military State, Trade Regulation and the Caribbean Colonies

As noted above, the development of a fiscal–military state intensified imperial control and regulation of colonial affairs, also intensifying the tensions between metropole and periphery. Centralised commercial regulations from domestic institutions, such as the navy, the customs, and the excise, were resented by the colonial inhabitants, who had a strong preference for free trade. In addition, the colonists struggled bitterly to defend their revenues from the encroachment of the crown, and later from that of parliament.

Interactions – particularly financial and military interactions – between colonies and the motherland developed rapidly from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century. Colonies served as providers of raw materials, and as markets for British goods, in exchange for Britain’s military protection and material support, as well as the supply of slaves. Due to the burgeoning plantation system, British colonial exports increased substantially during the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century. At the turn of the eighteenth century, the average annual value of commodity exports into London from British America was £838,814, of which most (£621,793) was from the British West Indies, chiefly Barbados, the Leeward Islands, and Jamaica.<sup>121</sup> Sugar was the most important staple imported from the West Indies: by the end of the 1660s England and Wales were importing about 26.2 million pounds per annum, and mostly from the Caribbean; by the early 1700s the quantity had risen to 42.5 million pounds; and by the second half of the 1720s it was about 92.6 million pounds.<sup>122</sup> England’s exports to the West Indies also experienced a great expansion during this period. The massive scale of trade between the Caribbean and the homeland linked their economies closely.

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<sup>121</sup> Zahedieh, *The Capital and the Colonies*, pp. 189–200.

<sup>122</sup> Julian Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty? England 1689–1727* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 266.

Meanwhile, the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries also witnessed a series of wars in the West Indies, including the Anglo–Spanish War of the late 1650s, which led to the English capture of Jamaica; the Anglo–Dutch War in the second half of the seventeenth century; the Nine Years’ War between 1689 and 1697; and the War of the Spanish Succession from 1702 to 1713. All these wars more closely connected the colonies and the mother country.<sup>123</sup> In the West Indies, Barbados was not very vulnerable militarily as it was well fortified and to windward of the French islands. The Leeward Islands, however, suffered from attacks from forces based in the neighbouring French islands.<sup>124</sup> During this period, England dramatically increased the size of her army and navy to successfully defend her interests in Europe and her overseas colonies. The colonies needed arms and ammunition from the Royal Navy to protect themselves from the attacks of enemies, and to protect their trading vessels from pirates in peacetime. As an overseas front line in the imperial contest between Britain, France and Spain, the Caribbean colonies were required to undertake greater military responsibilities and were vulnerable to military threats from other empires and colonies. They took the opportunity to bargain for privileges, revenues, and other concessions in return for supplying defence funds.<sup>125</sup>

### Revenue Issues in the Caribbean

Revenue was a precondition of the continued conduct of imperial wars. For the mother country, the formation of a fiscal–military state, characterised by a large fiscal deficit on the part of the crown and increased expenditure dedicated to the growing

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<sup>123</sup> Michael J. Braddick, ‘The English Government, War, Trade, and Settlement, 1625–1688’, in Canny (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume I: The Origins of Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 286–87; J. H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492–1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 223.

<sup>124</sup> Richard B. Sheridan, ‘The Formation of Caribbean Plantation Society, 1689–1748’, in Marshall (ed.), *The Eighteenth Century*, p. 398.

<sup>125</sup> Ian K. Steele, *The English Atlantic, 1675–1740: An Exploration of Communication and Community* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 249.

bureaucracy, put a heavy burden on the government's finances, making colonial taxation an important source of government income.<sup>126</sup> In the eighteenth century, Britain became one of the most heavily taxed nations in Europe. During this period, indirect taxes eclipsed direct taxes, becoming the main source of the state's income.<sup>127</sup>

In the Caribbean, revenue was largely based on trade activities. Both Barbados and the Leeward Islands established a perpetual revenue paid in kind, namely a 4½ per cent duty on all exports, soon after their settlements. In 1663 the Barbadian assembly agreed to grant the crown the annual duty of 4½ per cent to cover the colony's civil expenses, in return for the abolition of proprietary government and the relief of the feudal dues of the Barbadian land-owners.<sup>128</sup> In 1664, this sort of duty was also secured in the Leeward islands in exchange for the extinction of proprietary claims.<sup>129</sup> The purpose of the duty was to cover public expenditure including 'maintaining the authority of the Crown, the public meeting of the Sessions, the often attendance of the Council, the repairing the ports, the building the Session House, and all other public charges incumbent on the Government'.<sup>130</sup> Other taxes included a duty on imported slaves, land tax and quit-rent, which were levied on an ad hoc basis, when the need for revenue required it.

The 4½ per cent duty was an important source of colonial finance in Barbados and the Leeward Islands. During the seven years from 1670 the duty from the two colonies generated £7,000 annually, and in the following seven years it generated £5,000 annually.<sup>131</sup> Between 1691 and 1700 the gross receipt in Barbados was about

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<sup>126</sup> William Ashworth, *Customs and Excise: Trade, Production, and Consumption in England, 1640–1845* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Braddick, 'English Government', pp. 290–91.

<sup>127</sup> Eckhart Hellmuth, 'The British State', in H. T. Dickinson (ed.), *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 21–22; Brewer, *Sinews of Power*, p. 79.

<sup>128</sup> Keith, *Constitutional History*, p. 124; G. H. Guttridge, *The Colonial Policy of William III in America and the West Indies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), p. 9.

<sup>129</sup> Keith, *Constitutional History*, p. 124.

<sup>130</sup> CTB, Vol 18, pp. 191–211, Caribbee Islands, 22 Mar. 1703 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-treasury-books/vol18/pp191-211>].

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

£72,251, and in the Leewards was it was about £35,785, which meant they generated about £7,200 and £3,600 per annum respectively.<sup>132</sup> A large part of the duty was used for military expenditure. For example, in 1703 goods in a London warehouse with an approximate value of £5,000 were sold, and £3,500 was applied to ‘the sending to Barbados an engineer, storekeeper, master gunner and 17 other gunners and for paying them a quarter’s salaries’, together with payment for firearms and ammunition, while the remainder was used for ‘making good the demands of the Governor of the Leeward Islands for stores of war’.<sup>133</sup>

The situation in Jamaica differed from that in Barbados and the Leewards. Although occasional money bills were passed by the assembly, governors of Jamaica did not secure a perpetual revenue act until the 1720s, when an act was passed in exchange for the confirmation of a large number of acts passed previously, and for recognition of the assembly’s institutional integrity as a kind of overseas House of Commons.<sup>134</sup> Prior to that point, there were bitter struggles over the issue of money in Jamaica, triggering a series of constitutional conflicts within the colony. Money bills were frequently used as tools to bargain with the metropole for her acknowledgement of Jamaica’s independence, the tradition of English rights, acceptance of inhabitants’ British identity, and recognition of the assembly’s constitutional roles. With the leverage afforded by their hold on the purse strings, the assembly also successfully defended its legislative independence in 1679–80, when the mother country sought to subject it to Poynings’ Law. Through financial bargaining, the assembly also prompted the crown to formally acknowledge Jamaica’s entitlement to the protection of English laws.<sup>135</sup> In addition to the issue of a perpetual money act, the issue of acts for the provision of soldiers also preoccupied Jamaica’s governors for decades. This was due to grievances similar to those in

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid., The Four-and-a-Half per cent. Duty in Barbados and the Leeward Islands, 22 Mar. 1703 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-treasury-books/vol18/pp191-211>].

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Brathwaite, *Development of Creole Society*, p. 8.

<sup>135</sup> Greene, ‘Liberty and Slavery’, p. 56.

Barbados and the Leeward Islands, arising from the objection to colonies being required to provide extra funds to support British regiments when they had already paid large amounts of tax to the homeland. As a result, it was common for the assemblies to reject governors' suggestions of tax levies and to attempt to claim authority over the passing of finance bills and the disbursement of revenues, together with other money-related issues.

Revenue was an enduring bone of contention almost from the time of the establishment of the Caribbean colonies. Colonial people resented their obligation to pay taxes twice: they had to pay export duties to the crown in addition to taxes to support the governor and militia.<sup>136</sup> They also worried about their money being misused: although the revenue was collected for the defence and governing of the colonies, it was also used for domestic purposes by the mother country. For example, the 4½ per cent duty of Barbados had been granted to William III as part of his Civil List, and when, towards the end of 1700, the agents of Barbados requested that the fund should be used for its intended purpose, both the Board of Trade and the Privy Council were reluctant to consider the matter.<sup>137</sup> In addition, the metropole continued to require the colonial assemblies to pass new money bills to defray civil and military costs. This not only gave rise to great resentment in the colonies, but also enabled the local assemblies to regain the financial leverage that had been lost when they granted perpetual revenue to the crown.<sup>138</sup>

Due to the antagonism of colonial legislatures in relation to taxation, colonial governors lacked a strong and independent fiscal basis for public expenditure. Caribbean colonial societies were therefore continually preoccupied with issues of deficits, low public credit, huge public debt and scarcity of cash, and governors anxiously sought ways of covering the rising costs of administration and defence.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges*, p. 109.

<sup>137</sup> Ian K. Steele, *Politics of Colonial Policy: The Board of Trade in Colonial Administration, 1696–1720* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 94–96.

<sup>138</sup> Greene, 'Liberty and Slavery', p. 56.

<sup>139</sup> Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World*, p. 140.

Their attempts often backfired, with financial bills being used as weapons by their opponents, and even their own salaries came under threat. As a result, governors frequently complained about the insufficiency of funds, or sacrificed their own money in public affairs, as previously mentioned. For example, Barbadian governor Richard Dutton complained to Sir Leoline Jenkins in 1681 about the delay of his salary, ‘this place being very expensive in every way. I have not yet received one penny from the King or this country, and am already out of purse over 3,500*l*.’<sup>140</sup> Similarly, in 1681 Sir Thomas Lynch of Jamaica complained, ‘I am not likely to get any salary, but am indebted for hire of war vessels, building of ships, and repairing of King’s houses’.<sup>141</sup> Governors sometimes had to yield in their disputes with assemblies to get their financial support, or to turn to controversial sources of income, such as receipt of gifts, as noted above, or participation in privateering and illegal trade, discussed below.

### Commercial Regulations from the Metropole and Demand for Free Trade from the Periphery

Piracy and illegal trade were two profitable forms of enterprise, not only for the Caribbean governors, but also for colonial elites. But they were also controversial in the colonies, due to fluid domestic policies and due also to the multiple interests which were affected, which included planters, merchants, colonial governments, and trading companies.

Before discussing the issues of piracy and illegal trade, we first need to explore the context of these issues by looking at commercial regulations from home and

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<sup>140</sup> *CSPC, Vol 11, 1681–1685*, pp. 49-65, Gov. Sir Richard Dutton to Sir Leoline Jenkins, 30 May 1681 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol11/pp49-65>].

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37-49, Sir Thomas Lynch to the Lord President of the Council, 6 May 1681 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol11/pp37-49>].

colonial demands for free trade. Due to the increasing amount of wealth created by the plantations, the substantial economic contribution provided by the colonies became increasingly accepted by inhabitants of Britain, and it became increasingly plausible to view colonies as commercial adjuncts of Britain. It was accordingly often argued that the interests of England should always have precedence over those of the colonies, and that, when necessary, the colonies should be obliged to give way to the metropole. In this spirit, parliament passed a series of acts in the seventeenth century with the intention to prohibit direct trading between British colonies and other countries, to promote England's role as an entrepôt, and to minimise the loss of wealth.<sup>142</sup> In 1651, the first navigation act was passed. This aimed to restrict colonial trade to trade with England and to decrease dependence on foreign imported goods, and was a significant parliamentary assertion of power over the empire. The Navigation Act 1660 required that all the goods imported to or exported from American colonies should be carried by English ships, and that certain colonial goods, such as sugar, tobacco, cotton, wool, indigo, ginger, and dyestuffs, could only be shipped to England or its colonies. The Staple Act 1663 provided that all goods produced or manufactured in a foreign country and destined for the colonies should first be carried to England and unloaded there, before being carried to the colonies by English ships.<sup>143</sup>

This series of commercial regulations was modified several times in the following decades, and parliamentary supremacy was progressively established through regular and effective imperial trade legislation.<sup>144</sup> Trade regulation of this sort emphasised the subordination and functionality of the colonies, and was promoted for decades by the English crown. In addition to legislation, vice admiralty

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<sup>142</sup> Zahedieh, 'Economy', pp. 54-55.

<sup>143</sup> Geoffrey Holmes, *The Making of a Great Power: Late Stuart and Early Georgian Britain, 1660-1722* (London: Longman, 1993), pp. 440-41.

<sup>144</sup> Ian K. Steele, 'The British Parliament and the Atlantic Colonies to 1760: New Approaches to Enduring Questions', in Lawson (ed.), *Parliament and the Atlantic Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), p. 45.

courts were also established in the colonies, which were responsible for trying offenses against the navigation acts, and by 1710 there were forty-two permanent customs officers in the British colonies whose remit was to ensure that the acts were observed.<sup>145</sup>

For the relatively isolated Caribbean colonies, however, trade with foreign countries was usually aimed at obtaining provisions or the accumulation of primary capital, and it was therefore significant for their survival and prosperity.<sup>146</sup> Colonists never stopped advocating for open and free trade. In 1674, a memorandum from Barbados to the crown argued for free trade between the islands and Scotland – prevented by the navigation acts – in order to increase the supply of white servants who were considered a necessary source of labour for the colonial economy.<sup>147</sup> In 1676, a complaint from the council of Barbados about the navigation acts was considered in London, but rejected; the council argued that it was inappropriate and set a bad precedent. As a result, the colonies sought other ways to pursue material betterment, including sponsoring piracy and illegal trade.

Piracy and illegal trade were two interrelated activities which caused political disputes and scandals in the Caribbean world in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.<sup>148</sup> Some colonists traded secretly with other empires in violation of parliamentary acts, while others took chances to increase their personal wealth when English law permitted the seizure of foreign cargoes.<sup>149</sup> There were

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<sup>145</sup> Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World*, p. 222.

<sup>146</sup> Christian J. Koot, 'Constructing the Empire: English Governors, Imperial Policy, and Inter-imperial Trade in New York City and the Leeward Islands, 1650–1689', *Itinerario*, 31 (2007).

<sup>147</sup> Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges*, p. 89.

<sup>148</sup> See, for example, Zahedieh, 'Merchants of Port Royal'; Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700–1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Wim Klooster, 'Inter-imperial Smuggling in the Americas, 1600–1800', in Bernard Bailyn and Patricia L. Denault (eds), *Soundings in Atlantic History: Latent Structures and Intellectual Currents, 1500–1830*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009); Douglas R. Burgess Jr, *The Pirates' Pact: The Secret Alliances Between History's Most Notorious Buccaneers and Colonial America* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2009); Koot, *Empire at the Periphery*; Margarette Lincoln, *British Pirates and Society, 1680–1730* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014); Hanna, *Pirate Nests*.

<sup>149</sup> Carla Gardina Pestana, *The English Atlantic in An Age of Revolution, 1640–1661* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 175.



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many similarities between these two enterprises in the colonies, but also tensions and incompatibilities between them, which will be discussed in the following sections.

Piracy was a double-edged sword for colonies, as was illegal trade. Both piracy and illegal trade remained attractive for the colonies because they brought huge profits to the colonial economies, and the military power of pirates also protected the islands from enemy attacks; both were regarded as contrary to domestic policies in some situations, but exceptions were made at other times due to shifts in attitude in the home country; both were difficult to monitor or to eradicate, were deeply rooted in colonial lives, and were intertwined with the sophisticated interests of colonial inhabitants, officials, and governors; and both frequently led to accusations and scandals in the colonial governments, and became tools which political enemies could use to attack each other. The following sections consider each type of illicit revenue in turn.

### Illegal Trade

For the authorities in England, trading with merchants of other nations meant loss of revenue. As early as the 1630s, the king began to order his admirals to force vessels that traded with foreign merchants to pay a higher duty. The Privy Council also attempted to prevent illegal trade by urging the Caribbean islands to plant less tobacco, as any increase in tobacco production would increase their dependency on supplies from the Dutch.<sup>150</sup>

Yet illegal trade was pervasive in the early modern West Indies. It is hard to determine the relative magnitudes of legal and illegal trade, but it is clear that smuggling brought huge economic profits and provided various kinds of commodities for the West Indian colonies. In 1710, a letter was circulated from the Board of Trade to the governors and proprietors of American and West Indian

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<sup>150</sup> Koot, *Empire at the Periphery*, p. 38.

colonies, reporting the illegal trade carried between the British colonies and Curaçao and St Thomas. According to the letter, the British colonies provided the inhabitants of Curaçao with provisions such as bread, flour, butter, cheese, peas, rice, beef, pork and corn, and ‘from Pennsylvania and New York strong and small beer; from Carolina and New England pitch and tarr; from the Charibbee Islands and Jamaica rum, sugar, cotton, ginger, indigo, and tobacco’. In return, the British colonies received cocoa, linens, muslins and silks, together with some ship parts and ironwork from Curaçao.<sup>151</sup>

Covertly traded commodities provided colonies with provisions, manufactures and slaves that were costly or even unavailable through legal channels, and also brought silver and gold which were in high demand among both planters and merchants. For colonial inhabitants, illicit goods provided them with daily necessities, and residents higher on the social ladder were often able to buy goods of better quality at a lower price than would be possible if they relied on legal channels.<sup>152</sup> As the Jamaican governor William Beeston complained to the Board of Trade in 1696, ‘there come not from England necessaries enough to furnish the people’s wants, nor ships enough to take away their produce’. Hence, despite his desire to observe the navigation acts, ‘people’s necessities put them on invention’.<sup>153</sup> The attempts of the domestic government to restrict illegal trade were always impeded by the inhabitants. For example, when the homeland sent Edward Randolph to inspect trade and customs in the colonies in the 1690s, he was resented by provincial people, and failed to sue any illegal sloop he seized.<sup>154</sup> Colonial

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<sup>151</sup> *CSPC, Vol 25, 1710–1711*, pp. 4–18, Circular letter from the CTP to the Governors and Proprietors of Plantations, 19 Jan. 1710 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol25/pp4-18>].

<sup>152</sup> Wim Klooster, ‘Inter-imperial Smuggling in the Americas, 1600–1800’, in Bernard Bailyn and Patricia L. Denault (eds), *Soundings in Atlantic History: Latent Structures and Intellectual Currents, 1500–1830* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), p. 144.

<sup>153</sup> *CSPC, Vol 15, 1696–1697*, pp. 63–71, Gov. Sir William Beeston to LTP, 7 Aug. 1696 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol15/pp63-71>].

<sup>154</sup> Guttridge, *Colonial Policy of William III*, p. 158.

governments' efforts to suppress smuggling were also frustrated by their inhabitants, sometimes violently. In 1699, John Townsend, a custom house officer in Nassau Island, appointed by Bellomont, came to 'beg' the governor, telling him that 'though most of that town were his near relations and several of them of his name, yet he was threatened by them to be knocked on the head, and he had already suffered many abuses, insomuch as he was in fear of his life'.<sup>155</sup> In 1719, when the customs collector of Rhode Island tried to seize several hogsheads of claret, the townspeople rebelled.<sup>156</sup>

Suppression of smuggling also adversely affected the interests of complicit officials, including even governors. Customs officers were usually susceptible to gifts, bribes, and other inducements offered by smugglers, and were also influenced by personal relationships.<sup>157</sup> For colonial officials, the regulation of trade was a grey area that presented them with opportunities for corruption. For example, some officers and crews embezzled parts of cargoes that they had captured; others accepted bribes to release seized shipments.<sup>158</sup> Governor Nicholson and Secretary Lawrence of Maryland noted the difficulty in getting either juries or judges to convict, and county juries would hardly ever find against an illegal trader.<sup>159</sup> Samuel Cox of Barbados was accused of favouring smuggling when he served as a naval officer, and he later conducted illegal trade himself.<sup>160</sup> Some captains of the crown used men of

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<sup>155</sup> *CSPC, Vol 17, 1699 and Addenda 1621–1698*, pp. 208–24, Gov. the Earl of Bellomont to the CTP, 13 May 1699 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol17/pp208-224>].

<sup>156</sup> Klooster, 'Inter-imperial Smuggling in the Americas', p. 145.

<sup>157</sup> Alan L. Karras, 'Smuggling and its Malcontents', in Jerry H. Bentley, Renate Bridenthal, and Anand A. Yang (eds), *Interactions: Transregional Perspectives on World History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), p. 141; Klooster, 'Inter-imperial Smuggling in the Americas', pp. 145–47.

<sup>158</sup> Karras, 'Smuggling and its Malcontents', p. 141.

<sup>159</sup> Guttridge, *Colonial Policy of William III*, p. 159.

<sup>160</sup> *CSPC, Vol 22, 1704–1705*, pp. 225–45, CTP to the Queen [3 of 3], 25 Aug. 1704 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol22/pp225-245>]; *CSPC, Vol 32, 1720–1721*, pp. 1–21, Petition of John Lenoir, Judge of the Admiralty Court, and Henry Lascelles, Collector, Barbados, to Governor Lowther, 31 Mar. 1720 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol32/pp1-21>].

war to carry illegal trade. In the Leewards, in 1682, Governor William Stapleton seized cargoes belonging to Captain Billop, complaining that the latter ‘acted more like a merchant, and sometimes more like a piratical one, than a man-of-war or one that holds the King’s commission’.<sup>161</sup> As Klooster comments, ‘bribes and gifts were hallmarks of the system, frequently blurring the distinction between the private and public domains in the colonial world’.<sup>162</sup>

The attitudes of governors in dealing with illegal trade were not straightforward. Some governors were reluctant to give up the profits which benefited colonial economies. For them, trading with other nations secretly was not a crime against society but, on the contrary, was necessary for the maintenance of colonial commerce and prosperity.<sup>163</sup> As a result, flags of truce, which were used to carry prisoners of war, were also used as a cover for smuggling.<sup>164</sup> Several governors conducted illegal trade for personal enrichment. Governor Willoughby of Barbados was one example. Another was Sir Thomas Lynch of Jamaica, who was joined by other merchants, including Hender Molesworth, the Royal African Company’s factor, in hiring a Bristol frigate to trade at Cartagena.<sup>165</sup>

### Piracy

Like smuggling, piracy was a persistent problem in the overseas colonies. During the early stage of colonial expansion, sea marauding proved of economic and military

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<sup>161</sup> *CSPC, Vol 11, 1681–1685*, pp. 259–70, Sir William Stapleton to LTP, 10 July 1682 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol11/pp259-270>].

<sup>162</sup> Klooster, ‘Inter-imperial Smuggling in the Americas’, pp. 141, 148.

<sup>163</sup> Koot, ‘Constructing the Empire’, p. 13.

<sup>164</sup> *CSPC, Vol 25, 1710–1711*, pp. 4–18, Circular letter from the CTP to the Governors and Proprietors of Plantations, 19 Jan. 1710 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol25/pp4-18>]; see also, Klooster, ‘Inter-imperial Smuggling in the Americas’, p. 165.

<sup>165</sup> Zahedieh, ‘Merchants of Port Royal’, p. 579.

importance to the survival of Atlantic colonies, and as a result, government-dominated pirating activities were universal: naval vessels were sent on pirate voyages, and naval captains became privateers.<sup>166</sup> Later, England's attitude to piracy was influenced by factors such as diplomatic relations and foreign policy, and piracy became a grey area in the colonies.

Despite the existence of anti-piracy acts, the enforcement of piracy regulations at the imperial level was inefficient due to the great distance between the metropole and the periphery, and the lack of colonial oversight. Instructions were given to suppress piratical activities, but pitifully little was achieved. For example, the outdated admiralty law required that all pirates captured in the colonies be remanded to England for trial, as it was believed that no pirate would be convicted by people who had profited from his career; the consequence was that only a small fraction of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century pirates were ever tried, as conveying them to England was too burdensome.<sup>167</sup> With the backing of the Board of Trade, Edward Randolph introduced a scheme to extend and standardise the vice admiralty courts in the colonies, but the local people voiced vigorous and persistent objections to the courts as an invasion of their rights.<sup>168</sup> In 1700, parliament passed several acts to combat piracy and to regulate governors' behaviour.<sup>169</sup> However, many local officials, including governors, turned a blind eye to piracy, or even made their own profits through it; and inhabitants interpreted efforts to crush piracy as threats to local autonomy and the common law tradition.<sup>170</sup>

As with illegal traders, some governors chose to protect pirates within their colonies, and some, such as Benjamin Fletcher of New York, William Markham of Pennsylvania, and Archibald Hamilton of Jamaica, lost their positions for that

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<sup>166</sup> Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, p. 417; Burgess, *Pirates' Pact*, p. 26.

<sup>167</sup> Burgess, *Pirates' Pact*, pp. 164-65, 261-62.

<sup>168</sup> Steele, *Politics of Colonial Policy*, pp. 47-48.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 56-60.

<sup>170</sup> Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, p. 419.

reason.<sup>171</sup> For the governors, piratical forces provided armed protection to trade and substantial profits to the local economy, and it was not easy to refuse these benefits. Besides, the colonial governors were given wide latitude over the regulation of trade. They could endeavour to interpret the law as loosely as possible, and they also had the opportunity to manage profits of prize. When a prize arrived, a court of inquiry would be convened to decide whether the goods were obtained legally. If the decision was unfavourable, the goods would be completely seized by the crown. If the decision was favourable, the crown took its cut and released the goods for public sale. This procedure was presided over by the governor alone, and abuses were therefore common.<sup>172</sup> Accordingly, even though some governors endeavoured to act against piracy, they were open to accusation from parties with an interest in illegal seizures and liable to become embroiled in scandal.

### Fluid Domestic Policies and Tensions between Illegal Trade and Piracy

If the vested interests of various parties in the colonies impeded the regulation of piracy and smuggling, shifting attitudes in the mother country played an even larger part. On the one hand, in the spirit of mercantilism, a series of trade acts had been passed since the 1650s, and circular letters were addressed to the governors from time to time, urging them to enforce these acts strictly; on the other hand, domestic governments made many exceptions, and the legitimacy of colonists' trade with other nations was affected by multiple factors, including cargo, destination, ship registration, crew makeup, and official licensure.<sup>173</sup> Behind these fluid policies, however, was a consistent motivation to promote England's interests. The mother country neither had nor aspired to a coherent trading policy, but rather took a

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<sup>171</sup> Burgess, *Pirates' Pacts*, xiv.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., p. 209.

<sup>173</sup> Koot, *Empire at the Periphery*, p. 12.

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pragmatic attitude to different circumstances as they arose.<sup>174</sup>

One example of this interest-oriented approach to regulation was the colonial trade with Spanish colonies. The English government saw in Spanish America a great field of opportunity for commercial enterprise.<sup>175</sup> The Royal African Company preferred to sell slaves to Spaniards, who were capable of paying in coin or bullion, rather than to sell them to the planters of Jamaica. According to a report of 1708, around half of the slaves sent to Jamaica were resold to the Spanish colonies, and said to be worth £150,000 a year.<sup>176</sup> The government in London spared no effort in promoting Spanish–American trade, despite the navigation acts. Piracy in the West Indies was therefore opposed and attacks on the Spanish coast were prohibited; the English navy furnished convoys for vessels trading to the Spanish coast; and the navigation acts were suspended in favour of Spanish ships and merchants exporting slaves.<sup>177</sup> In 1685, the Lords of Trade commanded the colonial governors to seize all foreign vessels trading to the colonies, excepting Spanish ships that came to purchase slaves.<sup>178</sup> In February 1704, a circular letter went out to the English colonies, declaring that English subjects might trade freely with the Spanish: they might import all Spanish colonial products and export anything to the Spaniards except ammunition, stores of war, and other enumerated articles. This circular was followed by a letter to all English privateers, directing that no injury should be inflicted on either Dutch or English merchants engaged in trade with the Spanish Indies that conformed to the conditions specified in the letter of 1704.<sup>179</sup>

In this situation, piracy and trade became incompatible in the colonies; frequent

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<sup>174</sup> W. A. Speck, 'The International and Imperial Context', in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole (eds), *Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Era* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), p. 392.

<sup>175</sup> Curtis Nettels, 'England and the Spanish-American Trade, 1680–1715', *The Journal of Modern History*, 3 (1931), p. 8.

<sup>176</sup> Zahedieh, 'Regulation, Rent-seeking, and the Glorious Revolution', p. 884.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13–14.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

piratical activities not only impeded legal trade, but also threatened illegal trade, causing loss of cargoes and damage to vessels. Due to the tensions between these two enterprises, colonial people were divided in their support either for piratical interests or for trading interests. One example of this is provided by colonial Jamaica, where quarrels between those who supported piratical activity because of its great profits, and those who attempted to obstruct it and to develop legal and illegal trade activities, promoted the formation of two factions. The disputes between traders and privateers began with conflict between Governor Thomas Lynch, a big planter, and Sir Henry Morgan, a famous privateer. The divergences persisted in Jamaica for decades, and together with constitutional tensions caused the recall of Governor Hamilton in 1716, which will be discussed in chapter 4.

The economic ideologies of the trade faction and the piracy faction in the colonies were to some extent reflections of disputes concerning the political economy of the empire. Although both piracy and illegal trade were alike in being effective methods of wealth accumulation, their ideological associations were very different. Piracy was a way to gain profits directly through robbery and seizure, consistent with the mercantile spirit which emphasised the direct capture of resources and bullion. Illegal trade, by contrast, was a means of creating wealth from trading activities, or in other words, human labours. Therefore, the divergence between support for piracy and support for smuggling in the colonies did indeed echo divergences in debates over issues of political economy, such as mercantilism, and even partisan debates over the nature of empire.<sup>180</sup> Steve Pincus argued for the disagreements between Whigs and Tories in relation to the doctrine of mercantilism. For Pincus, Whigs were convinced that property and worldwide economic growth resulted from human endeavour and

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<sup>180</sup> Steve Pincus, 'Rethinking Mercantilism: Political Economy, the British Empire, and the Atlantic World in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *WMQ*, 69 (2012); Trevor Burnard, 'Making a Whig Empire Work: Transatlantic Politics and the Imperial Economy in Britain and British America', *WMQ*, 69 (2012); Philip J. Stern and Carl Wennerlind (eds.), *Mercantilism Reimagined: Political Economy in Early Modern Britain and Its Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).



were potentially infinite. Therefore, they supported the rapid expansion of the slave trade and plantation commerce. Tories, by contrast, favoured territorial imperialism and believed commercial exchange was a zero-sum game based on landed wealth; this echoed the ideology of mercantilism, which emphasised the limits to the growth of wealth, trade, land, markets, and raw materials.<sup>181</sup> In Jamaica, the disputes over piracy and illegal trade echoed Pincus' analysis, with the supporters of trade being regarded as Whig and that of piracy being regarded as Tory, as will be discussed later.<sup>182</sup> Jonathan Barth, on the other side, claimed for the consensus of mercantilism during the seventeenth and eighteenth century, although he also agreed that there were diversities created by the consensus. Barth has divided mercantilists into two categories: one believed that the reexport sector to be the most profitable branch of overseas commerce and supported state-protected monopolistic ventures, and the other highlighted the importance of state-protected manufacturing, banking, capital, and labour; the former found a natural home in the Tory party and the latter linked closely with the Whig party.<sup>183</sup>

## **Ideology, Identity and Constitutional Tensions**

Together with the growing connection between the metropole and the periphery there was an increased desire on the part of the crown and parliament to enhance control of colonies, and not only in the economic sphere. There was also an increase in colonial assemblies' demands for independence, which caused enduring constitutional tensions in the Caribbean colonies, together with disputes and scandals against governors. The maintenance of military forces in the colonies triggered constitutional conflicts and worries about tyranny. In addition, the Caribbean colonies were deeply

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<sup>181</sup> Pincus, 'Rethinking Mercantilism', p. 15.

<sup>182</sup> See chapter 4, p. 183.

<sup>183</sup> Jonathan Barth, 'Reconstructing Mercantilism: Consensus and Conflict in British Imperial Economy in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *WMQ*, 73 (2016), pp. 273-74.

influenced by domestic political cultures, such as partisan spirits and country sympathy.

Constitutional tensions between the colonies and the mother country were manifest in many facets of British imperial policies and colonial politics. For England, colonial welfare was subordinate to that of the mother country, and whether colonial people lived under the protection of common law and enjoyed the same privileges as inhabitants at home were matters of doubt. The colonists, however, insisted on two things, namely, their natural-born English identity and liberty, and their allegiance to the constitution and to representative government. Based on these two claims, colonial assemblies disputed with the governor about their authority. The claimed authority of assemblies was usually regarded by governors as an encroachment, while the assemblies presented their claims as necessary for the protection of the people from arbitrary government.

### Subordination of the Colonies and Centralised Control from Home

The ideological origins of the long-lasting constitutional debates in American and West Indian colonies can be traced back to the establishment of the colonies. The English crown argued that the colonial societies were subordinate to England, that the royal prerogative overrode settlers' rights, and that settlers had no inherent claim to English law or representative institutions but enjoyed them only at the pleasure of the crown.<sup>184</sup>

For English writers in the early modern period, the concepts of *colony* and *colonial* were associated with subjection and inferiority.<sup>185</sup> Charles Davenant's *On the Plantation Trade* of 1696 reflected the contemporary opinion of observers about the colonies. Davenant argued that the colonies 'work for' the mother country by

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<sup>184</sup> Yirush, *Settlers, Liberty and Empire*, p. 16.

<sup>185</sup> Jack P. Greene, *Creating the British Atlantic: Essays on Transplantation, Adaptation, and Continuity* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013), p. 84.

creating ‘a spring of wealth to this country’.<sup>186</sup> To avoid colonies growing too strong and turning against the mother country, Davenant urged the government to ‘keep a strict eye’ on whatever achievements the colonies made, in particular their naval strength, and ensure they were kept dependent on the mother country. For Davenant, a colony was a subordinate economic enterprise in the service of the metropole and should be under the control of the central authority.

In relation to the issue of the inferiority of the colonies, the crown argued that their governance was not limited by common law but was the absolute prerogative of the king. The discussion regarding whether the colonies were bound by England’s laws endured among observers and jurists for many years from the early sixteenth century, and the related constitutional rivalries have been much studied.<sup>187</sup> Edward Coke argued that English common laws had no authority in the area outside the homeland.<sup>188</sup> The later jurist Sir Matthew Hale expanded on this notion that English laws ‘are settled according to the king’s pleasure’ in the colonies.<sup>189</sup> With the passage of time, these formulations became connected with a theory that distinguished between inhabited and conquered territories, and which affected domestic views of the colonies over a long period. As William Blackstone summarised it in the 1760s, if a new territory was uninhabited by English subjects, English laws should be enforced, while conquered or ceded countries could retain their ancient laws until the king determined to alter them. For Blackstone, the West Indian colonies belonged to the latter category, and were therefore not bound by English common law.<sup>190</sup> This

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<sup>186</sup> Charles Whitworth (ed.), *The Political and Commercial Works of that Celebrated Writer Charles D’avenant, LL.D. Relating to the Trade and Revenue of England, the Plantation Trade, the East-India Trade, and African Trade* (5 vols, London: R. Horsfield and others, 1771), II, p. 8.

<sup>187</sup> David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Lauren Benton and Lisa Ford, *Rage for Order: The British Empire and the Origins of International Law, 1800–1850* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016); Lauren Benton and Richard J. Ross (eds), *Legal Pluralism and Empires, 1500–1850* (New York: New York University Press, 2013); MacMillan, ‘Imperial Constitutions’.

<sup>188</sup> Daniel J. Hulsebosch, ‘The Ancient Constitution and the Expanding Empire: Sir Edward Coke’s British Jurisprudence’, *Law and History Review*, 21 (2003), p. 439.

<sup>189</sup> D. E. C. Yale (ed.), *Sir Matthew Hale’s The Prerogatives of the King* (London: Selden Society, 1976), pp. 42–43, cited in MacMillan, ‘Imperial Constitutions’, p. 74.

<sup>190</sup> Yirush, *Settlers, Liberty and Empire*, pp. 45–47.

viewpoint was endorsed by those who supported the crown's exercise of tighter control over colonial affairs, and who therefore regarded both North American and Caribbean colonies as conquered lands. For example, in supporting the crown's unsuccessful attempt to enforce Poynings' Law in Jamaica, the attorney general William Jones contended that the king was the 'absolute sovereign' in Jamaica and the inhabitants were not bound by the laws of England, but 'by the mere grace and grant of the king'.<sup>191</sup>

As well as asserting the inferior status of colonies in the legal sphere, observers in the homeland also tended to distinguish colonial people from the inhabitants of the mother country. Some suggested that colonists were not full Britons but, in Benjamin Franklin's words, 'subjects of subjects'.<sup>192</sup> There was also a widespread assumption in Britain that many colonists, especially those in the Caribbean, were mere 'layabouts'.<sup>193</sup> Caribbean settlers were adversely judged for their luxurious lifestyles, and the immoral character of colonial inhabitants was a widely discussed topic in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. History books presented analyses of the character of Caribbean inhabitants. The slightly later *New History of Jamaica*, for example, asserted the insensibility of the colonial inhabitants to the miseries of negro slaves.<sup>194</sup> Edward Long issued a rebuttal, maintaining that colonists had not degenerated in tropical climates, and stating that 'the planters of this island have been very unjustly stigmatized with an accusation of treating their Negroes with barbarity'.<sup>195</sup> In Long's view, colonial people were 'in general sensible, of quick apprehension, brave, good-natured', and 'unsuspicious lovers of freedom'. However, he also admitted that, due to lives of idleness and luxury, the colonists were 'too much

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<sup>191</sup> Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>192</sup> Benjamin Franklin to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, Jan. 1768, in Verner W. Crane (ed.), *Benjamin Franklin's Letters to the Press, 1758–1775* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1950), p. 111, cited in Greene, *Creating the British Atlantic*, p. 271.

<sup>193</sup> Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World*, p. 242.

<sup>194</sup> Charles Leslie, *A New History of Jamaica* (London, 1740), cited in Wylie Sypher, 'The West-Indian as a "Character" in the Eighteenth Century', *Studies in Philology*, 36 (1939), pp. 505–07.

<sup>195</sup> Long, *History of Jamaica*, II, p. 267.

addicted to expensive living, costly entertainments, dress, and equipage'.<sup>196</sup> Even the governors appointed to the West Indies tended to live more luxurious lives than their continental counterparts. For example, when Governor Joseph Dudley travelled to Massachusetts in 1702, he only had five servants accompanying him, whereas the Earl of Inchiquin was allowed to take up to seventy-five servants to Jamaica when he assumed office in 1690; while Inchiquin's predecessor, the infamous Duke of Albemarle, had received free transportation for no less than one hundred servants.<sup>197</sup>

The theory of colonial subordination, combined with the metropole's growing awareness of the economic and political importance of colonies, influenced domestic policies. The English crown made many efforts to enhance its control over the colonies in both constitutional and financial spheres, for example by demanding that governors should secure more money bills and by seeking to turn more colonies into royal ones. These tasks were accomplished with the development of domestic departments, the function of which was to supervise colonial trade, legislation, and administration, such as the Council for Foreign Plantations in 1670, the Lords of Trade in 1675, and the Board of Trade in 1696.<sup>198</sup> During this period, the mother country took some further steps to enhance centralised control from home, including an assault on the legislative power of Virginian and Jamaican assemblies involving an attempt to enforce Poynings' Law, and the consolidation of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Plymouth, and New Hampshire into a new entity named the Dominion of New England.<sup>199</sup> In addition, the royal governors were placed under tighter control through demands that they supply more frequent reports and through the issuing to them of more detailed and rigid directions.<sup>200</sup> More importantly, domestic departments, in particular the Board of Trade, played the role of umpire in

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid., pp. 262-65.

<sup>197</sup> Labaree, *Royal Government in America*, p. 83.

<sup>198</sup> MacMillan, 'Imperial Constitutions', p. 82; Steele, *Politics of Colonial Policy*, p. 5. Regarding the history of commissions and committees for colonial affairs established by the early Stuart crown, see also MacMillan, *Atlantic Imperial Constitution*, pp. 143-67.

<sup>199</sup> Yirush, *Settlers, Liberty and Empire*, p. 64.

<sup>200</sup> Greene, *Creating the British Atlantic*, pp. 128-29.

colonial political disputes. It was common to see colonial politicians bringing accusations against their enemies, in particular against governors, before the Board of Trade. Colonial politicians also frequently defended their reputations by presenting evidence and testimonies in front of the Board. This opened an avenue for domestic authorities to monitor colonial affairs, although sometimes they lacked the means to verify information impartially.

In order to place more colonies under the control of the crown, officials in London repeatedly proposed to parliament the passage of a bill revoking the charters of private colonies in America in order that they should become royal colonies.<sup>201</sup> In 1700, the Board of Trade urged parliament to pass a resumption bill when it presented its work report, and one year later, William Blathwayt presented the Board's complaints about private colonies to the Commons again, accusing them of violating trade acts and arrogating to themselves the power to make laws contrary to the laws of England. The Board tried to introduce a resumption bill in 1701 and 1702, but failed. One reason was that their proposals encountered bitter opposition from the principal proprietors, including William Penn and his family for Pennsylvania, the Earl of Bath for the Carolinas, and Sir Henry Ashurst for Connecticut. They claimed their rights of property, appealed to the inviolability of contracts, made reference to the heavy financial losses involved during the period of settlement, and were effective in influencing the decision of the peers.<sup>202</sup> Yet the efforts of the Board were not without rewards. Due to domestic policies, the influence of the royal charter companies in American colonies faded at the end of the seventeenth century. The Royal African Company's trading monopoly was revoked by parliament in 1698, and the Hudson's Bay Company failed to get the parliamentary charter it sought.<sup>203</sup> Proprietary authority was also declining: William Penn, proprietor of Pennsylvania, and Cecilius

<sup>201</sup> Steele, *Politics of Colonial Policy*, pp. 62–65; Yirush, *Settlers, Liberty and Empire*, pp. 91–96.

<sup>202</sup> Charles M. Andrews, *The Colonial Period of American History: England's Commercial and Colonial Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938), pp. 382–84.

<sup>203</sup> Ian K. Steele, 'The Anointed, the Appointed, and the Elected: Governance of the British Empire, 1689–1784', in Marshall (ed.), *The Eighteenth Century*, pp. 106–07.

Calvert, proprietor of Maryland, were both deemed unsuitable to command colonies at war with France. Moreover, after the dissolution of the Dominion of New England in 1689, a royal governor was appointed to Massachusetts in 1691.<sup>204</sup>

### Claims from the Periphery: English Identity and Liberty

Although the metropole sought to establish theoretical bases for the subjection of the colonies, government policies were in practice not consistent with these theories. Due to the lack of funding, the early stages of colonisation were mainly accomplished by private enterprise for economic interests, or were undertaken for religious reasons with limited support from the government. Scholars have taken note of the role which private actors played in the process of colonisation. For example, Andrew Phillips and J. C. Sharman explore the rise, spread, and decline of the imperial trading companies that undertook the task of extending the overseas imperial presence during the early modern time. These hybrid state companies, the two authors argue, were combinations of profit-seeking corporation and sovereign instrument.<sup>205</sup> Granted sovereign prerogatives, the companies were devoted to the pursuit of profit through trade conducted by and answerable to private individuals.<sup>206</sup> Charters from the crown granted these companies the authority to govern substantial domains, including rights to conduct diplomacy, wage war and make peace, and administer civil and criminal justice. Meanwhile, the companies were also profit-motivated entities which enjoyed authorised monopolies over trade in particular commodities.<sup>207</sup> For Phillips and Sharman, these companies were the vanguard of the crown's overseas ventures, and played a vital role in the formation of the British empire.

This practice of delegating responsibilities for conquering and administering new

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>205</sup> Andrew Phillips and J. C. Sharman, *Outsourcing Empire: How Company-States Made the Modern World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020), p. 1.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

territories was not restricted to monarchs and trading companies. In fact, most of the English colonies in America were settled as the result of private initiatives with different degrees of sovereignty delegation, and the colonising process could therefore also be described as a process of individual self-empowerment.<sup>208</sup> The proprietary colonies, such as Maryland, Carolina, and Pennsylvania, enjoyed a devolved sovereignty, similar to that of the trading companies. Proprietors enjoyed quasi-sovereign status over their colonies and were able to develop colonial constitutions according to their charters and particular needs.<sup>209</sup> Even where royal colonies were governed by the representatives of the monarch, sovereignty was to some extent divided. In royal colonies, the governors appointed by the crown were also motivated by the private pursuit of economic interests or political ambitions, and they enjoyed well-extended sovereignties like that of the monarch at home. Sometimes a governor even exercised a wider authority than the monarch in the sphere of taxation, as previously discussed.

Examining legal pluralism in early modern empires, Paul Halliday claims that ‘the exercise of sovereignty was extended by dividing it’.<sup>210</sup> This opinion is shared by Richard Ross and Philip Stern, who argue that ‘the state was so dependent on provincial magnates, local notables, and corporations that its very operation assumed pluralism and, in certain ways, the expansion of its ambitions further entrenched pluralism’.<sup>211</sup> For English monarchs, granting charters or patents to proprietors and corporations was a favoured means to expand their overseas enterprises at little cost. In addition, due to limited funds, coercive ability and administrative capacity, it was common for private groups to undertake the tasks of colonisation and administration on behalf of the crown in exchange for rights and authorities granted by the king as a

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<sup>208</sup> Greene, *Creating the British Atlantic*, pp. 87-88.

<sup>209</sup> Vicki Hsueh, *Hybrid Constitutions: Challenging Legacies of Law, Privilege, and Culture in Colonial America* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

<sup>210</sup> Paul D. Halliday, ‘Laws’ Histories: Pluralisms, Pluralities, Diversity’, in Benton and Ross (eds), *Legal Pluralism*, p. 269.

<sup>211</sup> Richard J. Ross and Philip J. Stern, ‘Reconstructing Early Modern Notions of Legal Pluralism’, in Benton and Ross (eds), *Legal Pluralism*, p. 112.



reward.<sup>212</sup> The cost to the crown of overseas ventures that relied on private efforts was the relinquishment of certain rights to govern the colonies.

Colonists had grounds for maintaining that since they had borne the costs and dangers of overseas travel, and had benefited the metropole by expanding its overseas presence, the king in return had a responsibility to guarantee equal rights and privileges to them on a par with those enjoyed by their counterparts at home, as long as they remained in allegiance to him.<sup>213</sup> Historians have referred in this context to ‘the theory of reciprocal sovereignty’.<sup>214</sup> This originated with the theories of jurists in the early 1600s, who argued that in return for their allegiance to the crown, those living in the colonies possessed basic rights to life, liberty, and property.<sup>215</sup> Jack Greene maintains that this effectively amounted to a contract between the crown and colonists.<sup>216</sup> He argues that for the colonists, the metropolitan–colonial relationship was seen to be based on this contract between colonists and the crown, but that there was a subsequent attempt by England to alter the contractual arrangement by claiming the unlimited authority of the crown and the superiority of domestic welfare, and that this led to the constitutional conflict between centre and periphery.<sup>217</sup>

Colonial inhabitants undoubtedly retained their conviction of their own English identity and their profound allegiance to a tradition of liberty. As Greene recounts, one of the reasons that the colonial elites acknowledged the metropolitan authority was because it positioned them within a larger system of national identity and confirmed their Englishness.<sup>218</sup> While the British crown tended to regard the Caribbean

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<sup>212</sup> Lauren Benton and Richard J. Ross, ‘Empire and Legal Pluralism’, in Benton and Ross (eds), *Legal Pluralism*, p. 10.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>214</sup> Lauren Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400–1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Benton and Ross (eds), *Legal Pluralism*; Lauren Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>215</sup> MacMillan, ‘Imperial Constitutions’, pp. 78–79.

<sup>216</sup> For example, Greene, *Creating the British Atlantic*, pp. 168–70. Other scholars have also explored the contractual relationship between the crown and colonists. See, for example, Yirush, *Settlers, Liberty, and Empire*, p. 17.

<sup>217</sup> Greene, *Negotiated Authorities*, pp. 46–47, 56–59.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

settlements in the same light as its conquest of the kingdom of Ireland, the colonists were adamant that they only settled 'vacant' lands and should therefore enjoy the same rights and privileges as proprietors at home.<sup>219</sup>

For the colonists, the pursuit of liberty became the emblem of their English identity, and in this perception they were supported both by domestic jurists and by colonial thinkers. Drawing on Magna Carta and the ancient constitution, there was a belief that it was the tradition of liberty, and a legal system that placed restraints upon the crown, that distinguished the English from others, including those living under other monarchies and those in uncivilised territories.<sup>220</sup> According to the theories of Coke and Hale, the colonists retained their English liberties and other fundamental rights guaranteed by natural law if they continued their allegiance to the English crown. In other words, even though the colonies were not bound by common laws, the king's prerogative was not unlimited there; this theoretical position became the basis on which colonists claimed their privileges. As early as 1687, William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania, published a pamphlet entitled *The Excellent Priviledge of Liberty and Property Being the Birth-Right of the Free-born Subjects of England*, which sought to defend the 'unparalell'd Privilege of Liberty and Property' of the colonists, reminding planters and inhabitants 'not to give away anything of Liberty and Property that at present they do, (or of right as Loyal English Subjects, ought to) enjoy'.<sup>221</sup>

### Defending Constitution and Independence: The Constitutional Role of the Assembly

The ideological disagreements between the mother country and colonies were closely linked with their political practices. Colonists developed their own political institutions to guarantee the liberty and privileges they claimed. This brought disputes

<sup>219</sup> Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World*, p. 136.

<sup>220</sup> Greene, *Creating the British Atlantic*, p. 254.

<sup>221</sup> William Penn, *The Excellent Priviledge of Liberty and Property being the Birth-Right of the Free-Born Subjects of England* (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1687).

from the ideological dimension into the sphere of political practice, where they usually became manifest as tensions between governors and assemblies related to the limits of their respective authorities.

It was generally agreed that England's freedom was directly attributable to its constitution, which was better than any other organisation of governmental power. Its mixed government consisted of an element of monarchy in the crown, an element of aristocracy in the House of Lords, and an element of democracy in the House of Commons.<sup>222</sup> Therefore, a key strategy used by colonists to defend their British identity consisted in maintaining their constancy with the motherland – not only in their tendency to replicate domestic norms, customs, and fashions, but also in their allegiance to its constitution and their imitation of the metropolitan framework of government, in particular the establishment of a tripartite colonial administration in which the council and assembly acted as the upper and lower houses respectively, and the governor served as the representative of the king.<sup>223</sup>

The English constitution was based on some general rules: a balance between humans' self-interest and rational action; the maintenance of people's freedom in the face of threats posed by human beings' own frailties; effective checks on the power of government; and the principle that private interests ought not to be set in competition with the public good.<sup>224</sup> All these were reflected in colonial practice and the inhabitants' constitutional conflicts with governors. For example, as previously mentioned, a common accusation against governors was that they used their public authority to pursue private interests, whether this was a matter of receiving presents, attacking private enemies, or participating in piracy or illegal trade. It was also

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<sup>222</sup> Bailyn, *Origins of American Politics*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>223</sup> Representative forms of government came to British America within a few years of settlement. The Virginia assembly was first summoned in 1619, and the Bermuda assembly was summoned the following year. These institutions were models for the newer colonies. By 1640 eight assemblies had been established in the colonies. See Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World*, pp. 134-35, 243.

<sup>224</sup> Robert M. Weir, "'The Harmony We Were Famous For': An Interpretation of Pre-Revolutionary South Carolina Politics", *WMQ*, 26 (1969), pp. 474-75.

common for colonial assemblies to require the right to supervise public funds and government expenditure, and this issue of accountability led to disputes between governors and inhabitants.

Balance was not easy to achieve. Throughout the political history of England and her colonies there were frequent complaints about encroachments on their authority both from the executive and from the legislature. In the homeland, when the crown dominated politics, having the capacity to influence parliament and to control revenue and the army, people worried about its overwhelming privileges and the danger of arbitrary government; but when sovereignty was shifted to parliament, people became concerned about the possibility of parliament becoming a new tyranny. In the colonies, the blurred line between the authorities of the governor and the assembly created the potential for such encroachment and triggered constitutional scandals. As Governor Lowther of Barbados complained in 1712, ‘they have extorted so many powers from my predecessors, that there is now hardly enough left to keep the peace, much less to maintain the decent respect and regard that is due to the Queen’s servant’.<sup>225</sup>

Disagreements about the constitutional role of colonial assemblies and the origins of their authority lay behind disputes about encroachment. There was a fundamental tension between the domestic view that England’s executive and legal authorities stood above the colonial assemblies, and the latter’s claims to enjoy all the privileges of the House of Commons.<sup>226</sup> Disputes about the role of the assemblies persisted both at home and in the West Indian colonies for more than a century.<sup>227</sup> When considering the reasons for the West Indian colonies’ choosing to stay loyal during the American Revolution, Andrew O’Shaughnessy states that, in contrast to the mainland colonies, the West Indies ‘specifically denied any claims to their assemblies’

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<sup>225</sup> Greene, *Negotiated Authorities*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>226</sup> Charles M. Andrews, *Colonial Background of the American Revolution: Four Essays in American Colonial History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931).

<sup>227</sup> Natalie A. Zacek, *Settler Society in the English Leeward Islands, 1670–1776* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 235-43.

equality with Parliament': he gives the example of Nicholas Bourke of Jamaica, who considered the power of the assembly was 'subordinate to that of a British legislature'.<sup>228</sup> However, referring to the case of Jamaica, we will see that in the early eighteenth century, the assembly was still directly comparing itself to the House of Commons. As Governor Sir William Beeston wrote in 1701, the members of the Jamaican assembly believed 'that what a House of Commons could do in England, they could do here'.<sup>229</sup> Similar reports came from Lowther in Barbados.<sup>230</sup>

Another question to consider is the origins of assemblies' authority. During the American Revolution, colonists opposed parliament's authority on taxation, claiming that the colonies owed their origin to the authority of the crown in the seventeenth century and were still subject to that authority and not to parliament.<sup>231</sup> John Phillip Reid argues that there were in fact 'two constitutions' within the dominions of the British monarchs. One applied to Britain and embodied the sovereignty of the king-in-parliament; the other pertained to the remaining dependencies and concerned the crown alone.<sup>232</sup> This argument has been challenged by Ian Steele, however. He argues that there were many statutes passed by parliament between 1660 and 1753. In his view, the Revolution of 1688 established the sovereignty of the king-in-parliament in all parts of the empire.<sup>233</sup> Moreover, if we look at the colonial constitutional history of the earlier eighteenth century, we find that even the king's authority was challenged in the colonies. In the view of the colonists, their assemblies were not a grant from the crown; rather, their inherited English right and many decades of customary practice entitled them to establish their own representative governments.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> O'Shaughnessy, *Empire Divided*, p. 130.

<sup>229</sup> *CSPC, Vol 19, 1701*, pp. 415-59, Gov. Sir William Beeston to the CTP, 19 Aug. 1701 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol19/pp415-459>].

<sup>230</sup> Greene, *Negotiated Authorities*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>231</sup> W. A. Speck, 'Britain and the Atlantic World', in H. T. Dickinson (ed.), *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), p. 455.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 456.

<sup>234</sup> Greene, 'Liberty and Slavery', p. 55.

Based on their conception of their English identity and their legitimate authority, assemblies' challenge to the monarch and to governors – the representatives of the crown – emulated the Whigs' challenge to the monarch at home, and was connected to the supposition that the assembly's primary function was to protect people from arbitrary rule.<sup>235</sup> Colonial assemblies passed a series of bills to lay claim to the same rights as those Englishmen who had remained in the homeland. These included the Bill of Privilege passed by Jamaica's assembly in 1677 and the Charter of Liberties passed by the New York assembly in 1683, and subsequently by the legislatures of Virginia, New York, Massachusetts, South Carolina, and Maryland.<sup>236</sup> Extension of royal authority was challenged by both private and royal colonies. For example, Connecticut and Rhode Island opposed the Board's attempt to have one captain general for all of the northern colonies, and the Crown's claim to review and disallow colonial laws was also the subject of much dispute.<sup>237</sup> It was also common for assemblies to use control of the purse strings, or to encroach on the powers assigned to the governor and council. In Jamaica, governors struggled to pass money bills to maintain the military expenditure, and in their bargaining with the assembly, the latter attempted to deny the council's authority to amend money bills and to appoint its own agents in England, and claimed that it itself had the right to adjourn without the governor's leave. In the Leewards, the assembly sought to achieve a legislative veto for itself when bargaining over revenue with the governor.

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<sup>235</sup> Jack P. Greene, 'Political Mimesis: A Consideration of the Historical and Cultural Roots of Legislative Behavior in the British Colonies in the Eighteenth Century', *The American Historical Review*, 75 (1969), p. 347.

<sup>236</sup> Greene, *Negotiated Authorities*, p. 60.

<sup>237</sup> Oliver Morton Dickerson, *American Colonial Government, 1696–1765: A Study of the British Board of Trade in its Relation to the American Colonies, Political, Industrial, Administrative* (Cleveland, OH: Arthur H. Clark), pp. 209–11, cited in Yirush, *Settlers, Liberty and Empire*, p. 90.

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## Case Studies in the Caribbean Colonies

This thesis focuses on governance issues, and the public records available in the digitalised *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies* are therefore my principal source. This collection contains abundant and wide-ranging official documents related to England's governance and activities in the Caribbean colonies, including the journal of the Board of Trade, memorials of colonial assemblies and councils, correspondence between domestic institutions and colonial politicians, and commissions and instructions from the metropole. In addition to the colonial state paper collection, this thesis also uses other official materials including the *Treasury Books* and the *Journal of the Board of Trade and Plantations*. The former provides information about colonial trade and revenue issues, and the latter is of value when examining the role of the domestic departments in colonial affairs and the interactions between the centre and periphery. These official materials enable the thesis to explore different facets of colonial politics. They also offer abundant information about England's colonial policies, which helps one to trace the initial stage of the development of the British empire. In addition, the thesis also relies on pamphlets and books written by contemporary writers, as supplementary sources and to provide comparative perspectives.

For the sake of clarity of analysis, this thesis combines case studies of several Caribbean islands with thematic analysis. Chapter 2 focuses on factional conflicts and financial disorders among the white community in Barbados. After the establishment of sugar plantations, Barbados rapidly became the wealthiest colony in the West Indies, and the Barbadian planters became the wealthiest men in English America. However, this increasing wealth was accompanied by inefficient and disordered financial arrangements. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, much of the British West Indies, including Barbados, suffered from a scarcity of coin. Moreover, the planters struggled with debt problems due to the fragile public finances. To solve these problems, the Barbadian assembly passed the Paper Act 1706 with the support

of Governor Bevil Granville; this created a land bank by issuing bills of credit to the amount of a quarter of the value of people's estates. However, passage of the act quickly led to the development of contention and scandal.

The Barbados Paper Act was plainly designed to reduce private indebtedness by means of paper money. And, given the overlap between those people who benefited from the act and those who actively promoted it, this financial issue soon became a political one. Factions which had both public and private links coalesced into a single political-financial coalition, which fought for the common interests of its members. Some planters were so deeply involved in the passing of the act that their mercantile enemies claimed that they had been bribed and were using their public authority to pay private debts. This group of planters included more than half of the councillors and some assemblymen. The Act gave rise to a series of debates in the colony and to lobby wars conducted before the Board of Trade. Agents and allies of planters and merchants defended their respective interests and attacked the misconduct of their enemies before the Board. The case of Paper Act in Barbados also illustrates the multiple and petty causes of factional politics, such as political ambition, patronage, kinship, and personal rivalry, and we can also see how factions fluctuated, dividing and reuniting, or cooperating with opposing factions to promote policies in which they had a common interest.

Moving on from consideration of the financial problems of Barbados in chapter 2, chapter 3 explores the case of Governor Daniel Parke in the Leeward Islands. While the discussion of Barbados presents a pattern of verbal and legal contentions within colonial society, chapter 3 considers the murder of Governor Parke as an unprecedented instance of inhabitants' retaliating with violence when they became convinced that their fears of being enslaved had been realised. Like those of his Caribbean counterparts, Parke's government was afflicted by factional disputes, constitutional tensions, and issues related to smuggling. Soon after Parke took office, he became involved in quarrels with his predecessor, Christopher Codrington the



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Younger, over the issue of land concentration. He also attempted to regulate the corrupted judicial system, which was under the control of key figures who were closely related and who protected each other. Another factor that contributed to his isolation in the colony was that he took robust measures against illegal trade, and this threatened numerous interests.

Parke's flouting of established norms of conduct and his confrontational approach to governance, threatened many vested interests of the planters and merchants who dominated every aspect of the society. This resulted in resentment from different parties, especially as Parke was not without flaws himself. Enemies of Parke, including members of the assembly, freeholders, and merchants of Antigua, complained of Parke's tyranny, and compiled twenty-two articles concerning his abuse of power, arbitrary conduct and maladministration.<sup>238</sup> During this period, Parke struggled in constitutional contentions with the Antiguan assembly regarding revenue collection and the latter's authority to appoint their own agent in England. Parke gained for himself the support of the soldiers of a regiment by issuing them with brevets, and did not hesitate to mobilise them when he thought necessary, for example, in the case of a contention with the assembly in the council chamber. This was interpreted by the colonists as a sign that they might lose their freedom to tyranny, and it made Parke the enemy of the whole colony, rather than merely of some faction members. It proved to be the final straw that caused conflict between the governor and the inhabitants to escalate into a violent rebellion. Parke was ultimately murdered during a riot at his house. After Parke's death, some of his friends and allies tried to appeal for justice, but in vain: no one in the Leewards was punished for his murder. Parke's death attracted some attention in both domestic and colonial newspapers, but this was very limited.

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<sup>238</sup> *CSPC, Vol 24, 1708–1709*, pp. 254–69, Order of Queen in Council, 31 Mar. 1709, [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp254-269>].

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Chapter 4 examines the constitutional disputes in Jamaica during the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century, and explores how white elites used ostensible concern for public welfare to defend their private interests. While Granville and Crowe were enduring financial problems and factional politics in Barbados, the Jamaican governors William Beeston and Thomas Handasyd were struggling with the assembly in their attempts to pass an act to raise revenue for provisions for the army, and were engaged in constitutional conflicts triggered by the situation. The opposition faction they confronted was also bonded by private interests in illegal colonial trade. The issue of quartering for soldiers, which underpinned the tax disputes, had been a bone of contention between the colonies and the mother country for many years, and had been used by the assembly as a bargaining chip for a long time.

When Archibald Hamilton took office, the constitutional tensions became sharper, and were accompanied by scandalous accusations against the governor. An address against Hamilton was sent to the king by the assembly, without awaiting the cooperation of the governor and council. Challenges from colonial assemblies to the authority of the governor brought about controversies within the colonies as well as conflicts with the mother country. Colonial people's pursuit of independence was regarded as an encroachment on the crown's prerogative. Accordingly, the Board of Trade backed Hamilton and determined that the charges of the assembly were transparently malicious. However, the situation underwent a dramatic change in May 1716 when James Stanhope, the secretary of state for the Southern Department, brought forward a bundle of complaints against the governor concerning his piracy against the Spaniards. Hamilton admitted that he had had a share in private activities but claimed that these activities were conducted to secure Jamaican trade. Although Hamilton provided some evidence to support his claims, the Board of Trade decided to arrest him, bringing his career in Jamaica to an end.

These conflicts between the governor and the assembly permit a consideration of factional politics in Jamaica. The white community was divided by trading and

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piratical interests which underlay the constitutional tensions, with some planters skilfully using the language of the public interest to defend their own private interests. Later, the colony was dominated by the ‘Creolean party’ which was made up of people who were Jamaican natives and who sought to make themselves independent of the motherland’s control. Although influenced by self-seeking motivations, the ‘Creolean party’ also aimed at protecting inhabitants’ liberty, and at claiming for the privileges enjoyed by their domestic counterparts. Their disputes with Hamilton about the revenue issues, together with constitutional tensions, eventually caused his recall in 1716.

All in all, as summarised in chapter 5, conflicts and scandals were general features of Caribbean society, triggered by multiple factors at different levels, including institutional problems, competing interests, ideological disputes and complex interpersonal networks. Both public and private issues played significant roles in the development of Caribbean politics. By combining case studies with thematic analysis, this thesis will seek to understand the governance issues within the ruling hierarchy and the social orders established in the colonies.

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## **Chapter 2: Faction, Scandal, and the 1706 Paper Act of Barbados**

This chapter examines the restless factional politics of colonial Barbados through the lenses of planter–merchant power dynamics and colonial financial disorder. It will consider in depth the origins and features of political factions in the domestic and colonial contexts, how factions co-operated or competed with one another, the lobbying war and accompanying accusations and scandals brought to the Board of Trade, and the impact of long-lasting factional strife on colonial governments.

In the early modern period, factional conflicts occurred across the length and breadth of the Caribbean and were common triggers of political scandals. The settlement of merchants and planters in the colonies led within a few decades to the development of sophisticated interest networks; these brought tensions and disorders but also promoted the perfection of institutional frameworks and social rules.<sup>1</sup> Due to conflicting interests and competition in politics, planters and merchants became the two main bases of colonial factions. During the governorships of Bevil Granville (1702–1706) and Mitford Crowe (1707–1710), the focal points of this chapter, the two factions disputed with each other over the issues of treasurer appointment and debt payment, triggering accusations of misuse of power against the two governors. Granville successfully defended himself but died on his way home, and Crowe was recalled after serving for only two years.

### **Definition and Historiography of Political Faction**

Before starting to discuss faction in the colonial sphere, it is important to clarify what

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<sup>1</sup> Nuala Zahedieh, *The Capital and the Colonies: London and the Atlantic Economy, 1660–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 46–47.

people refer to when they employ the notion of party and faction. There has been a paucity of interest in the history of factions in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century, when party politics became predominant. In early modern political discourse, party and faction were usually employed in synonymous ways, although there were also discussions about the differences between them, as will be discussed further. The rise of Whigs and Tories seemed to further distinguish party and faction in politics. Compared with interest-oriented factions and personal networks, the formation of Whig and Tory party politics was the result of complex and profound transformations in society, with both parties characterised by more systematic organisations and persistent political allegiance. This provided a sense of identity that made party a more solid group than faction.<sup>2</sup>

The terms Whig and Tory had been commonly used since the Exclusion Crisis between 1679 and 1681, but the roots of party strife, as maintained by Tim Harris, could be traced back to the political and religious struggles after the Restoration.<sup>3</sup> The divisions between Whig and Tory were revealed in both domestic and diplomatic issues; for example, religious sympathy with dissenters, foreign policies towards other European states, the scale of continental warfare, expansion of overseas trade, and economic tensions between landed and monied interests. From these, historians have developed abundant research about the formation and consequences of party politics, development of party ideologies, impact of party propagation and its relation to popular politics, and how party divisions influenced political economies and empire building.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> On the comparisons between party and faction, see Pasi Ihalainen, *The Discourse on the Political Pluralism in Early Eighteenth-century England: A Conceptual Study with Special Reference to Terminology of Religious Origin* (Finnish Literature Society, 2000), pp. 195-210. When we talk about party, we usually refer to Whig and Tory, but there were other sorts of party, such as 'country party' and 'court party', and the characters of the latter two were not completely in accordance with the characters of Whig and Tory parties.

<sup>3</sup> Tim Harris, *Politics under the Later Stuarts: Party Conflict in a Divided Society 1660–1715* (London: Routledge, 1993).

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Geoffrey Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne* (London: Macmillan, 1967); Gary Stuart De Krey, *A Fractured Society: The Politics of London in the First Age of Party, 1688–1715* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985); Clyve Jones (ed.), *Britain in the First Age*

For all the importance of party politics, faction was also an important phenomenon, not least to contemporaries, such as Henry St John Bolingbroke. Bolingbroke's journal, the *Craftsman*, defined faction as 'a Set of Men arm'd with Power, and acting upon no one Principle of Party, or any Notion of Publick Good, but to preserve and share the Spoils amongst Themselves, as their only Cement'.<sup>5</sup> Bolingbroke regarded party as a 'political evil', and faction as 'the worst of all parties', for it struggled for power instead of principle, while Hume was convinced in his *History of England* that moderate faction could be beneficial.<sup>6</sup> Hume examined the causes, nature, and remedy for faction. In 'Of Parties in General', he distinguished between 'personal' factions, founded on personal friendship or resentment, and 'real' factions, founded on commonality of sentiment or interest. And he further subdivides 'real' factions into rooted in *interest*, *principle*, and *affection*.<sup>7</sup>

Historians working on courts in the early modern period have also advanced conceptions of faction. Ralph W. Nicholas emphasises personal connections and competition for power, defining faction as 'a political group whose members are bound to a leader by a variety of personal, informal ties and which vies for power with other, similar groups'.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Simon Adams considers faction as closely connected to personal loyalty, referring to it as 'the dark side of the system of personal loyalties and dependence that the society prized so much'.<sup>9</sup> For Adams, as for

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*of Party, 1680–1750: Essays Presented to Geoffrey Holmes* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 1987); Mark Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Britain: Partisanship and Political Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Steve Pincus, 'Addison's Empire: Whig Conceptions of Empire in the Early 18th Century', *Parliamentary History* (2012), pp. 99–117.

<sup>5</sup> *The Country Journal, or the Craftsman*, 674, 9 June 1739, quoted in Max Skjönsberg, 'Lord Bolingbroke's Theory of Party and Opposition', *THJ*, 59 (2016), p. 951.

<sup>6</sup> St John Bolingbroke, *Dedication to Sir Robert Walpole* (1735) in *The Works of the Late Right Honourable Henry St John, Lord Viscount Bolingbroke* (5 vols, London: Mallet, 1754), II, p. 76, quoted in Skjönsberg, 'Bolingbroke's Theory', p. 951; Spencer, 'Hume and Madison', pp. 880–81.

<sup>7</sup> Mark G. Spencer, 'Hume and Madison on Faction', *WMQ*, 59 (2002), p. 879.

<sup>8</sup> Ralph W. Nicholas, 'Factions: A Comparative Analysis', in Steffen W. Schmidt and others (eds), *Friends, Followers, and Factions: A Reader in Political Clientelism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 57–58, quoted in Shephard, 'Court Factions in Early Modern England', p. 722.

<sup>9</sup> Adams, 'Faction, Clientage and Party: English politics, 1550–1603'.

Bolingbroke, what essentially characterises faction is the predominance of personal factors over consideration of the public good.<sup>10</sup> Eric Ives, however, complicated this simple opposition of public versus private or personal. He points out that beside their self-interested motivations, members of factions were linked by shared faiths and united in attempts to promote particular policies. While factions consisted of people who sought objectives ‘seen primarily in personal terms’, a faction should also be understood as ‘a web of personal ties and an alliance seeking to promote particular politicians and particular policies’.<sup>11</sup> Kevin Sharpe notes additional factors connecting people in factions, referring to ‘ties of interest, family, locality, chance encounter’.<sup>12</sup> And Janet Dickson identifies another key feature of faction, namely, competition with enemies. She understands factions to be ‘groups of individuals joined together in short- or long-term interest groups who work against opposing factions to advance their own personal and public interests’.<sup>13</sup> These definitions point us to some key elements of court faction, including personal and informal ties, shared faith and policies, self-interest and private motivations, and competition with other groups. All of these features are also in some measure evident in colonial factions, as we will have occasion to note later.

In the last few decades, exploration of factions has been a growing concern within the study of Tudor and Stuart politics, and male factional court politics has come to be regarded as a key characteristic of the Elizabethan, Jacobean and Carolingian courts.<sup>14</sup> The existence and extent of Tudor factionalism remain matters of debate when it comes to the king’s ability to make his own decisions under the

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<sup>10</sup> Skjönsberg, ‘Bolingbroke’s Theory’, pp. 947-73.

<sup>11</sup> Ives, *Faction in Tudor England*, p. 1, and ‘Faction at the Court of Henry VIII: The Fall of Anne Boleyn’, *History*, 57 (1972), p. 181.

<sup>12</sup> Sharpe, ‘Faction at the Early Stuart Court’, p. 40.

<sup>13</sup> Janet Dickinson, *Court Politics and the Earl of Essex, 1589–1601* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012), p. 67.

<sup>14</sup> See Kristin Bundesen, ‘“No Other Faction But My Own”: Dynastic Politics and Elizabeth I’s Carey Cousins’ (PhD thesis, University of Nottingham, 2009) [consulted at Nottingham ePrints, <http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/10828/>]; Alan Marshall, *The Age of Faction: Court Politics, 1660–1702* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); Kevin Sharpe (ed.), *Faction and Parliament: Essays on Early Stuart History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).

influence of advisers and courtiers. The changing relationship between the king and his advisers – how often and to what extent each party manipulated the other – is the crux of the debate.<sup>15</sup> In seventeenth-century England, government depended upon co-operation between the king and his ministers in Whitehall and the nobility and gentry in the counties.<sup>16</sup> Court patronage, the granting of reward in return for service, converted loyalty and obedience into an identity of interest and a working partnership.<sup>17</sup> People aligned around patrons constituted the various factions in court politics.<sup>18</sup> The revisionist school of early seventeenth-century studies led by Conrad Russell emphasised the importance of faction.<sup>19</sup> Debates about the role of faction also extended to a study of the eighteenth century, which centered on the dynamic of party politics versus that of faction and personal connections. Through biographical studies of individual members of several parliaments, Namier long ago concluded that the underlying motives behind political action were familial and oligarchic connections and the quest for position and place, rather than great events and issues.<sup>20</sup> Robert Walcott followed Namier's analysis, stressing that English politics in the early eighteenth century was dominated by factions based on economic interests, personal relationships and political affiliations.<sup>21</sup> But Walcott's opinion was criticised by many historians, including J. H. Plumb, Geoffrey Holmes and Bill Speck, who published a series of works arguing how British society in the late Stuarts and early Hanoverians was divided by fierce and genuine party conflict.<sup>22</sup> Later, many more historians

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<sup>15</sup> See Mears, 'Courts, Courtiers, and Culture', p. 709.

<sup>16</sup> Sharpe, 'Faction at the Early Stuart Court', p. 39.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> For example, Wolsey and Cromwell's faction during Henry VIII's reign, the factions of Somerset and then Northumberland during the reign of Edward VI, those of Leicester and Cecil in the Elizabethan era, the Southampton-Pembroke faction in the early Stuart period, and the Danby faction in the 1670s. See Shephard, 'Court Factions', p. 729.

<sup>19</sup> Conrad Russell, *Parliaments and English Politics 1621–1629* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979); Sharpe (ed.), *Faction and Parliament*.

<sup>20</sup> L. B. Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III* (London: Macmillan, 1957).

<sup>21</sup> Robert Walcott, *English Politics in the Early Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956).

<sup>22</sup> J. H. Plumb, 'Reviewed Work: "English Politics in the Early Eighteenth Century by Robert Walcott"', *EHR*, 72 (1957); Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne*; Holmes and Speck (eds),



challenged Walcott's claim and emphasised the predominance of party politics, including Henry Horwitz, Tim Harris and Steve Pincus, as noted above.<sup>23</sup> Debates about the role of party politics and personal networks enable us to think about the main dynamics underlying divided Stuart and Hanoverian societies, but not enough attention is paid to colonial societies. More importantly, while Walcott's theory of factional-dominated politics in England might go too far, stories from the Caribbean indeed prove the importance of faction, even when they were sometimes interwoven with parties, as will be seen in chapter 4 and chapter 5.

## **Faction in the Colonial Sphere**

As imperial extensions of the British empire, colonies were undoubtedly influenced by the political atmosphere at home, including its party politics. However, considering the rent-seeking motivation of colonial settlement, economic interest was the biggest concern of inhabitants, and the disputes in colonial politics were more or less linked to economic triggers. While other political and religious issues did find their expressions in colonial disputes, these were not as fierce as economic disagreements. Hence, it is not difficult to understand why colonial society was prone to the formation of interest-oriented factions rather than parties.

Some researchers have paid attention to the factious politics of the colonies. Patricia Bonomi offers an in-depth exploration of factionalism in colonial New York after Leisler's Rebellion in 1689. As Bonomi notes, the commercial-landed rivalry of the 1720s, the Morris-Cosby dispute, the court-assembly struggle of the mid-century years, and the rancorous campaigns of the 1760s, were instances of intense

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*The Divided Society*; Holmes, *Religion and Party in Late Stuart England* (London: Historical Association, 1975); Holmes, *The Electorate and the National Will in the First Age of Party* (Lancaster: University of Lancaster, 1976). Add Speck Tory and Whig here

<sup>23</sup> Henry Horwitz, 'Parties, Connections, and Parliamentary Politics, 1689-1714: Review and Revision', *Journal of British Studies* (1966), pp. 45-69; Harris, *Politics under the Later Stuarts*; Pincus, 'Addison's Empire'.

competition among various factions for a share of the public authority.<sup>24</sup> Bernard Bailyn maintains that factionalism in the colonies transcended institutional boundaries. Some were personal groups, relatives and friends who rose suddenly and faded quickly; others were economic, regional, and more general social interest groups that either quickly rose and suffered an even faster failure or were more durable but never highly organised with a continuously shifting personnel; still others formed to defend and advance programmes that transcended immediate personal or group interests.<sup>25</sup> Jack Greene, nevertheless argues that colonial factionalism was not a universal phenomenon. His study of Virginia stresses the disappearance of factionalism and of confrontation between governor and Burgesses after the administration of Alexander Spotswood, and the political stability was maintained until the early 1760s. During this period, he suggests, 'Virginia legislators routinely supported the administration and increasingly took special pride in the colony's intense British patriotism and loyalty'.<sup>26</sup> Alan Tully similarly argues for political stability in mid eighteenth-century Pennsylvania.<sup>27</sup> Other mainland colonies, however, such as North Carolina and Maryland, were deeply influenced by factionalism.<sup>28</sup>

One notion similar to faction in the colonial sphere concerned 'interest groups', defined by Olson as 'a group that accepts the political system and attempts through bargaining with political authorities to improve its own position in it, operating from the borders of power, influencing but not directly making political decisions.'<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Patricia U. Bonomi, *A Factious People, Politics and Society in Colonial New York* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1971), p. 280.

<sup>25</sup> Bailyn, *The Origins of American Politics*, p. 64.

<sup>26</sup> Jack P. Greene, "'Virtus et Libertas': Political Culture, Social Change, and the Origins of the American Revolution in Virginia, 1763–1766", in Jeffrey J. Crow and Larry E. Tise (eds), *The Southern Experience in the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), pp. 58–59; John M. Murrin, 'Political Development', in Greene and Pole (eds), *Colonial British America*, p. 435.

<sup>27</sup> Alan Tully, *William Penn's Legacy: Politics and Social Structure in Provincial Pennsylvania, 1726–1755* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977).

<sup>28</sup> Murrin, 'Political Development', p. 435.

<sup>29</sup> Alison G. Olson, 'The Board of Trade and London-American Interest Groups in the Eighteenth Century', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 8 (1980), p. 34.

According to this definition, an interest group was a much larger but loose group, with its members bonded by nothing other than similar interests. Compared with political factions that could decide on political policies directly, members of interest groups usually attempted to lobby for policies beneficial to their interests instead of making decisions. In this sense, faction lay between interest group and party, consisting of those with related interests and the authority to change political decisions. The faction was thus less solid than a party but more powerful than an interest group.

The Caribbean area was undoubtedly riven by factional politics.<sup>30</sup> There are some intrinsic problems confronting the analysis of colonial factions. One difficulty is that the factions were forever changing, both in membership and in allegiances; another is that quarrels between different factions sometimes arose from petty causes, making it hard to identify and interpret the motivations of faction members.<sup>31</sup> But however difficult it is to disentangle the detail, there is no question that faction among the white elite was a significant feature of Caribbean societies, which were based on the connections and social bonds within the white community of the Caribbean, as noted by Sarah Barber.<sup>32</sup> The complex interpersonal networks and competing interests in Caribbean society became preconditions of factionalism, and the involvement of the governor and his authority made the situation more complex. To take Barbados as an example, more than half of governors between 1680 and 1720 were embroiled in conflicts relating to factionalism, and most of their tenures lasted for merely two to three years. Barbadian politics during the governments of Granville and Crowe, who form the focus of this chapter, provides a good opportunity to explore the dynamics of colonial faction; we can see how factions formed and interacted, and examine their linkages to fierce political disputes and to scandals which were used as a tool to attack enemies.

Faction in the colonies was similar in many ways to domestic faction, but also

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<sup>30</sup> For example, see Zacek, *Settler Society*; Barber, *The Disputatious Caribbean*.

<sup>31</sup> Bonomi, *Factionous People*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>32</sup> Barber, *The Disputatious Caribbean*, pp. 83-118.

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had distinctive characteristics. Both domestic and colonial factions exhibited self-interested motivations, which sometimes supplanted pursuit of public goods, and both attempted to promote particular policies in competition with other factions.<sup>33</sup>

However, unlike court factions based on patron–client relationships, these were more like networks of politicians, although patronage relations were to some extent replicated in the colonies. There were cases of people gaining offices through the support of political leaders and returning the favour with their loyalty, but the predominant relationship of people in a colonial faction was that of allies, rather than that of leaders and followers.

The formation of colonial factions was influenced by many factors. In the public sphere, factions arose from commonalities of political, commercial and economic interests gathering people together; in the private sphere, people were linked by kinship, marriage, and friendship, and divided by personal rivalries and resentments. Interlinked with the factious politics of the colonies were scandals connected to accusations of corruption and bribery, manipulation of legislatures and elections, and arbitrary rule and misuse of power on the part of governors.

Having outlined the nature of parties and factions, it is now time to consider Barbados as a case study of them.

## **Competing Interests of Planters and Merchants in Barbados**

England established a colony on Barbados in 1627, and it became the wealthiest colony in the West Indies within a few years. Merchants tended to dominate local politics during the infancy of colonies, but as more and more planters took over the marketing of their own produce using English commission agents, island merchants

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<sup>33</sup> E. W. Ives, *Faction in Tudor England* (London: Historical Association, 1979); Simon Adams, 'Faction, Clientage and Party: English politics, 1550–1603', *History Today*, 32 (1982); Kevin Sharpe, 'Faction at the Early Stuart Court', *History Today*, 33 (1983); Robert Shephard, 'Court Factions in Early Modern England', *Journal of Modern History*, 64 (1992).



the plantocracy emerged earlier in Barbados than in Jamaica and the Leewards: when Barbados had 175 big planters there were only 30 planters in Jamaica, and only 20 in the Leewards, who counted as big planters by Barbadian standards.<sup>37</sup>

The creation of great wealth accompanied the rise of the big planters to economic and political dominance. As Dunn has discussed, access to high office in Barbados was restricted to the elite: the most powerful positions, such as councillor, assemblyman, judge, and commander of a military regiment, were reserved for the colonists of the highest economic and social standing. In the ten assemblies elected between 1674 and 1685, big planters won 186 of the 220 seats, and 42 big planters sat in the assembly, serving an average of four and a half terms.<sup>38</sup> In the period covered by this chapter, 1680–1720, the big planters served even longer. Manipulation of power caused divisions between planters, and also triggered tensions between the planters and the other group of colonial pioneers, the merchants.<sup>39</sup>

In addition to the political competition between them, antagonisms between planters and merchants arose in the financial sphere – specifically, in connection with the credit system underpinning trading activities between the mother country and the colonies. Due to the scarcity of currency in the colonies and the slowness of communication between London and the periphery, colonial trade usually depended on credit.<sup>40</sup> Adam Smith later discussed the economic interactions between merchants in England and colonial planters in *Wealth of Nations*, maintaining that the development of the colonial sugar industry and of trading activities between merchants and planters was accomplished largely on the basis of credit. This credit was not usually obtained through the issuance of bonds, but rather was most often

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<sup>37</sup> Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, pp. 96-97.

<sup>38</sup> Dunn, 'Barbados Census of 1680', pp. 19-20.

<sup>39</sup> Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges*, pp. 104-05.

<sup>40</sup> Zahedieh, *Capital and the Colonies*; Zahedieh, 'Credit, Risk and Reputation in Late Seventeenth-Century Colonial Trade', in Olaf Uwe Janzen (ed.), *Merchant Organization and Maritime Trade in the North Atlantic, 1660–1815* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019); Daniel Carey and Christopher J. Finlay (eds), *The Empire of Credit: The Financial Revolution in the British Atlantic World, 1688–1815* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2011).

obtained by planters simply ‘running as much in arrear to their correspondents, who supply them with goods from Europe, as those correspondents will allow them’.<sup>41</sup> Accordingly, the merchant–planter relationship in the early modern British empire can in part be identified as a creditor–debtor relationship. Richard Pares has also emphasised the importance of domestic capital and the credit-based financial structure of the plantation economy in the process of colonial settlement.<sup>42</sup> However, because the early modern trading system was very irregular and lacked central supervision, financial disputes between different parties became a common phenomenon. For example, due to most goods being sold on credit, manipulation of the value of legal tender or of some other medium of exchange was a trick often used by colonial debtors to enable them to pay creditors with tender which had reduced purchasing power.<sup>43</sup> There were also ways for a planter government to extend credit and escape their debts. In colonies, laws were amended and interpreted to favour the debtor class; measures including delaying legal proceedings and increasing the cost of suing for debt were used. The various tricks played by planters triggered long-term resentment on the part of mercantile groups. In addition, the economic disputes also extended to the political sphere, with planters and merchants attempting to seize key government offices (such as the treasurer and customs collector) to advance or defend their interests, and this caused further contentions between the two factions.

Financial innovation was also key. Indeed, a failed attempt to introduce a financial revolution on the island produced widespread reverberations. Throughout the first decade of the eighteenth century, several factions attacked each other over the issue of passing a Paper Act. The Act was a land bank project promoted by several dominant planters in government, which allowed inhabitants to obtain locally issued bills of credit in exchange for a mortgage on their property. The Act was claimed as an

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<sup>41</sup> Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (2 vols, 2nd edn, London: Strahan and Cadell, 1778), II, p. 206.

<sup>42</sup> Richard Pares, *Merchants and Planters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960).

<sup>43</sup> Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery*, pp. 274–75.

attempt to solve the money scarcity problem prevailing in the colony in the context of the financial crisis in the British empire.<sup>44</sup> However, due to the incapacity and unwillingness of planters to pay their debts to merchants, they sought to manipulate the value of the bills and as a result, the Act became a tool to shrink debts. The fierce political disputes about it led to disruptions in public affairs – frequent political purges carried out by the dominant faction led to discontinuity of political policies; revenue collection was delayed due to the adjournment of the assembly and the council; and politicians deployed the powers of the colony for their ends, causing inconvenience to trade and damaging the economy of the island.

### **Faction in Governor Granville's Administration**

Governor Bevil Granville took office in 1703 in the context of heated competition between planters and merchants. He remarked on the factional tensions soon after he assumed his new role, telling the assembly members '[you are] yourselves divided at home by animosities unhappily if not industriously fomented amongst you, and your enemies make preparations to invade you'.<sup>45</sup> Yet these words neither persuaded factional politicians to give up their resentments. Ironically, Granville was himself soon involved in the political brawling, and was accused of arbitrary government, as many of his predecessors had been, and as many of his successors were to be.

Prior to Granville's government, the leading faction in Barbados was dominated by politicians linked closely to the mercantile interest, which competed with the planters for public offices and influence on economic policies. The core members of this faction served for long periods either as assemblymen or as councillors in the years between 1690 and 1710. A key figure in the faction was George Lillington, who

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<sup>44</sup> *CSPC, Vol 23, 1706–1708*, pp. 262–76, CTP to the Queen, 17 Oct. 1706 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp262-276>].

<sup>45</sup> *CSPC, Vol 21, 1702–1703*, pp. 681–97, Minutes of Council [in Assembly] of Barbados, 14 Sep. 1703 [Consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol21/pp681-697>].



had been appointed as councillor in 1688, and who took the position of president of the council several times up to his death in 1711. Richard Downes was another key man, acting as speaker of the assembly during more than one session, and as treasurer of Barbados from 1699. The office of treasurer was significant for the mercantile interest, because control of the treasury office gave the merchant faction authority to manage the king's revenue in the colony. The domination of this office by the merchants triggered resentment from the planters; some members of the assembly proposed that the public accounts should be inspected, since, they claimed, Downes and his friends had embezzled public money. More bad news for the merchants' faction came in the election of August 1703, when they won only seven seats, losing the position of Speaker to their planter enemy, William Holder. After the election, the new assembly proceeded to appoint commissioners for the inspection of the public accounts and tried to replace Downes as treasurer.

As will be discussed in chapter 4, the issue of accountability caused disputes both in the mother country and in the colonies.<sup>46</sup> In England, the establishment of a committee for public accounts was closely linked with the country ideology that public expenditure should be inspected routinely, a mindset that led to greater pressure on government for accountability.<sup>47</sup> In Jamaica, the main focus was on the inspection of the accounts by the legislature – a demand from the assembly which functioned to express its broader claim to authority. But the factional disputes in Governor Granville's administration presented another role for the public accounts committee, namely, a tool used by politicians to attack their enemies in factional controversy, as in the metropole. It is probable that Downes and his friends had indeed misused public funds, but the main objective of his enemies was to eject Downes from his position as treasurer, rather than to defend the public good. In this situation,

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<sup>46</sup> See Chapter 4, pp 175-77.

<sup>47</sup> Jason Peacey, 'Royalist News, Parliamentary Debates and Political Accountability, 1640–60', *Parliamentary History*, 26 (2008), pp. 328-45; Brooks, 'The Country Persuasion'; Paul Seaward, 'Parliament and the Idea of Political Accountability in Early Modern Britain', in Jansson (ed.), *Realities of Representation*.

concern for the public good was a weapon to be deployed in the ongoing political contest, and as we will see in the following part of this chapter, a common argument of politicians from different factions.

Granville was appointed governor during these contentions, and as leader of the government he became the greatest potential ally of the mercantile faction, especially considering his extensive experience in various aspects of colonial administration, as discussed in chapter 1. But the role of the governor in factional competition was a subtle one. Governors generally relied on co-operation with the local elite, needing to win over the leading men of the island to be able to govern effectively. This meant that they could not altogether avoid the factional competition among politicians. As noted above, historians studying domestic court factionalism have related the emergence of factions to the centralised royal court and a weakness on the part of the monarch, such as occurred during Edward VI's reign and the late period of Elizabeth's reign in the 1590s.<sup>48</sup> In the colonies, the authority of governors received no less challenges than that of monarchs. As a result, they needed the support of local allies as the monarch did, and sometimes were more liable to become involved in factional conflicts. It was common for colonial governors to support political factions and make use of them in sustaining their governments and promoting their policies. Correspondingly, colonial politicians sought governors' support, especially in the context of factional contentions, in a manner similar to that of domestic politicians seeking the monarch's patronage.

To secure the governor's support, the first strategy of the Lillington-Downes faction was to offer him financial incentives. In June 1703, the assembly voted him a present of 2,000, which he rejected.<sup>49</sup> Later, two assemblymen who were members of the merchants' faction, Thomas Maycock and Philip Kirton, proposed to vote him

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<sup>48</sup> Adams, 'Faction, Clientage and Party', p. 33; Natalie Mears: 'Courts, Courtiers, and Culture in Tudor England', *THJ*, 46 (2003), p. 708.

<sup>49</sup> *JBTP, Vol 1, Apr. 1704–Jan. 1709*, pp. 141–49, Observations on the Governor's arrival and about presents, June 1705 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/jrnl-trade-plantations-vol1/pp141-149>].

£1,500 for maintaining servants until a house was provided for him, although the majority maintained the amount should be only £200.<sup>50</sup> Although realising that this might be bait from the planters to entice him to receive gifts in violation of his instruction, Granville in the end accepted two presents of £600 and £500 from the assembly; the pretext for these being that they were reimbursements and provisions for his reception and accommodation. Assembly members also showed their solicitude towards Granville by proposing to the queen that she should revoke the order restraining the receipt of presents, as well as other means for the governor to gain money, though this was not approved by the crown.

For reasons which are not entirely evident, these expedients did not succeed in winning Granville to the merchants' cause. He instead sided with the planters. Several months after his assumption of the governorship in May 1703, Granville agreed that the public accounts should be subject to scrutiny:

[I]t is necessary that the funds you give should answer the sums you give them for, that such approbations [*sic*] be made as may prevent their being diverted or delayed from the uses contended, and such frequent inspections by the Council of Accounts into the receipts and issues of the publick money as may be a cheque upon the persons intrusted with it.<sup>51</sup>

In this situation, Lillington and Downes had little choice but to seek to precipitate the dissolution of the assembly by means of absenting themselves, a frequently employed technique by factional politicians seeking to avoid making decisions disadvantageous to themselves. Due to the lack of quorum, the Barbadian

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<sup>50</sup> *CSPC, Vol 22, 1704–1705*, pp. 456–75, CTP to the Queen. Whitehall, 29 Mar. 1705 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol22/pp456-475>].

<sup>51</sup> *CSPC, Vol 21, 1702–1703*, pp. 681–97, Minutes of Council [in Assembly] of Barbados, 14 Sep. 1703 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol21/pp681-697>].

assembly adjourned for one month from October to November 1702, and again from January to March 1703, meaning that public affairs were brought to a standstill for nearly five months.<sup>52</sup> The excuses of those absenting themselves were various, including sickness, death of relations, and even the lameness of a horse.<sup>53</sup> For colonial politicians, absenting was also an efficient way to force dissolution when they were convinced that the current assembly could no longer represent the interests of their community. Absences and the adjournment of the assembly, which also occurred in other Caribbean colonies, even triggered constitutional conflicts, as will be discussed in the following chapters.<sup>54</sup>

In 1704, seven members absented themselves from the Barbadian assembly to force a dissolution, their professed purpose being to prevent Governor Granville from passing an excise bill that would increase his own wealth and inflict a burden on the colony. The intention of the bill was to establish two companies of grenadiers to be posted in the forts and fortifications, receiving certain allowances and payments. The seven absentees – John Leslie, Thomas Maycock, Philip Kirton, William Terrill, Christopher Estwicke, Enoch Gretton, and Thomas Maxwell – were convinced that if the bill passed, it would impose a heavy burden on the colony's finances and would endanger the people's liberty: the cost of the two companies would be 'at least 9,000*l.* ster*l.* Per annum', and the greatest part of the money would be under the control of the governor or someone appointed by him, which meant, 'he will have an opportunity of gaining to himself at least 3,000*l.* ster*l.* in one year', since provisions might be purchased for less than the money allotted for them.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> *CSPC, Vol 22, 1704–1705*, pp. 293-303, CTP to the Queen. Whitehall, 26 Oct. 1704 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol22/pp293-303>].

<sup>53</sup> *CSPC, Vol 21, 1702–1703*, pp. 57-80, Journal of Assembly of Barbados, 22 Dec. 1702 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol21/pp57-80>].

<sup>54</sup> See chapter 4, pp. 192-93, p. 198.

<sup>55</sup> *CSPC, Vol 22, 1704–1705*, pp. 245-67, Mr. Secretary Hedges to the CTP. Cockpitt, 20 Sep. 1704 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol22/pp245-267>].

The seven absentees also claimed that several members of the assembly who were opposed to the bill, together with several colonels, lieutenant colonels and majors, had been discharged and unjustly charged with promoting factionalism by the governor, and that those who supported the bill had been appointed without the consent of the council, even though many of them were unqualified. They had no choice but to absent themselves, they declared, in order to get the governor to dissolve the assembly and bring in a new one; they were not acting in contempt or being disobedient, but were acting out of concern for the public good.

Four councillors – George Lillington, Michael Terrill, David Ramsay, and Benjamin Cryer – outwardly condemned the conduct of the absentees, but also held that the latter did not mean to be ‘prejudicial to the island’.<sup>56</sup> When the governor advised the removal of the absentees from their positions, these four councillors proposed that they should be allowed further time, and recommended dissolution of the assembly rather than removal of the absentees. Later, when Granville summoned the council again to continue proceedings, these four followed the seven in absenting themselves in order to break the council.

The seven absentee assemblymen and the four councillors constituted the core membership of the Lillington-Downes faction. Compared with domestic factions, Barbadian factions were more likely to be focused on pursuit of interests than on the persons of prominent politicians. It would not be justified to say that either Lillington or Downes was in a significant sense the leader of the faction. Nor was either better positioned in the government than others in the faction. The faction was comprised of individuals from powerful economic and political backgrounds, working together to defend their common interests. For example, John Leslie was repeatedly elected as representative of St John from the 1680s. Thomas Maxwell served nearly the same terms as Leslie, and was elected speaker several times. More importantly, his family

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., pp. 194-211, The four suspended Members of the Council of Barbados to the CTP, 1 July 1704 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol22/pp194-211>].

built a huge trade enterprise concentrating on sugar exports, provisions for the colony, and the slave trade with the influential Lascelles family.<sup>57</sup> The other member who remained in the assembly for more than ten years was Thomas Maycock, the representative of St Lucy, and he was also the judge of the court of common pleas for the precincts of St Andrews and St Joseph in 1702. As for the four councillors, Michael Terrill had been an assemblyman for St Lucy between 1681 and 1693, and was appointed to the council from 1696; David Ramsay entered the council in 1697; Benjamin Cryer entered the council in 1695, and remained in the council thereafter. In addition to these eleven politicians, there were other public officers belonging to the faction, including William Heysman, a factor of William Stout who traded between North America and the West Indies, and Robert Heysman and Guy Ball, who supported the faction by petitioning against the governor.

Realising that he was unlikely to get the seven absentees removed, Granville sought to suspend the four councillors. According to Granville's report, the purpose of the excise bill was to repair and extend the fortifications of the island, not to increase his personal income, and it had been introduced long before the current disputes, as could be seen from the minutes both of the council and of the assembly. He accused the councillors of using their power to repair their broken fortunes, impoverishing the island and endangering the crown's authority, and pointed out that the real reason for the crisis was the competition over the nomination of the treasurer. The merchant faction adopted a carrot and stick approach to other politicians. According to the deposition of Charles Irvine, a Barbadian clerk,

Capt. Gretton desired [him] to make a proposal to any of his friends in the Assembly, that if they would choose Col. Downes to be Treasurer for this one year, Col. Downes' friends would joyne with them in other things, and

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<sup>57</sup> S. D. Smith, *Slavery, Family, and Gentry Capitalism in the British Atlantic: The World of the Lascelles, 1648–1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

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the business of the Assembly should be done; but if they would not choose Col. Downes, he had friends enough there to break the House, and no business would be done.<sup>58</sup>

The faction controlled several parishes, as Irvine testified, including Christchurch, St John's and St Lucy's, and it partly controlled St Philip's and St Peter's.

Given that the assembly was fundamentally manipulated by the merchant faction, Granville decided to rely on the council, where he could turn out his opponents and bring in his planter allies. After suspending the four councillors, Granville drafted a list of names to fill the vacancies on the council. These included Abel Alleyne, William Cleland, James Colleton, William Holder, Alexander Walker, John Holder, Middleton Chamberlin, and Robert Gibbs. None of these men were members of the merchant faction; the list included only politicians linked closely with the planter interest. Some, such as Alleyne, Walker and Gibbs, belonged to big propertied families. The Holders were another such family, becoming the largest estate-owner in Barbados by 1750.<sup>59</sup> James Colleton, from a dominant planter family, was the youngest son of Sir John Colleton, one of the founders of Barbados; he was married to Anne Kendall, a daughter of James Kendall (1647–1708), governor of Barbados between 1690 and 1694. Prior to his involvement in factional strife in Barbados, Colleton had served as the governor of the English Province of Carolina from 1686 to 1690.<sup>60</sup>

The merchant faction was not content to have a governor who supported the planters. Seeking to get Granville recalled, the faction brought several accusations against him, in addition to their complaints about the excise bill. They first

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<sup>58</sup> *CSPC, Vol 22, 1704–1705*, pp. 303–17, Deposition of Charles Irvine, Clerk, Barbados, 15 Nov. 1704 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol22/pp303-317>].

<sup>59</sup> Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery*, p. 145.

<sup>60</sup> J. E. Buchanan, 'The Colleton Family and the Early History of South Carolina and Barbados, 1646–1775' (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1989).

complained that the Governor had managed to manipulate the election of the assembly at St Lucy: ‘Capt. Osbourn kept the guard out that day and prevented freeholders voting for Col. Maycock and Col. Terrill, whilst he permitted others of the same guard to vote for Lt. Col. Pickering and Major Lambert’.<sup>61</sup> Granville’s agent claimed the real situation was the opposite. During the election, Maycock and Terrill William had not only unlawfully restrained Gourdon, who was appointed by the governor to execute the writ of election, but had also collected the votes themselves, arguing that they would act as they pleased, swear whom they pleased, and order the proceedings of the election as seemed proper to them.<sup>62</sup>

The other main accusations against Granville concerned his behaviour in receiving gifts. According to the seven absentees, Granville had accepted presents not only from the assembly, but also from Jews, Scots, and from other private persons. As noted above, Granville had accepted sums of £600 and £500 voted by the assembly, in violation of the crown’s order. The ‘Nation of the Jews’, they asserted, had presented him with £200, and he had granted them ‘many privileges contrary to law’.<sup>63</sup> He had also received presents from Scots, and in exchange had given them ‘the greatest places of trust, profitt and honour, civill and military in this Island’, although ‘many of them [were] disaffected to the English nation and Government’.<sup>64</sup> As a result, according to the testimony of Thomas Maycock, ‘The English inhabitants express themselves to bee under dissatisfaction and fear of its becoming a Scotch Island’.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> *CSPC, Vol 22, 1704–1705*, pp. 395–428, Eleven Affidavits presented to the CTP by the Gentlemen who appear against Sir Beville in behalf of the Absenting Members of Assembly, 2 Mar. 1705 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol22/pp395-428>].

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 456–75, CTP to the Queen, 29 Mar. 1705 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol22/pp456-475>].

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 275–93, Proofs particularly desired from the Gentlemen of the Assembly concerned in the petition against Sir B. Granville [above], 19 Oct. 1704 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol22/pp275-293>].

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 245–67, Address of [7 Members of] the Assembly of Barbados to the Queen, 20 Sep. 1704 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol22/pp245-267>].

<sup>65</sup> According to the affidavit of Thomas Maycock, ‘Several of the natives of Scotland are preferred to places of great trust and profit... Robert Steward is Lt. Col. of the Guards, Register and Examiner of the Court of Chancery and Clerk of the Crown... William Clealand, Member of



They also stated that William Holder, who had been elected as the Speaker of the assembly and appointed by the governor as chief judge of common pleas for the precincts of St Michael (the highest court in the island), was never baptised, and was from a family which had some Quaker background.

In order to present these accusations and related evidence before the Board of Trade, the merchant faction sent their agents to London, as did Granville to defend his reputation. As a result, the factional disputes in the colonies grew into a lobbying war in the mother country.

## Political Lobbying and the Role of Colonial Agents

The development of interest groups in the West Indian colonies and their lobbying activities, in particular that of the American continent has been studied by historians.<sup>66</sup> Alison G. Olson examines three types of Anglo-American interest group, mercantile, ethnic, and ecclesiastic, each with its own political leverage. She argues that one of the Board of Trade's functions was to accommodate these interest groups.<sup>67</sup> However, she does not give much consideration to the activities of political lobbyists. In addition, historians have generally focused more on the later period of the eighteenth century, in relation to which materials are easier to locate, especially the period after the absentees of the colonies began to play a more substantial role in domestic

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Council, Col. of a Regiment and Governor of several forts; Alexander Skeene, Secretary; George Hay, Deputy Provost Marshall and Chief Engineer and Surveyor General of Fortifications; Alexander Burnett, Chief Clerk of one of the Courts of Common Pleas; Isaac Wood, Chief Marshall of the same Court ; and — Thare, Clerk of the Council and one of the Masters in Chancery'. See *CSPC, Vol 22, 1704–1705*, pp. 395–428, Eleven Affidavits presented to the CTP by the Gentlemen who appear against Sir Beville in behalf of the Absenting Members of Assembly, 2 Mar. 1705. Consulted at <https://www.britishhistory.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol22/pp395-428>].

<sup>66</sup> Perry Gauci, 'Learning the Ropes of Sand: The West India Lobby, 1714–60', in Perry Gauci (ed.), *Regulating the British Economy, 1660–1850* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011); Lillian Penson, *The Colonial Agents of the British West Indies: A Study in Colonial Administration Mainly in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Cass, 1924); Michael Kammen, *A Rope of Sand: The Colonial Agents, British Politics, and the American Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1968).

<sup>67</sup> Olson, 'The Board of Trade'.

politics.<sup>68</sup>

Agents were frequently of central importance in colonial lobbying activities. For those who traded and lived in the West Indies, it was important to maintain their connections with the mother country, whether for keeping abreast of the latest information, or for defending their political and economic interests.<sup>69</sup> Therefore, sending agents to England became a custom among the colonists from a very early time. To take Jamaica as an example, during the Poynings' Law crisis of 1680, Jamaican politicians including William Beeston, Samuel Long, and Peter Beckford had returned to London, in order to lobby for the maintenance of Jamaica's 'ancient constitution'. However, it was impractical for the inhabitants of the West Indies to travel to the mother country every time they needed to defend their interests. Appointing agents was a preferable alternative, and from the late seventeenth century, colonial governments began to appoint agents to look after their affairs in England. Barbados, which appointed an agent in the mother country in 1670, appears to have been the first West Indian island to do so; Jamaica and the Leewards appointed their own during the following decade.<sup>70</sup> It was also customary for other interest groups, such as mercantile groups and ecclesiastical groups, to send representatives who could lobby for their interests to England.<sup>71</sup> With the growing importance of agents, who had the authority to send agents also became a bone of contention in the colonies. This is evidenced in the bitter political feuding between the governor and the

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<sup>68</sup> For example, see Trevor Burnard, 'Passengers Only: The Extent and Significance of Absenteeism in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica', *Atlantic Studies*, 1 (2004); B. W. Higman, *Plantation Jamaica, 1750–1850: Capital and Control in a Colonial Economy* (Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2005); Nicholas Draper, 'Possessing people: Absentee Slave-owners within British Society', in Catherine Hall and others (eds), *Legacies of British Slave-ownership: Colonial Slavery and the Formation of Victorian Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Perry Gauci, *William Beckford: First Prime Minister of the London Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

<sup>69</sup> Penson, *The Colonial Agents*.

<sup>70</sup> Lillian M. Penson, 'The London West India Interest in the Eighteenth Century', *EHR*, 36 (1921), pp. 374–75.

<sup>71</sup> Olson, *Making the Empire Work*; Andrew J. O'Shaughnessy, 'The Formation of a Commercial Lobby: The West India Interest, British Colonial Policy and the American Revolution', *THJ*, 40 (1997).

Jamaican assembly over the latter's authority to send their own agents to London. And in Barbados, the assembly's authority to nominate agents was also frequently doubted by the governor.

Economic and political interests were a main motivation of lobby activities, but apart from defending interests, they had another function, namely, maintaining reputations. Although this remit could be regarded as another sort of defence interest, agents in this situation did not merely restrict the members of interest groups. Those who accepted the role of agent usually had a relationship with the person they defended. These could be people sharing similar economic interests, patrons or clients, of course, but also friends and relatives. William Sharpe, president of the Barbadian council, sent his wife Barbara to defend him before the Board of Trade in 1707. Similarly, Samuel Cox, a naval officer suspended by Governor Mitford Crowe, was lobbied for by his brother Charles, a member of parliament for the borough of Southwark.<sup>72</sup>

Concerning Granville's conflicts, merchants who made accusations against the governor, saw their colonial disputes develop into a lobbying war. Two targets existed for the merchants' lobby: the first was to restore suspended assemblymen and councillors, and the second was to air their complaints about the Governor. In September 1704, a merchant named William Heysham presented the case of four suspended members of the council of Barbados to the Board of Trade, asking it to restore all four to their positions. He brought with him the copy of a bill to establish two companies that had been the topic of heated debated in the colony, together with articles and affidavits against Granville.

Granville's agents included his planter friends, such as William Holder and William Cleland, who sent reports in vindication of the governor to the Board of Trade, and successfully defended him. They pointed out that the faction arrayed

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<sup>72</sup> *JBTP, Vol 1, Apr. 1704–Jan. 1709*, pp. 339–47, Mrs. Sharpe at the Board in behalf of her husband, and Mr. Cox of his brother, Apr 1707 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/jrnl-trade-plantations/vol1/pp339-347>].

against him existed before the governor's arrival, and presented evidence of the frequent absence of assemblymen. William Bridges, William Holder and Robert Chester successfully suggested a decrease in the quorum number from fifteen to twelve, in order to lessen the possibility of some assemblymen disrupting public affairs through absenteeism.<sup>73</sup>

In 1704, the agents of Barbados, led by Holder and Cleland, together with some merchants trading to Barbados, objected that 'the complaints of Lillington' in the report to the queen 'were false and groundless'.<sup>74</sup> In 1705, they reported to the Board of Trade that the excise bill had been first brought in by the assembly itself, not the governor; as for the governor being able to profit by £3,000, this was merely a supposition, and neglected the provision that the person appointed by the governor would be accountable to the assembly. Regarding the presents received from the assembly, the agents maintained that the money was granted before the crown's order arrived in the island: 'until he was restrained by H.M. Order, he had just pretences by his patent to all the profits and perquisites that former Governors enjoyed'.<sup>75</sup>

In 1705 there were two hearings regarding complaints against Granville at the Board of Trade. Maycock and Kirton took one side, standing for the merchants and bringing thirteen articles against Granville; Granville's friend at home, the lawyer and judge Sir Thomas Powis, defended him by responding to the articles one by one.<sup>76</sup> Powis emphasised the misbehaviour of the absent assemblymen, as well as that of the four suspended councillors, and denied that the £600 and £500 were given as gifts. Another hearing concerned the four suspended councillors, whose agents claimed that

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., *Mr. Bridges &c. about quorum of Assembly*, Oct. 1704 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/jrnl-trade-plantations/vol1/pp44-52>].

<sup>74</sup> *CSPC, Vol 22, 1704–1705*, pp. 349–52. Agents of Barbados and other Gentlemen of estates in and merchants trading to Barbados to the Queen, 1704 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol22/pp349-352>].

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., pp. 524–39, Agents of Barbados to the Council of Trade and Plantations, 7 June 1705 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol22/pp524-539>].

<sup>76</sup> *JBTP, Vol 1, Apr. 1704–Jan. 1709*, pp. 101–22, Hearing of complaints against the Governour, Mar. 1705 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/jrnl-trade-plantations/vol1/pp101-122>].

the former did not object to the governor's power of suspension, but 'that power being limited by his instructions, he could not suspend any counsellor arbitrarily'. However, the governor's defenders claimed that the councillors were 'suspended for encouraging faction and not attending in Council'.<sup>77</sup>

The defenses made for Granville by his agents were all accepted by the Board of Trade, except those concerning the presents he had received. According to the Board's report, Granville received the gifts in the sum of £600 and £500 after the queen's order against presents on June 1703 which was, for them, a violation of instructions to him.<sup>78</sup> However, with the help of the planter faction and his agents, Granville still came out on top. Three of the four suspended councillors died before their positions were returned to them, and in June 1705 the remaining one, Lillington, was tried for 'faction, and reflecting on the Governor, and wishing his death'. He was fined £2,000, although that was later returned on appeal to the Privy Council.<sup>79</sup> Two other members of his faction, Thomas Maycock and William Terill, were attacked for 'menacing and violently interrupting the sheriff at the election of St. Lucy's parish', and travelled or fled to London to defend themselves. Maycock's estate was sequestered by the Barbados chancery.<sup>80</sup>

Granville nevertheless did not have long to savour his victory. In May 1706, he was allowed to leave the island for six months for a health problem, and he died on the homeward voyage. Yet he had left the government in the hands of his planter allies. Abel Alleyne, William Cleland, James Colleton, and Middleton Chamberlain –

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., Hearing relating to the four suspended counsellors. Mr. Cooper and Dodd against the Governor, Mar. 1705 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/jrnl-trade-plantations/vol1/pp101-122>].

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., pp. 141-49, Observations on the Governor's arrival and about presents, June 1705 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/jrnl-trade-plantations/vol1/pp141-149>]; *CSPC, Vol 22, 1704–1705*, pp. 456-75, CTP to the Queen, 29 Mar. 1705 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol22/pp456-475>].

<sup>79</sup> Sharon Hamby O'Connor and Mary Sarah Bilder, 'Appeals to the Privy Council from the American Colonies: An Annotated Digital Catalogue' (2014), vol. 2, pp. 492-93 [consulted at [https://amesfoundation.law.harvard.edu/ColonialAppeals/CaribAppeals/report\\_carib\\_mysqli.php?report\\_no=BAR\\_1705\\_02](https://amesfoundation.law.harvard.edu/ColonialAppeals/CaribAppeals/report_carib_mysqli.php?report_no=BAR_1705_02)]. See also *ibid.*, vol. 6, pp. 39-40, pp. 49-50; *ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 601-02.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, 492-93.

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all big planters – were put into the council, together with William Sharpe, Samuel Cox and Alexander Walker; the position of speaker also passed into the hands of the Alleyne family, being taken by Thomas Alleyne.

The power struggle between the planters and merchants was a key context in the factional politics in Barbados, and the disputes between Granville, planters and merchants illustrate the disruptions and scandals brought about by factional contentions in the colony. During Granville's government, the dynamic that dominated factional rivalries was a contest for power between two leading groups of the white community, but this does not indicate the full complexity of colonial factionalism. The formation and development of political factions was also influenced by petty factors such as personal resentments, judicial disputes and private relationships. As Kevin Sharpe argues, 'Between factional groupings there were rivalries and antagonisms arising from sharp differences of personality as well as disagreements over policy.'<sup>81</sup> More importantly, the gap between the planters and merchants was not always paramount because the white elite in the Caribbean often had interests both in plantations and commercial activities. Therefore, relations between the two groups were not only animated by competition but also, on occasion, by co-operation.

After the departure of Granville and the arrival of a new governor, factional conflicts in Barbados developed further and brought more scandals concerning the misuse of power and corruption in the government, in which Mitford Crowe, Granville's successor, was deeply involved. Using the political advantage they had just won, the planters took steps to promote their interests. Having majorities in the council and assembly, they immediately put themselves and those close to them into all offices and positions that conferred power and profit. However, divisions within the faction soon arose. In fact, the planter politicians competed as much with one another as with their merchant rivals.

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<sup>81</sup> Sharpe, 'Faction at the Early Stuart Court', p. 44.

## Scarcity of Money and the 1706 Paper Act

Before Granville's departure for England, the Barbadian assembly, with his support, passed an Act named *An Act to supply the want of cash and to establish a method of credit for persons having real estates in this island* in June 1706. The immediate origin of this Act lay in the decision of the Board of Trade in 1704 to fix the rate of exchange at pieces of eight by royal proclamation (discussed in a later section), although it was also closely linked to the long-standing problem of money scarcity prevailing in the West Indian colonies. At the end of the seventeenth century, England suffered a severe financial crisis due to the large expenditure on military activities, and recoinage transformed it into a serious problem.<sup>82</sup> In this situation, the government in London took a series of measures to increase the amount of money circulating in the market, such as establishing the Bank of England, and issuing Exchequer bills.<sup>83</sup>

Due to the ideology of mercantilism, the situation in the colonies was even worse, for the exportation of English sterling coin to the islands was forbidden.<sup>84</sup> In order to tackle the problem, colonial planters were forced to use alternative mediums

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<sup>82</sup> In the 1690s, there were two types of coin in use in England: hammered pieces that were irregular in size and weight, and milled coins that were uniform and designed to prevent mutilation. Parliament passed a Recoinage Act in 1696 to melt all light money and form milled coins from the bullion, but this recoinage still did not adequately supply the desired currency. See Curtis P. Nettels, *The Money Supply of the American Colonies before 1720* (New York: Kelley, 1964), p. 163, and 'British Policy and Colonial Money Supply', *EHR*, 3 (1931), pp. 219-45. Nettels gives additional explanations of the scarcity of domestic silver at that time, including the India trade, England's war expenditure and a higher price of silver in other European countries.

<sup>83</sup> H. V. Bowen, 'The Bank of England during the Long Eighteenth Century', in Richard Roberts and David Kynaston (eds), *The Bank of England: Money, Power, and Influence, 1694-1994* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 1-18; Dennis Rubini, 'Politics and the Battle for the Banks, 1688-1697', *EHR*, 85 (1970), pp. 697-98; R. D. Richards, 'The Exchequer Bill in the History of English Government Finance', *Economic History*, 3 (1936), pp. 193-211; Aaron Graham, 'Credit, Confidence and the Circulation of Exchequer Bills in the Early Financial Revolution', *Financial History Review*, 26 (2019), pp. 63-80.

<sup>84</sup> Joseph Albert Ernst, *Money and Politics in America, 1755-1775: A Study in the Currency Act of 1764 and the Political Economy of Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), pp. 20-21.

of exchange to facilitate their daily exchange and trading activities, including staple commodities, foreign coins and bills of exchange. This measure resulted in other problems and controversies, in particular a reduction in colonial revenues and increased debts for merchants, which will be discussed later. In addition, the colonies blamed each other for draining their coin: the value of money was decided by local governments, and by increasing the value of local money, it was easy to attract coin from neighbours or trading partners.

Initially, colonists resorted to staple commodities, such as tobacco in Virginia and Maryland, and sugar in the Caribbean, to function as mediums of exchange.<sup>85</sup> These products could be used in payment of debts, salaries, fees, fines, and even taxes. For instance, the 4½ per cent duty, the most important revenue in Barbados and the Leewards, was paid in sugar, as was the governor's salary. Before 1685, Barbadian sugar was sent to England, where it was sold and the proceeds paid into the exchequer; the government would then pay the salary of the governor to his agent in London. But the use of commodities as tender caused inconveniences for trade. The biggest problem lay in the freedom colonies enjoyed to decide the value of the products: when using sugar and tobacco as tender, planters often affixed a higher value to them than the market price, and this obviously hurt the interests both of the mother country and of the merchants who received the products. In the metropole, receipt of taxation in the form of commodities meant loss of revenue. For instance, between 1662 and 1685 the quit-rents of Virginia were paid in tobacco rated at 2d. a pound, even though the sale price was usually only about 1d. a pound.<sup>86</sup> Over-valued tender also hurt the interests of domestic merchants. In Jamaica, an act that declared sugar to be legal tender was condemned by local merchants in 1728; the value of sugar was fixed at a level higher than the market price, which meant planters could pay their debts with commodities which had a lower exchange value, gaining at the

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<sup>85</sup> Claire Priest, 'Currency Policies and Legal Development in Colonial New England', *The Yale Law Journal*, 110 (2001), p. 1324.

<sup>86</sup> Nettels, 'British Policy', pp. 230-31.



expense of the merchants.<sup>87</sup> In the Caribbean, numerous branches of trade suffered due to such measures, because merchants were reluctant to accept the risk of losing money.<sup>88</sup>

The second substitute used was foreign coin. The most popular foreign coin in the colonies was Spanish money, although coin from France, Holland, and the German Empire was also in circulation alongside English money.<sup>89</sup> Initially, the colonists proposed to establish their own mints and coinages so that foreign coin could be melted down and transformed into uniform pieces. But this proposal was rejected by London.<sup>90</sup> Later, the wars with Spain interrupted normal trade and the amount of coin declined correspondingly. As with commodities, use of foreign money also had drawbacks and caused disputes. These arose from the use by colonists of strategies similar to those deployed in relation to commodities; the value of foreign coin was raised by legislation, so that more provisions could be purchased with less money, and in order to attract coin from neighbours. In Jamaica, a cheap money party led by Sir Henry Morgan and Roger Elletson attempted to raise the value of the standard piece of eight from 5s to 6s through an act, and managed to do this during the government of Albemarle.<sup>91</sup> Between 1670 and 1672, Montserrat, Antigua, and Nevis all passed laws raising the value of the piece of eight to 6s.<sup>92</sup> Similar actions were taken in mainland colonies, including New England, Virginia and Maryland, leading to complaints from merchants trading with them and the governors of other colonies. For example, the governor of Maryland wrote home to the Board of Trade, stating that the value of the coin there lay below that of Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New York, and claiming that it was being carried away to those places.<sup>93</sup> For money-

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<sup>87</sup> Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery*, p. 276.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Leslie V. Brock, *The Currency of the American Colonies, 1700–1764: A Study in Colonial Finance and Imperial Relations* (New York: Arno Press, 1975), p. 5.

<sup>90</sup> Nettels, 'British Policy', pp. 226–28.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, p. 234.

<sup>92</sup> John J. McCusker, *Money and Exchange in Europe and America, 1600–1775: A Handbook* (London: Macmillan, 1978), pp. 256–57.

<sup>93</sup> Brock, *Currency of the American Colonies*, p. 131.

receivers such as the crown and merchants, this strategy meant reduction in their income. London was therefore eager to regulate the rate of exchange between sterling and foreign coins.

In June 1704, the Board of Trade decided to fix the rate of exchange for the piece of eight by royal proclamation.<sup>94</sup> The proclamation declared that the standard piece of eight should not pass in any colony at more than 6s, and that £100 sterling was worth £133 in colonial proclamation money.<sup>95</sup> However, the proclamation was often not treated seriously in the colonies: most of the West Indian colonies decided to ignore it. In July 1705, Governor Dudley of Massachusetts complained that ‘nothing at all [is] done to inforce the Proclamation, nor any penalty’.<sup>96</sup> In Pennsylvania, the inhabitants decided to wait to see what would be the attitude of New York, ‘whose measures in Traffique, as being much more considerable therein, have generally a great influence over us’.<sup>97</sup> The attitude of New York was that the proclamation would ruin the colonies, especially those without staple commodities to trade with England. Governor Cornbury proposed to delay the execution of the proclamation because when the proclamation was published, some inhabitants ‘sent away as much money by the post as he (the inhabitants) could carry, and for 4 or 5 days all manner of trade was stopped’.<sup>98</sup> As Governor Lowther of Barbados later complained to the Board of Trade, whilst Barbadian islanders had faithfully observed the proclamation, the other colonies had maintained their higher rates, ‘to the unspeakable prejudice of Barbados’

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<sup>94</sup> *CSPC, Vol 22, 1704–1705*, pp. 164–74, Order of Queen in Council, 15 June 1704 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol22/pp164-174>]; *ibid.*, pp. 174–94, Circular Letter from the CTP to the Proprietors of H.M. Colonies in America, 29 June 1704 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol22/pp174-194>].

<sup>95</sup> Nettels, ‘British Policy’, pp. 238–39; E. James Ferguson, ‘Currency Finance: An Interpretation of Colonial Monetary Practices’, *WMQ*, 10 (1953), p. 157.

<sup>96</sup> *CSPC, Vol. 22, 1704–1705*, pp. 584–600, Gov. Dudley to the CTP, Boston, 25 July 1705 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol22/pp584-600>].

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 367–76, Lt. Gov. Evans to the CTP, 13 Feb. 1705 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol22/pp367-376>].

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 376–95, Gov. Lord Cornbury to the CTP, 19 Feb. 1705, [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol22/pp376-395>].

and had ‘almost drained’ the island of its coin.<sup>99</sup> All in all, the attempt to establish a uniform exchange rate in the colonies turned out to be a failure. Although a parliamentary act with similar intentions was passed in 1708, the colonial governors were still unable or unwilling to follow it.<sup>100</sup> After 1710, six different rates of colonial money prevailed on the mainland instead of the single standard rate anticipated by the proclamation of 1704.<sup>101</sup>

The long-lasting disorders in colonial finance and trade pushed colonists to find different ways to meet their need to have money in circulation, and they turned to a third substitute, namely the bill of exchange. The bills were checks drawn on deposits lodged with English agents and could be used as a substitute for money in both public and private payments. As a widely used medium of exchange, bills of credit resting on private or public credit were adopted both by the mother country and by most colonies in the West Indies. In the 1690s, domestic politicians debated whether to establish a National Land Bank or invest in the Bank of England. The former issued loans in the form of mortgages against landed properties, and was welcomed by the landowners; the latter issued bank notes in return for bullion lent by subscribers, in particular the monied interests. Both bank schemes triggered heated debate in England. Charles Montagu, promoter of the Bank of England, introduced Exchequer bills to be backed by the credit of the English state, which would circulate throughout the country until taxes were introduced to redeem them.<sup>102</sup>

In the colonies, men of property gave their promissory notes in place of money, and colonial treasurers issued promissory notes to pay debts in advance of tax collections, redeeming the notes when they received the taxes.<sup>103</sup> In 1686, a group of merchants in Boston proposed to establish a bank secured by personal property and

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<sup>99</sup> *CSPC, Vol 26, 1711–1712*, pp. 171–85, Gov. Lowther to the CTP, 20 Dec. 1711 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol26/pp171-185>].

<sup>100</sup> Priest, ‘Currency Policies’, p. 1324.

<sup>101</sup> Nettels, ‘British Policy’, p. 241.

<sup>102</sup> Rubini, ‘Politics and the Battle for the Banks’.

<sup>103</sup> Nettels, *Money Supply*, pp. 250–51.

land, which would issue bills equal to half the value of an individual's collateral as a medium of exchange.<sup>104</sup> After 1690, the Massachusetts government began to issue paper money annually in the form of bills of credit to pay public debts.<sup>105</sup> A similar procedure was soon adopted by other colonies, including South Carolina in 1703, Connecticut, New York, New Hampshire and New Jersey in 1709, Rhode Island in 1710 and North Carolina in 1712. By 1715, all of the mainland colonies, with the exceptions of Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, had established a paper currency in the form of bills of credit.<sup>106</sup>

Scholars have offered various interpretations of the debates concerning the two banks in England and these have implications for how we view the Caribbean scheme. For Pincus and Wolfram, the debates were closely linked with partisan rivalries and what was at stake was the nature of English society: it was 'a debate over the relationship between state and society, not a narrow, erudite discussion over high finance'.<sup>107</sup> Whigs supported the Bank of England not only because it could help finance the war, but also because it would help promote the manufacturing sector, which they believed would increase the prosperity of the state. The mostly Tory defenders of the land bank, on the other hand, anticipated that it would restore the standing of the gentry and aristocracy against the new moneyed interest and reverse the social revolution which they believed had begun at the Revolution.<sup>108</sup> Dennis Rubini, on the other hand, argues that the bank debates had little to do with party politics, for the land bank scheme was dominated by the country party, especially those hardest hit by the heavy land taxes of the wars. 'The country gentlemen wished for a bank which was less London-orientated', and 'the country gentlemen disliked the Bank of England and the Exchequer bill schemes for much the same reason that

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<sup>104</sup> Priest, 'Currency Policies', p. 1344.

<sup>105</sup> Priest, 'Currency Policies', p. 1347.

<sup>106</sup> Nettels, *Money Supply*, p. 253.

<sup>107</sup> Steve Pincus and Alice Wolfram, 'A Proactive State? The Land Bank, Investment and Party Politics in the 1690s', in Gauci (ed.), *Regulating the British Economy*, p. 50.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, pp. 50-54.

they detested the customs and excise'.<sup>109</sup> This argument has been followed by Anne Murphy, who also suggests that the creation of the land bank had little to do with party politics.<sup>110</sup>

A land bank was a common apparatus used by colonists to issue bills of credit and, as in the mother country, it generated debates in the colonies, in particular in terms of factional politics. Despite the fact that both domestic and colonial land banks were designed by landowners, divergences existed between the two schemes. Compared with the protagonists of party politics and country ideologies at home, conflict over the land bank scheme in Barbados expressed another tension within society: the fundamental antagonism between the planters and the merchants in the spheres of finance and politics. The promoters of a colonial land bank, namely, the planter faction, was more interest-oriented, although the disputes regarding the Paper Act also contained echoes of the domestic ideology that power was naturally vested in a landed elite.

Among the Caribbean colonies, Barbados relied most heavily on bills of exchange. In as early as 1661, a land bank bill had been proposed by the chancellor of the exchequer, calling for the creation of a bank in Barbados to lend money on landed security in the colony at the rate of 6 per cent per annum.<sup>111</sup> Of the fifteen hundred West India bills received by the company in payment for slaves in the years 1672–1694, 94 per cent were drawn from Barbados, 4 per cent from Jamaica, and 2 per cent from the Leeward Islands.<sup>112</sup> However, like staple commodities and foreign coins, the value of paper money was also under the control of local government and if it was depreciated by the authorities, creditors would lose their debts. In addition, it was

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<sup>109</sup> Rubini, 'Politics and the Battle for the Banks', pp. 697–98.

<sup>110</sup> Anne L. Murphy, *The Origins of English Financial Markets* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 57–8.

<sup>111</sup> Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery*, pp. 279–80.

<sup>112</sup> R. C. Nash, 'The Organization of Trade and Finance in the British Atlantic Economy, 1600–1830', in Peter A. Coclanis (ed.), *The Atlantic Economy during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Organization, Operation, Practice, and Personnel* (University of South Carolina Press, 2005), pp. 98–99.

usual for colonial planters to purchase supplies on credit and to delay the payment, and this behaviour was supported by a small group of substantial property holders who controlled the government. In order to assemble enough capital to expand production, planters usually chose to postpone their debt repayments, and when crops failed, repayment became even harder. The records of the Royal African Company show that the total amount owing to them from the West Indies was £120,000 in 1680, £136,000 in 1684, and £170,000 in 1690.<sup>113</sup>

The Barbados 1706 Paper Act allowed planters of the island to obtain locally issued bills of credit in exchange for a mortgage on their properties. A planter could obtain bills of credit to the amount of a quarter of the value of his estate. In return, they were required to pay 5 per cent interest to the manager of the bank, John Holder, the treasurer and one of the primary promoters of the act, for ‘administrative costs’. The bills could be used for all payments at their face value, and people who refused to accept them would have to forfeit half of the debt involved. They were renewable yearly, but for no longer than five years.<sup>114</sup> One month later, the assembly passed a Triennial Bill for ‘ascertaining the continuance of the assembly’ for two years longer with the support of the council, as the current one was about to expire. Apparently, this act was an attempt to safeguard the land bank scheme. Although the members of the merchant faction such as John Frere, William Leslie and Thomas Maxwell were strongly against the triennial act, averring that the act infringed on the rights and liberties of the queen’s subjects and altered the ancient tradition of free election, it was passed by a majority of 12 to 7.

The Paper Act claimed to be an effort to deal with scarcity of coin and the decline of trade, but it was also openly designed to lessen private indebtedness.<sup>115</sup> It was clear that the motivation for the planters to pass the act was that it would enable

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<sup>113</sup> K. G. Davies, *The Royal African Company* (London and New York: Longmans, Green, 1957), pp. 316-19, cited in Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery*, p. 278.

<sup>114</sup> CSPC, Vol 23, 1706–1708, pp. 262-76, CTP to the Queen, 17 Oct. 1706 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp262-276>].

<sup>115</sup> Nettels, *Money Supply*, p. 256.

them to use paper money to pay debts, reducing the real money they needed to settle their obligations, and this severely undermined the credibility of their bills. The passage of the Paper Act caused severe inflation in the Barbadian economy. In 1706–1707, the value of the Barbadian currency relative to London sterling reached the weakest point it attained during the whole period between 1687 and 1775, with £100 in London sterling equalling £180 in Barbadian currency.<sup>116</sup> For merchants and for the metropole, this brought inconvenience and losses. Those who held bills had to pay 8 per cent of their value for holding them, and most of the profit went to those who issued the bills, rather than creditors. If bills depreciated, the wealth of the person holding them would shrink. Moreover, a creditor who had lent his money upon good securities, such as mortgages, judgements and the like, had to surrender these securities, and take bills for them. Besides, the Act required the treasurer of the island to accept bills in payment for excise, taxes and all other impositions, which would hurt the queen's revenue. Last, but not least, the bills impeded normal trade between Barbados and other islands, as it was felt that the currency of bills in the island would reduce the currency of money there; if traders received nothing but bills in payment, they would lack a sufficient quantity of cash and might choose to desert the island if they were ruined.

To argue for the repeal of the Act, a merchant group led by George Lillington, together with the Royal African Company, petitioned the Board of Trade at the time it was passed, alleging that the Act 'was destructive of trade and injurious to the property of her Majesty's subjects trading to that island.'<sup>117</sup> Another petition signed by forty-three merchants in Barbados, including William Heysham and Guy Ball, was sent to the Board of Council in November 1706. It argued that the Act was in fact promoted by some assemblymen to solve their debt problems, for 'no person be a

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<sup>116</sup> McCusker, *Money and Exchange*, p. 241.

<sup>117</sup> *JBTP, Vol 1, Apr. 1704–Jan. 1709*, pp. 297–82, Merchants for copy of an Act to supply the want of cash, Sep. 1706 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/jrnl-trade-plantations/vol1/pp279-281>].

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Member of Councill there who has been either a contriver, promoter or encourager of such differences, either by voting for the Paper Act or Triennial Bill, or is considerably in debt'.<sup>118</sup>

Both the Paper Act and the Triennial Bill incurred the wrath of London and were soon repealed by the Board of Trade. According to their report, some of the councillors were deeply engaged in 'ill practices that have occasion'd these distractions', and 'incumbered with Law-suits and debts and unfit for the discharge of that Trust'. The Board was convinced that the councillors who voted for the Act did so merely to secure their own solvency.<sup>119</sup> And they suggested the replacement of those who promoted the Paper Act with merchants and 'others concerned in the trade of Barbadoes'. According to the Board, there were eight councillors involved in the promotion of the Paper Act,

Wm. Sharpe: Much in debt: an execution against him. He was for the Paper Bill, and paid severall of his debts with those Bills.

Thomas Merrick: For the Bill. Dead.

Samuel Cox: Much in debt and for the Bill.

Wm. Cleland: For the Bill. The promoter of all their disorders.

John Mills: Much in debt; for the Bill and has paid off a judgment of 1,000l. in Bills.

James Colleton: For the Bill (Dead).

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<sup>118</sup> *CSPC: Vol 23, 1706–1708*, pp. 286–307, William Heysham and other Barbados Merchants to the CTP, 8 Nov. 1706 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp286-307>].

<sup>119</sup> *CSPC, Vol 23, 1706–1708*, pp. 286–307, CTP to Mr. Sec. Hedges, 8 Nov. 1706 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp286-307>]; *ibid.*, pp. 307–23, CTP to the Queen, 19 Nov. 1706 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp307-323>].



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Alex. Walker: Very much in debt, a promoter of ye Bill.

Middleton Chamberlain: In debt, very much involved in Law.<sup>120</sup>

## **Factional Disputes Beyond Planters and Merchants**

Under the pressure from London, the planters who voted for the Act divided into two factions. One was led by planters who firmly supported the act, including John Holder, William Cleland, and James Colleton; the other led by William Sharpe, the president of the council who increasingly sought to distance themselves from it. Sharpe's alliance included Samuel Cox, John Milles, Alexander Walker, Raynes Bate and Samuel Beresford. In this period, the division among Barbadian white elites witnessed a transformation from merchant-planter conflicts to that based on other factors such as political ambitions, patronage, kinship and personal rivalries. In the story of William Sharpe and Governor Mitford Crowe, planter and merchant groups divided and reunited, growing into new factions and promoting policies that suited their interests. Although the expansion of sugar plantation had changed the political status of planters and merchants, and financial conflicts and the quest for power naturally divided them into different camps, it does not necessarily mean that they were two completely separate and opposite groups. In fact, planters and merchants co-operated on occasion as well as competing in the spheres of politics and economics.

Like the others in the planter faction, Sharpe came from a big planter family in Barbados. His father, William Sharpe the Elder, bequeathed 260 acres in St Thomas and 220 acres in St Joseph to him in 1683. After inheriting these plantations, Sharpe started his career in the council around 1697, and served several times subsequently.<sup>121</sup> The real reason for his disagreements with the Holder party is unknown, but there are grounds for thinking that Sharpe was unlikely to build a firm

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Barbados Department of Archives, *Hughes-Queree Index of Plantations*, 1680 [consulted at Legacies of British Slave-ownership, <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/estate/view/9642>].

partnership with Holder because the latter was involved in an inheritance dispute between Sharpe and his sister, Elizabeth.<sup>122</sup> Members of the merchant faction offered explanations about Sharpe's changing attitudes, claiming that he was 'very much in debt' when he promoted the Paper Act, but changed his attitude in order to win the favour of the Board of Trade and retain his office; for if he continued to be a member of the council, 'no prosecutions could be made against him to oblige him to pay his just debts'.<sup>123</sup> This was proven by Crowe, who later argued that the reason Sharpe resented him was because the courts sat more frequently during his government. He further noted that Sharpe 'owes the sum of £15,739 by judgments, besides what he owes on bonds and open accounts'.<sup>124</sup> In other words, the real motivation for Sharpe to follow the instructions of the mother country was to win its trust and stay in power, so that he could easily use his authority as president to eradicate his debts or at least protect him from suitors.

Sharpe's faction was a combination of planters and merchants. John Milles was one of the planter supporters of the Paper Act, like Sharpe, but Raynes Bate was an agent of the Royal African Company who entered the council on the recommendation of Sharpe. Sharpe also developed a good relationship with Major Pilgrim who was supported by some merchants on the island.<sup>125</sup> Samuel Cox had held several roles in the government. He served in the naval office from 1699 to 1707 and was one of the commissioners of the 4½ per cent duty between 1700 and 1701. Beresford was first placed in the council by Sharpe during the period of his presidency, and was dependent on him. As for Alexander Walker, his family had close economic and kin

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<sup>122</sup> 'Appeals to the Privy Council', vol. 2, pp. 363-65 [consulted at [https://amesfoundation.law.harvard.edu/ColonialAppeals/CaribAppeals/report\\_carib\\_mysql.php?report\\_no=BAR\\_1701\\_01](https://amesfoundation.law.harvard.edu/ColonialAppeals/CaribAppeals/report_carib_mysql.php?report_no=BAR_1701_01)].

<sup>123</sup> *JBTP, Vol 1, Apr. 1704–Jan. 1709*, pp. 420-30, Merchants about Col. Sharp's being in debt. Nov. 1707 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/jrnl-trade-plantations/vol1/pp420-430>].

<sup>124</sup> *CSPC, Vol 24, 1708–1709*, pp. 123-41, Gov. Crowe's Reply to the foregoing complaint, 2 Nov. 1708 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp123-141>].

<sup>125</sup> *JBTP, Vol 1, Apr. 1704–Jan. 1709*, pp. 410-20, Merchants' memorial recommending Major Pilgrim to be of the Council, Oct. 1707 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/jrnl-trade-plantations/vol1/pp410-420>].

relations with both the Sharpe family and the Alleyne family, and he started his service in the assembly around 1700.

Sharpe's shift in attitude towards the Paper Act was opportunistic. Realising the extent of domestic resentment of the act, Sharpe completely changed his tune. In the name of remedying the bad effects of the act, Sharpe proposed the re-election of the assembly, which he maintained was manipulated by people with vested interests, and this was supported by the merchant groups. We cannot rule out the possibility that he was seizing the opportunity to remove enemies and put people he trusted into the assembly in their place. The Holder faction of planters was strongly against the dissolution, absented themselves from the council and refused to publish the writs directed to them. Accordingly, they were attacked by Sharpe's faction as people with a vested interest in the Paper Act. According to Sharpe, in order to ensure the successful passage of the paper money scheme, the faction 'adhering to Col. Holder [had tried] to prevent a Grand Jury from presenting some of the greivances of the Island, and particularly relating to the paper-money'.<sup>126</sup>

Sharpe managed to remove Holder and Cleland from the council, and although his alliances included people of a mercantile background, he did not mean to co-operate with all merchants. Indeed, he publicly stated that he also did not want to consider Downes or William Cole to fill the vacancies because they were 'constant inflamers of the people'.<sup>127</sup> His ally Samuel Cox, who was now also the chief judge, nominated the petty juries chosen by himself. Two jurors, John Sandford and John Dorn petitioned to have a right to be consulted in the empanelling, but Cox refused and affirmed that he had the sole right of empanelling juries, and Dorn and Sandford were put into prison.

In January 1707, Sharpe managed to dissolve the assembly and call a new one.

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<sup>126</sup> *CSPC, Vol 23, 1706–1708*, pp. 344–66, Col. Sharpe to the CTP, 2 Jan. 1707 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp344-366>].

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 395–416, Col. Sharpe to the CTP, 24 Mar. 1707 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp395-416>].

Yet the newly called assembly did not behave as he expected. Under the influence of Cleland, Colleton and Holder, it introduced a new act that was in fact an attempt to re-enact the old Paper Act for a further fifteen months.<sup>128</sup> Sharpe reported that the assemblymen ‘(by the instigation of some factious and restless persons) have acted so disrespectfully to the Government, that we were obliged to give some publick check to their irregularities’.<sup>129</sup>

Within the colony, the factional war grew bitterly with heated debates about public office and political purges, and external to the colony, the lobbying war retained the pressure on the Board of Trade. In order to fight back, Sharpe’s enemies presented articles against him before the Board in May 1707. The accusations included claims that he had issued commissions without the advice and consent of the council threatening to suspend councillors without giving a cause, dissolving the assembly arbitrarily, and assuming himself the authority of governor.<sup>130</sup> In the meantime, justices Sandford and Dorn also complained to the Board regarding Cox’s attempts to name the petty juries by himself.<sup>131</sup> Later, Sharpe was involved in a corruption scandal about the Paper Act, and with the appointment of the new governor, Mitford Crowe, the factional contentions evolved into disputes among three groups – the Holders, the Sharpes and the Lillington-Downes alliance.

## Corruption and Scandal about the Paper Act

Governor Mitford Crowe, who was sent to the island in 1707, had long-established

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<sup>128</sup> *CSPC, Vol 23, 1706–1708*, pp. 395–416, Col. Sharpe to the CTP, 24 Mar. 1707 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp395-416>].

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 426–42, Col. Sharpe to the Council of Trade and Plantations, 8 May 1707 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp426-442>].

<sup>130</sup> *JBTP, Vol 1, Apr. 1704–Jan. 1709*, pp. 347–70, Hearing upon the petition of Colonel Cleland, &c. against Colonel Sharpe, May 1707 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/jrnl-trade-plantations/vol1/pp347-370>].

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, Hearing upon the petition of Sandford and Dorn against Mr. Cox, May 1707 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/jrnl-trade-plantations/vol1/pp347-370>].

connections with Barbados.<sup>132</sup> Crowe was supposed to take the office of Barbadian governor by the order of William III in 1702, but as a politician with a Whig background, his appointment was overturned after the king's death and the decisive victory of the Tories in the general election. He was replaced by Granville.<sup>133</sup> By 1707 the Tory-leaning administration had given way to a more moderate, even Whiggish one. As a young man, Crowe was apprenticed to a Barbados merchant, Mr Tillard, and his second wife was the widow of Sir Willoughby Chamberlain, a prominent Barbados planter. In 1700 he served as one of the agents of Barbados. During his government, Crowe's relationship with John Cleland, one of the leading promoters of the Paper Act, and with the planter faction, was attacked by politicians of the Sharpe faction. Samuel Cox complained to his brother Charles in London that Cleland had referred to Crowe as his 'bird', and had claimed that 'when his bird came he would do all our businesses, and make a greater turn than he had done in Sir Bevill's time'.<sup>134</sup> The behaviour of Crowe partly confirmed this complaint. It is not clear that Crowe was Cleland's 'bird', but it is certain that he sided with Cleland's faction, and protected their interests.

Before arriving on the island, Crowe was plunged into a judicial dispute with Butler Chamberlain, sister of Sir Willoughby Chamberlain, and her husband Manuel Gilligan. Willoughby had left his estate to his wife, Urania, subsequently Lady Crowe. According to the appeal of Butler and Gilligan, Crowe and his friend Cleland, had seized a portion of estate bequeathed to Butler by her father Edward Chamberlain.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Before he was appointed governor, Crowe had been MP for Southampton (1701–2); he was also a commercial agent at Genoa in 1705, and was then employed as 'Envoy Extraordinary' to the King of Spain from 7 Sep. 1705 to 27 Aug. 1706. See *CTB, Vol 21, 1706-1707*, pp. 67–84, Warrant Books: 26 Oct. 1706 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-treasury-books/vol21/pp67-84>]; Henry L. Snyder (ed.), *The Marlborough-Godolphin Correspondence, Vol. 1* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), p. 531.

<sup>133</sup> Biography of Mitford Crowe, ODNB [consulted at <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/6819>].

<sup>134</sup> *CSPC, Vol 23, 1706–1708*, pp. 555–79, Mr. Cox to the CTP, Southwark, 21 Oct. 1707 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp555-579>].

<sup>135</sup> *CSPC, Vol 24, 1708–1709*, pp. 123–41, Gov. Crowe to the CTP, 2 Nov. 1708 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp123-141>]; 'Appeals to the Privy Council', vol 2, 593–96 [consulted at <https://>]

Another Barbadian councillor and member of Sharpe's faction, Major John Pilgrim, was also involved. His brother, Thomas Pilgrim, bought the estate from Butler Chamberlain and thus joined Butler and Gilligan in attacking Crowe for his illegal seizure.<sup>136</sup>

In May 1707, Crowe took office under instruction to examine the promoters of the Paper Act and to remove those who were miscreants. However, during his two years' government, Crowe showed little regard for instructions from London. Furthermore, he continued to use his authority as governor to protect his alliances and remove his enemies from public office. Three months after he took office, the assembly identified several promoters of the act in their report, including William Sharpe, his brother-in-law James Cowse, Alexander Walker in the council, and John Holder in the assembly. According to the report, Sharpe had received £500 from the office erected by virtue of the Act. Although the power of the Act was solely in Holder's hands, Walker was to receive from Holder a large proportion of the profits, and did actually receive £527.<sup>137</sup> Besides, Major Dudley Woodbridge, John Milles and Middleton Chamberlain had, the report said, supported the act in order to obtain advantageous credit for themselves, and received money from the office. John Holder was alleged to have bribed Major Woodbridge with £1,000 of public money; and William Walker was said to have received £200 from his brother, Alexander, by consent of Holder, for soliciting support for the bill in the house. This list equally attacked members of both the Sharpe and Holder factions, but only Sharpe and his allies were punished by Crowe.

After reading the report of the assembly about the promoters of the act, Crowe

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[amesfoundation.law.harvard.edu/ColonialAppeals/CaribAppeals/report\\_carib\\_mysql.php?report\\_no=BAR\\_1709\\_01](http://amesfoundation.law.harvard.edu/ColonialAppeals/CaribAppeals/report_carib_mysql.php?report_no=BAR_1709_01)].

<sup>136</sup> *CSPC, Vol 24, 1708–1709*, pp. 182-93, Petition of Thomas Pilgrim to the Queen, 30 Dec. 1708 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp182-193>].

<sup>137</sup> *CSPC, Vol 23, 1706–1708*, pp. 518-37, Resolves of the Assembly of Barbados against the promoters of the Act for a Paper Credit, 8 Aug. 1707 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp518-537>].

suspended four of them, all of whom belonged to the Sharpe faction, these being Sharpe himself, Walker, Cox and Mills. However, he turned a blind eye to the complaints about his allies Cleland and Holder. The suspended four had in fact publicly expressed their disagreement with the act; but Crowe's concern was to use the assembly's report to get rid of them in the council. The Board of Trade, however, was dissatisfied with Crowe's public support of the Holder faction, and disapproved of his turning people out simply because they had voted for the Paper Act. The Board understood the drawbacks of a plantocracy, and was seeking to lessen the political leverage of Cleland and Holder's party, and to achieve a balance between the merchants and planters. Accordingly, soon after Crowe's suspensions, orders from the Board of Trade were received which restored Sharpe and the three other councillors, and dismissed Holder and Cleland.

Cleland was removed from the council and all other employments in the island, for endeavouring to 'promote sedition, encourage faction, and as far as in him lay, falsely and scandalously to libel and villify the Government'.<sup>138</sup> Holder ought to have been removed as well, but Crowe did not follow the instruction from London: he ordered Holder's readmission, and later explained that he had misunderstood the crown's warrant. In the meantime, upon the petition of John Holder in November 1707, the council of Barbados decided to 'relieve him from the clause in the Act for *ascertaining the payment of bills*, obliging him to refund 2,592l. 6s. 10d., being the commission given him under the *Paper Act*'.<sup>139</sup> Clearly, this was a strategy by the Holder faction to extricate him from the corruption scandal of the Paper Act.

This behaviour triggered resentment from both planters and merchants on the island. Beresford, a councillor belonging to Sharpe's faction, complained that 'the Governour has espoused Cleland and Holder soe farr that he has mightily lost

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., pp. 446-73, CTP to the Queen, 10 June 1707 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp446-473>].

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., pp. 579-602, Gov. Crowe to the CTP, 5 Nov. 1707 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp579-602>].

himself'.<sup>140</sup> In February 1708, two inhabitants of Barbados, William Heysham and John Royle petitioned the Board of Trade, referring to 'recent irregularities by the Governor and Council of Barbados, Nov., 1707, in favor of Col. Cleland and Col. Holder'.<sup>141</sup> More importantly, the assembly also stood against the council in this decision. It resolved that the action of the council in suspending the proceedings against Holder was illegal and led to the oppression of the island's subjects: the governor and council had no power to dispense with any law legally passed.

However, the governor and the Holder faction did not have to suffer this pressure for long – they soon found new allies with some merchants as well. At this point the political climate in Barbados witnessed a dramatic change. Unlike party politics at home, factions in colonies did not develop their own continuous ideology and grow into a solid community – they were more interest-oriented, like factions at home. In addition, the disagreements between different factions and faction members were usually not ineradicable, which contributed to the frequent unite and division of inhabitants, as well as the co-operation between different factions, even though they were enemies before. During this process, the colonial politics shifted quite rapidly, with different factions going up and down. And all these made it difficult to navigate a way through them.

Under the pressure from the Sharpe faction and the council controlled by them, some of the merchants inclined towards co-operation with their previous enemies, the Holders. This willingness to co-operate with a rival faction indicates that members of factions could be flexible if it served their interests. Crowe made two new judges after his arrival, one of whom was Downes, and stated that before he knew Downes personally he had entertained some misunderstandings about him, but that he now had to acknowledge his satisfaction with him.<sup>142</sup> Crowe's behaviour showed the

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid., pp. 633-52, S. Berresford to [? *Mr. Popple*], 26 Jan. 1708 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp633-652>].

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., pp. 675-80, Mr. Heysham and Mr. Royle to the CTP, 23 Feb. 1708 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp675-680>].

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.



possibility of co-operation between enemy factions under the condition of shared interests. His conduct was regarded by his enemy, the Sharpe faction, as a trick to escalate the factional contentions: ‘he has only added warmth and violence to our animosities by countenancing and cherishing sometimes one party, sometimes another’.<sup>143</sup>

In September 1708, Sharpe, Walker and Beresford petitioned the Board of Trade about Crowe’s arbitrary government. Their first accusation concerned his misuse of power. For example, Crowe was said to have interfered in cases of chancery, ‘assuming the role of chancellor’, and had manipulated several cases including the one between himself and Gilligan. This was, Sharpe argued, the main reason he was removed by Crowe from the council.<sup>144</sup> Crowe had also, the petitioners contended, exacted extra fees from litigants, and received considerable presents from them, and some subjects had been imprisoned ‘for supposed contempt in not obeying illegal and arbitrary orders and extrajudicial orders made by him’.<sup>145</sup> Their second complaint concerned Crowe’s encroachment of the patent offices. The petitioners alleged that Crowe had obliged all masters of ships to pay his private secretary before they sailed, even when they had already made payment to other offices; as the secretary Alexander Skene complained, ‘they have doubly payd [paid] for the same, which is a burthen upon trade’.<sup>146</sup> In the naval office, officer Samuel Cox complained that the Governor was not satisfied with his resignation of the whole profits of the naval office, but claimed his authority of appointing the naval officer. This was apparently contrary to his instructions, since the nomination of the naval officer was a matter for the crown, not for the governor. Even if the patentees had misbehaved, he ought to have waited until a judicial determination had been made and represented the matter to the queen,

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid., pp. 83-104, Messrs. Sharpe, Walker and Beresford to the CTP, 3 Sep. 1708 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp83-104>].

<sup>144</sup> William Sharpe, *The Case of William Sharpe Esq.* (London, 1712), pp. 3-4.

<sup>145</sup> *CSPC, Vol 24, 1708–1709*, pp. 437-57, CTP to the Queen, 19 Aug. 1709 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp437-457>].

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

instead of making his own decision.

Major Pilgrim wrote to the Earl of Stamford, complaining that Crowe and the assembly were projecting another Paper Act, which was also the reason why he suspended members of the Sharpe faction. Besides,

He [Crowe] has now severall suits depending in the Chancery where he is Judge in his own cause...he has a Judge in the precincts where his causes are to be tryed, that will doe what he will have him; the said Judg is Speaker of the Assembly [Downes] and is more in debt than he is worth.<sup>147</sup>

Crowe denied most of the accusations, and suspended the three petitioners several days later for presenting a scandalous libel. He also argued that the real reason for the accusations was the assembly's intention to try Alexander Walker. When attacked by the merchant faction in the assembly, the Walkers 'by many applications and insinuations endeavoured to gain the same credit and power with me [Crowe] that they formerly had with Sir B. Granville', supposing that that was their only means of avoiding the legal penalties.<sup>148</sup> Finding that such efforts were in vain, Alexander Walker then prevailed upon Sharpe and Beresford to join him in framing 'the libel'.

However, Crowe's repeated violation of instructions triggered resentments at home. In January 1709, the Board of Trade claimed that the complaints of the three petitioners were not without ground, and that there was no good reason for the governor to suspend the complainants from the council: 'we do humbly propose that the suspension of the said Counsellors, William Sharpe, Alexander Walker and Samuel Beresford be taken off, and that they be restored to their respective places in

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid., pp. 123-41, Major Pilgrim to the Earl of Stamford, 2 Nov. 1708 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp123-141>].

<sup>148</sup> According to the deposition of Mrs. Cryer, 'Alexander Walker approached Governor Crowe through her, offering to withdraw the charges against him and to pay him £800 sterl. down and a very handsome present every six months, as they had done Sir B. Granville, if he would join there [*sic*] party in the Assembly'. Ibid., pp. 300-22, Gov. Crowe to the CTP, 28 May, 1709 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp300-322>].

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that your Majesty's Council'.<sup>149</sup>

This was another order which Crowe did not intend to obey. He managed to adjourn the meeting of council that was supposed to restore the three, and worked with the assembly to pass an address complaining that the restoration of the three had occasioned a general consternation and great dissatisfaction in the inhabitants.<sup>150</sup> Crowe also emphasised the disputes between the Sharpe faction and the assembly, and the potential disruption brought by their restoration:

Another reason I had for suspending the swearing of said Gentlemen was, the aversion they have for the Members of the present Assembly, who have such interest in their country that it's impossible by any dissolution to alter, and in admitting the three Members, they with Mr. Cox and Mr. Pilgrim would have had a majority in Council, so have stopt all publick business, and infallibly ruined the Island.<sup>151</sup>

But Crowe's arguments did not convince the mother country. The queen chastised him and commanded him to restore the three petitioners: 'we resent your disrespect in disobeying our directions Jan. 24, 1707/8, etc. We command you ... to admit Messrs. Sharpe, Walker and Beresford to the Council, and comply with the Order of Dec. 30 last, etc.'<sup>152</sup> Due to his disobedience, and to the endless complaints, Crowe was recalled in October 1709 to answer the accusations against him, and Lillington was appointed as the president of the council again.

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., pp. 214-30, CTP to the Queen, 11 Feb. 1709, Whitehall [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp214-230>].

<sup>150</sup> The ten Assemblymen who voted for the address were Richard Downes, speaker, Thomas Maycock, treasurer, Thomas Maxwell, Edmund Sutton, Thomas Horne, Thomas Neal, Samuel Husbands, William Terril, William Grant, and James Vaughan.

<sup>151</sup> *CSPC, Vol 24, 1708-1709*, pp. 437-57, pp. 300-22, Gov. Crowe to the CTP, 18 May 1709 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp300-322>].

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., pp. 408-26, The Queen to Gov. Crowe, St. James's, 2 July 1709 [consulted at *British History Online*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp408-426>].

The governorship of Crowe was over, but factional politics in Barbados continued. The recall of Crowe marked the fall of his allies as well, and the island was left in the hands of the two remaining factions – the council controlled by the Sharpes and the assembly controlled by the Downes faction, with the council and assembly becoming the bases from which antagonisms were fought out. After Crowe's removal, their disputes returned to an old issue: the appointment of the treasurer. The assembly recommended Downes and Guy Ball, another member of the merchant faction, successively for the position; the council rejected these and nominated Raynes Bate instead, but he was rejected by the assembly. The dispute lasted for more than a year, with some members of the council pressing for the dissolution of the assembly and election of a new one. The dispute also raised a constitutional issue: the assembly insisted that the council should not interfere in the nomination of the treasurer, because the council was close to the governor, and a treasurer nominated by the council would therefore look after the governor's money, not the people's. In the end, the attorney and solicitor general at home decided that according to the former tradition, the assembly possessed the right of nominating the treasurer, and 'it will be best to putt an end to this dispute by H.M. sending instructions to the Governor and Councill in Barbadoes to allow of such appointments by the Generall Assembly'.<sup>153</sup>

Putting an end to disputes nevertheless proved an elusive aim. When Robert Lowther was appointed governor in 1710, Sharpe and his allies continued to lead the opposition in government, and during Lowther's first recall between 1714 and 1715 Sharpe temporarily controlled it as president of the council. More importantly, the contention between the governor and Sharpe's faction was also closely linked with the partisan atmosphere at home, which will be further discussed in chapter 5.

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<sup>153</sup> *CSPC, Vol 25, 1710–1711*, pp. 214–20, Lord Dartmouth to the CTP, 25 Sep. 1710 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol25/pp214-220>].

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## Conclusion

Factions were an ongoing theme of colonial politics under the domination of planters and merchants, and the 1706 Paper Act offers a window to examine how the colonial factions were organised and functioned in the context of the financial revolution and pressure on the currency, both of which disturbed vested interests among planters and merchants. The land bank scheme in Barbados was undoubtedly influenced by domestic examples, but also developed according to the demands of local elites, especially considering that Barbadian trading activities were heavily dependent on credit compared with the colonies of the American continent or mother country.

In the factional disputes, we see both public and private triggers of divisions within the ruling class, for example, over political or economic interests, private ambitions, and personal relations. Through the rise and decline of factions, we can trace the transformations of the dominant possessing classes in the colonies.

Barbadian factional politics emerged in the context of merchant–planter rivalries and financial disorders, in particular the debt relations between the two dominant groups. However, there was not only competition but also co-operation between planters and merchants. Factions could be flexible in the pursuit of their interests, even to the extent of embracing a common cause with their erstwhile enemies, because for Barbadian inhabitants, shared interests were more consolidated bonds than their economic identities.

Frequent shifts in political power and the high turnover of personnel, together with a lobby war aimed at influencing the Board of Trade, were key features of factional politics in the colonies. In the mother country, factions would disappear when key figures lost the ability to grant patronage.<sup>154</sup> The patron–client relationship

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<sup>154</sup> For example, when discussing the reasons for the Grenvillite faction's decline in the early nineteenth century, James Sack maintains 'the loss of control over parliamentary boroughs after the passage of the Reform Bill, coupled with economical reform legislation, left a substantial gap in the Grenvilles' ability to reward their partisans with seats in parliament or with sinecures'. See James J. Sack, 'The Decline of the Grenvillite Faction', p. 112.

was to some extent replicated in the colonies. Politicians in power tended to install their favourites and supporters in important offices – thus Beresford was put into the council by Sharpe, and Samuel Cox nominated the petty juries chosen by himself. Correspondingly, the rise of one faction usually meant the loss of public office for another. Suspension and removal of enemies were common tricks played by factions to secure an advantage, for political purges were effective means by which those in positions of authority could achieve their goals and ensure their power could be wielded smoothly. Accordingly, a giddy turnover in personnel became one of the key features both of party politics at home and of factional politics in the colonies. In England, 121 excise officers, about 10 per cent of the total establishment, were discharged for political reasons between June 1694 and June 1695, and a decade later, also in the excise department, 120 officers were dismissed for political offences.<sup>155</sup> In the colonies, it was also an unspoken custom for government leaders to replace their enemies in important positions with their allies. In this sense, political purges were a feature of the whole period of colonial factional politics.

In addition, the fierce contentions between hostile factions also caused discontinuity in government policy and endless scandals. Through analysis of the formation and development of factions in Barbados, we can see the way council and assembly became a plaything of factional conflicts, and the way colonial politicians used their authority to promote their interests and achieve their goals, such as by manipulating legislation and elections, controlling public offices, delaying the judicial process, and attacking their enemies for misuse of power. It was unusual that one faction enjoyed unfettered authority. Most of the time an opposing faction had sufficient power for factional contentions to cause political disruption in the colonies.

With the intensification of sophisticated conflicts in colonial societies, frequent correspondence between colonies and the mother country became significant for political antagonists. Through the help of colonial agents and domestic supporters,

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<sup>155</sup> Brewer, *The Sinews of Power*, p. 61.

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politicians raised accusations and defended their reputations in front of the Board of Trade and Privy Council. Agents could be the political allies of politicians political, their friends or relatives who either remained at home or returned with supporting evidence. The two governors, Granville and Crowe, displayed different attitudes towards the lobbying war in the mother country. The former nominated agents to represent him in front of the Board and they successfully defended his reputation. The latter, meanwhile, only sent letters and documents back when his enemy petitioned against him. It may be arbitrary to conclude that Crowe was recalled because he failed to wage this lobbying war, but the different results experienced by the two governors to some extent support this suggestion.

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## **Chapter 3: Violence, Interests and the Death of Daniel Parke in the Leeward Islands**

The murder of Daniel Parke, the governor-general of the Leeward Islands between 1706 and 1710, was an unprecedented episode in Caribbean colonial history. As discussed in previous chapters, scandals and disputes were widespread in the Caribbean colonies during the early modern period, and violence was routinely meted out to slaves and was not uncommon between the white elite; but Parke's case was the only one that resulted in a governor's death. This case went beyond verbal squabbling and escalated into a barbarous military uprising, and it raises a number of questions which this chapter will seek to answer. What caused the tensions that caused this colonial society erupt into violence, contributing to a governor's death? Under what circumstances would colonists take the risk of committing treason to conduct a rebellion against their governor, the representative of the crown? What was the role of interest groups and factional politics in the episode? And how did colonial politicians seek to disseminate the story in a way that was advantageous to themselves and that made their behaviour appear reasonable? Through an examination of the different versions of the story supplied by Parke's defenders and by the Antiguan planters, this chapter argues that Parke's case was a product of his conflicts with local interest groups related to land distribution, judicial corruption, illegal trade and constitutional issues, and was also an outcome of Parke's attempts to use public authorities to attack private enemies. Parke's murder was not a premeditated plot, but was an extreme case arising from complex tensions in the colony.

A number of historians have discussed the reasons for Parke's death. Some have pointed to Parke's sexual misbehaviour. For example, Natalie Zacek attributes Parke's death to his notorious sexual history, in particular to his affair with Catharine Chester,





Figure 1. Daniel Parke (1664/5-1710), by John Closterman, c. 1705. The Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia. Cited from James Falkner, 'Parke, Daniel', *ODNB*.

the wife of one of his key enemies, Edward Chester.<sup>1</sup> Sarah Barber argues that ‘Parke governed uppity Leeward Islands’ men by laying sovereign possession over their wives and daughters’.<sup>2</sup> In addition to Catharine, he also tried to ‘ravish’ Mrs Du Saussay, whose husband worked at the customs house and was dismissed and chased off the island by Parke.<sup>3</sup> The governor even had a sexual relationship with Lucia, wife of his chief defender, George French.<sup>4</sup> Contrary to social conventions, Parke was frank about these affairs, and even publicly acknowledged his daughter with Catharine Chester, naming her Lucy, which was his mother’s name and also the name of one of his legitimate daughters in Virginia.<sup>5</sup> Parke’s sexual activities triggered resentments on the part of the colonial inhabitants, since Parke was not only committing adultery but also showing contempt for the patriarchal order of the society. Thomas Humphrey has discussed how violence was used by colonists to impose the rules of behaviour that nearly all people in the community followed.<sup>6</sup> In the eighteenth century, crowds in the New England and Middle Atlantic colonies assaulted those who committed adultery or bigamy, turning to traditional rough music practices to express their grievances and punish their targets’ deviant behaviour.<sup>7</sup> In Parke’s case, inhabitants defended patriarchal social norms by turning Parke out of his office and taking his life.

However, Parke’s death was not only related to his personal life. Another explanation advanced by scholars is that his administration continually violated colonial people’s rights as Englishmen. Zacek writes: ‘It was Parke’s misfortune to have taken command of the Leewards at a moment when the islands’ Assemblies were

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<sup>1</sup> Zacek, *Settler Society*, p. 191.

<sup>2</sup> Barber, *The Disputatious Caribbean*, p. 163.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Helen Hill Miller, *Colonel Parke of Virginia: ‘The Greatest Hector in the Town’: A Biography* (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books, 1989), p. 198.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Humphrey, ‘The Anatomy of a Crowd: Making Mobs in Early America’, *Journal of Early American History*, 5 (2015), p. 72.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 68-72; William Pencak, Matthew Dennis and Simon P. Newman (eds), *Riot and Revelry in Early America* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002).

in a mood to test their authority by claiming ever greater powers, most of which were at the expense of the Crown and its representative, the governor.’<sup>8</sup> Stephen Webb, on the other hand, argues that Parke’s death was emblematic of the decline of his patron the Duke of Marlborough, and was due to the influence of shifts in the metropolitan power relations of Whigs and Tories.<sup>9</sup>

These accounts provide accurate, partial explanations of Parke’s death, but an in-depth analysis of the episode reveals that his murder was also closely connected to the complex political culture of the colony, in particular to the affairs of powerful local elites and their overlapping networks of interests in the spheres of property, economic activity, and the administration of justice. The local elites both contested and co-operated with each other in these areas, and continually manipulated the affairs of the colony to defend their interests. When these interests were threatened by people from outside, such as Daniel Parke, the elites exerted their power to remove the threat. For example, in the Leewards, as in many other Caribbean colonies, illegal trade was an established way to create wealth both for the white elites and for the colonial government. Parke’s harsh attitude towards such enterprise made him an enemy of most merchants.

Issues relating to the colony’s security were also at stake. Surrounded by Dutch and French colonies, and with Montserrat full of Irish people and St Kitts half-occupied by the French, threats to the Leewards came both from inside and from outside, and this made the maintenance of military forces and fortifications of great importance. Correspondingly, the issues of regiments and money bills, together with the constitutional conflicts that accompanied these issues, became the concern of every governor of the Leewards. The immediate trigger of Parke’s murder was his constitutional conflict with Antigua’s assembly over the issue of a money bill and the assembly’s privileges. Finally, Parke’s death was also the result of his attempt to blur

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<sup>8</sup> Zacek, *Settler Society in the English Leeward Islands*, p. 225.

<sup>9</sup> Stephen Saunders Webb, *Marlborough’s America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), pp. 267-90.

the line between public and private by using the power of the governor to attack his personal enemies.

In short, Parke was resented for multiple reasons. He was seen by Christopher Codrington the Younger, his predecessor, as having taken the position of governor that should have been occupied by Codrington himself; for Anthony Hodges, the lieutenant governor of Montserrat, Parke was a threat to the island's economic interests due to his attitude towards illegal trade; for Edward Chester, Parke was a challenge to patriarchal and masculine norms in the colonial society. Of course, these factors, while conceptually distinct, were in practice combined. To fight back against his opponents, Parke chose to combine the fulfilment of his instructions with attacks on the people concerned, both in relation to land grants and in relation to illegal trade, which will be discussed further in the following chapters.

The Leeward Islands, as governed by Parke, consisted of four islands: Montserrat, Antigua, Nevis, and St Christopher Island, also called St Kitts. Antigua is the largest of these islands, being approximately 108 square miles; it is also the flattest, and was therefore the only one on which planters were able to turn the majority of the land over to sugar production.<sup>10</sup> St Kitts and Nevis lie closely together. The former was widely regarded as producing the highest-quality sugar in the West Indies, but was occupied jointly by the English and French for a long period; the latter served as the administrative centre of the Leewards in the first twenty-five years after the colony gained its independence from Barbados in 1670.<sup>11</sup> Montserrat is the southernmost of the four islands; its economic development was significantly restricted by its lack of harbours. It was referred to as 'Ireland's only colony', and as 'the Emerald Isle of the Caribbean', because of the large number of Irish people there. The Irish inhabitants were a cause of concern because as Catholics they 'may be expected to welcome Papists, and particularly the French'.<sup>12</sup> The four islands were

<sup>10</sup> Zacek, *Settler Society in the English Leeward Islands*, p. 16.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>12</sup> *CSPC, Vol 13, 1689-1692*, pp. 224-43, Gov. Codrington to the LTP, 1 Mar. 1690 [consulted at

surrounded by colonies of other empires – to the northwest lies Saint Eustatius, which was Dutch, and to the southeast lie Guadeloupe and Martinique which were French. This situation increased cross-national trade but also made the Leewards vulnerable to military attack.

Colonisation of the Leeward Islands began early in the seventeenth century. In 1627, Charles I issued letters patent to the Earl of Carlisle, granting him proprietary rights over the Caribbean islands lying between ten and twenty degrees north.<sup>13</sup> In 1647, the Earl of Carlisle died a bankrupt and his son leased the Caribbean islands which were subject to the patent to Lord Willoughby for twenty-one years, on condition that half the revenue be paid to Carlisle's creditors.<sup>14</sup> Due to their lack of military strength, the Leewards were governed from Barbados and were under its protection against foreign enemies until 1670. However, the four islands grew more and more restive due to Barbados's reluctance to protect them and to aid them in the development of their sugar industries. When enduring military attacks, the inhabitants of the Leewards were convinced that Barbados's failure to come to their assistance was rooted in jealousy, because the Leewards were producing better quality sugar and indigo.<sup>15</sup> Hence, in 1670 the Leeward Islands were separated from Barbados and re-created as their own federated colony by order of the Lords of Trade. The subsequent government of the Leewards was to some extent different from that of other colonies in the Caribbean, because in addition to a governor who took charge of the four islands, each island had its own lieutenant governor as well as a council and assembly; more importantly, each had its own laws – the acts passed by one island legislature did not apply to the other islands, and it was not easy to enforce a united

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<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp224-243>.

<sup>13</sup> Cecil A. Kelsick, 'Constitutional History of the Leewards', *Caribbean Quarterly*, 6 (1960), pp. 178-79.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185.

<sup>15</sup> Zacek, *Settler Society in the English Leeward Islands*, pp. 7, 44.



policy across them.<sup>16</sup> The Leewards were therefore rather like a loose military alliance to co-ordinate mutual defence.

Given this complex situation, the governorship of the Leewards was not a position Parke particularly desired. Before this appointment, he had had no interactions with the colony at all, and he longed for the governorship of his birthplace, Virginia. Parke's political career had begun in Virginia, where he was elected to the house of burgesses in 1693 and became a council member in 1695.<sup>17</sup> He proved to be a troublesome colleague, always involved in quarrels and feuds with his neighbours,<sup>18</sup> and when his bitter enemy, Francis Nicholas, was appointed governor of Virginia in 1697, Parke decided to leave the colony.<sup>19</sup> In 1701 he sailed to England with his mistress, 'Cousin Brown', intending to seek public office in London.<sup>20</sup> However, this proved harder to achieve than he had imagined. After failing to be elected to parliament, he chose to attach himself to the Duke of Marlborough, serving as one of his aides-de-camp during the War of the Spanish Succession. This strategy seemed to win him a new opportunity. After serving the Duke for two years, he was sent to deliver news of victory at the Battle of Blenheim to Queen Anne, and was unsurprised to be rewarded with hundreds of guineas, a medal, and a miniature portrait of the queen. But Parke was not only seeking material rewards: he was also hoping to gain the governorship of Virginia, which Marlborough had promised to him.<sup>21</sup> To his dismay, however, this position was in the gift of the Earl of Orkney, Lord George Hamilton, and the lieutenant governorship went to Alexander Spotswood, who also served at Blenheim; Parke was instead posted to the Leeward

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 207.

<sup>17</sup> James Falkner, 'Parke, Daniel', in *ODNB* [consulted at <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/21281>].

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Edward W. Greenfield, 'Some New Aspects of the Life of Daniel Parke', *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 54 (1946), p. 309.

<sup>20</sup> Falkner, 'Parke, Daniel' [consulted at <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/21281>].

<sup>21</sup> In his correspondence with the Board of Trade, Parke mentioned that 'the Duke promised me the Government of Virginia at ye Battle of Blenheim, but for some reasons of State, that was given to my Ld. Orkney', *CSPC, Vol 23, 1706–1708*, pp. 518–37, Gov. Parke to the CTP, 4 Aug. 1707 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp518-537>].

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Islands in 1705.

## Disputes Concerning the Concentration of Lands

His disappointment did not stop Parke from trying to fulfil his responsibilities, but his relationship with the planters in the Leewards soon soured due to his attempts to address the land concentration problem, and to his use of land grants to attack his enemies and establish his own patronage.

The land problem had its historical origins, and the disputes over it had dominated the Leewards since the government of Christopher Codrington the Elder in the 1690s. Before Parke took charge of the government, the continual conflicts between Britain and France in the Caribbean centred on land which had passed back and forth between the two empires repeatedly. During the Anglo-French war in the reign of Charles II, the French inhabitants had managed to capture the English parts of St Kitts and had driven English owners away. Although these lands were restored by the Treaty of Breda in 1667, the French seized them again when James II abdicated the throne, and it took the English eight months to recapture them. The French seized St Kitts in 1689; in 1690 Governor Christopher Codrington the Elder recaptured it. This sort of capture and recapture lasted until the peace of Utrecht, which declared that the entire island belonged to Britain.<sup>22</sup> Other islands were also vulnerable. In 1698, a French expedition landed at Nevis and, after a pitched battle against the English settlers, burned many of the island's houses and sugar works and carried off between 3,000 and 4,000 slaves.<sup>23</sup> Montserrat was also attacked between 1710 and 1712.<sup>24</sup> The repeated transfer of areas of land led to a lack of clarity about who was entitled to exercise ownership, and this provided some planters with opportunities to

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<sup>22</sup> Bryan Edwards, *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies* (London: Printed for John Stockdale, 1793; repr. New York: Arno Press, 1972).

<sup>23</sup> Zacek, *Settler Society in the English Leeward Islands*, p. 42.

<sup>24</sup> Koot, *Empire at the Periphery*, p. 188.

seize large amounts of land.

The government of the Leewards was controlled by local landowners before Parke's arrival. Sir William Stapleton, who served as the governor of the colony between 1671 and 1685, had ownership interests in properties on all four islands. Members of the Stapleton family were also proprietors of large-scale sugar plantations.<sup>25</sup> And two Christopher Codringtons, father and son, served as governors of the Leewards successively from 1689 to 1703. Theirs was a dominant family which had been in the Caribbean since the 1660s and owned estates in Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda.

Land concentration and frequent shifts of ownership caused disputes within the white community and, together with other tensions between monied and political interests, were a bone of contention in the Leewards for a long period. One example of such contention related to the conduct of Governor Codrington the Younger, who was accused of having 'drawn off some of the inhabitants of the northern plantations for the settlement of St. Christophers...by giving them warrants for land on the French ground', and of having given 'a warrant for the plantation of Madame Salinave to the late Governor Francis Russell' in order to secure the latter's friendship.<sup>26</sup>

Factional politics was an important reason for the accusations against Codrington. Codrington was attacked by the opposition elites in both Nevis and St Kitts. His enemies included William Mead, the commissioner of customs and a councillor of Nevis and St Kitts, and James Norton, the lieutenant governor of St Kitts who he had removed. According to Codrington, Mead had used factions to control Nevis and to serve his own interests. Both the chief judge, Charles Pym, and the

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<sup>25</sup> J. R. V. Johnston, 'The Stapleton Sugar Plantations in the Leeward Islands', in *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 48 (1965), pp. 177-80.

<sup>26</sup> *CSPC, Vol 16, 1697-1698*, pp. 191-206, Memorial of Edward Walrond to the CTP, 6 May 1698 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol16/pp191-206>].



president, William Burt, were not only his tools, but his ‘slaves’:

Col. Pym was so to that degree, that when Mr. Mead’s cause was before him as Chief Judge, and it was evident that not a word could be said for it, he had the impudence to quitt the Bench and swear by God he wou’d not hear it, and everybody believes, if I had not appeared in Court and said publicly that cause had been too long the scandall of that Island, and should be delayed no longer, that Mr. President Burt wou’d not have had the courage to have pronounced against his Lord and Master. <sup>27</sup>

Land disputes lay at the heart of the contentions between the two factions. In Nevis, Mead brought accusations against two planters, William Shipman and Thomas Harvey, relating to Codrington’s intervention in a case between them and Thomas Herbert concerning a plantation named *Harvey’s*. According to Mead, Codrington had encouraged Herbert to seize the plantations, which were held by Mead as a tenant, without any trial. In St Kitts, a planter, William Freeman, brought a case about the plantation called the *Manor of Godwyn* on behalf of himself and James Norton. Freeman claimed that Codrington had sent three people with arms to evict their manager, John Pogson, from the property, and had committed him to prison ‘arbitrarily’, so that Codrington could take possession of the plantation himself.<sup>28</sup>

Freeman later presented a petition before the House of Commons on behalf of himself, Mead, Shipman and Norton. The case was heard before the House in February of 1702. Due to the hard work of Codrington’s agents and friends, Codrington won the case and was exonerated.<sup>29</sup> However, although he had won the

<sup>27</sup> *CSPC, Vol 19, 1701*, pp. 318-30, Gov. Codrington to the CTP, 30 June 1701 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol19/pp318-330>].

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 679-91, Copy of Petition of William Freeman to the King in Council, 18 Dec. 1701 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol19/pp679-691>].

<sup>29</sup> Falkner, ‘Parke, Daniel’ [consulted at <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/21281>].

case in the mother country, Codrington's seizure of lands became a concern of Parke's when he became governor. The chaos caused by the land disputes did not stop with the judgement from the mother country, and it even led to the murder of a lieutenant governor, John Johnson, soon after Parke arrived in the colony. This will be discussed in the next section.

In addition to the ownership disputes within the white community, the accumulation of land in the hands of big planter families meant the enlarging of plantations and the use of increased numbers of slaves, which was a threat to the security of the colony. After arriving in the colony, Parke became concerned about the number of slaves owned by big planter families: 'my Lady Russell and Stapleton had each of them above 200 negroes, and not one white man on their Plantation; Col. Codrington has 400 negroes on one Plantation, and but one white man'.<sup>30</sup>

In this situation, the Leewards' government took some measures to prevent the increase of the slave population and to tackle the land concentration problem. When Edward Fox took charge of the government in 1700, a proclamation was issued reclaiming forfeited land which had belonged to Irish rebels in St Kitts, and which Codrington the Elder had improperly allocated. Fox averred that these areas of land were possessed by people 'that had no right to them', and he proposed to call a Court of Escheat to dispose of them.<sup>31</sup> But Fox's attempts encountered opposition from the assembly which was under the control of big planters. They claimed that the Courts of Exchequer and Escheat were 'illegally constituted' and that, as the lieutenant general, Fox had no right to set up these courts. The opposition, including the chief justice of the Court of Common Pleas, President Burt, managed to adjourn the courts 'from quarter to quarter'.<sup>32</sup> Fox did not gain support from the Board of Trade either. In their letter to the king, they stated that Fox had 'exceeded his commission by taking upon

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<sup>30</sup> *CSPC, Vol 23, 1706–1708*, pp. 276-86, Gov. Parke to the CTP, 31 Oct. 1706 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp276-286>].

<sup>31</sup> *CSPC, Vol 18, 1700*, pp. 567-611, Col. Fox to the CTP, 18 Oct. 1700 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol18/pp567-611>].

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

him to be Chief Governor and passing Acts in the General Assemblies', and that all the Acts passed by him should be rendered null and void.<sup>33</sup>

But the mother country was not unaware of the problem. In 1702, when Codrington the Younger recaptured the lands in St Kitts possessed by the French, a royal warrant was sent, reminding him not to 'dispose of any part of the said lands for a longer term than 3 years'.<sup>34</sup> And after Parke took charge of the government, another warrant was sent, ordering him not to issue any new grant of the lands in St Kitts for more than two and a half years, and not to extend any existing grant. Meanwhile, Parke was required to do a survey of the land grants of St Kitts and send a report to London. Evidently, the metropole recognised that there had been disorders in land grants and was attempting to reverse the accumulation of land in the hands of big planters.

However, Parke did not strictly follow his instructions but used them as a tool to attack his enemy, Codrington the Younger. After arriving in Antigua in 1706, Parke sent the Board of Trade a report about the population and fortifications of the colony, mentioning his quarrel with Codrington, who 'opposed everything' and had granted the lands of St Kitts 'without any l[i]mitation'.<sup>35</sup> Nevis was in a similar situation, with lands divided among a few rich people who each owned a large number of slaves.

As the occupant of the position which Codrington had wished to resume, it was unsurprising that Parke's relations with the latter were strained. Codrington was initially seen as an ideal governor by the metropole, in particular when the colony was under the threat of military attack. He was well-educated, loyal to the crown, and

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., pp. 706-16, CTP to the King, Whitehall, 4 Dec. 1700 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol18/pp706-716>].

<sup>34</sup> *CTB*, Vol 17, 1702, pp. 352-62, Royal warrant dated Bath to Col. Codrington, Capt. Gen. &c. of the Leeward Caribbee Islands, 25 Sep. 1702 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-treasury-books/vol17/pp352-362>].

<sup>35</sup> *CSPC*, Vol 23, 1706-1708, pp. 194-213, Gov. Parke to the CTP, St. Christophers, 28 Aug. 1706 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp194-213>].

wealthy. In addition, it was thought that he possessed the military talent to be a good commander. A few years later, however, Codrington's reputation as a commander was damaged by his inability to co-ordinate the army and the failure of an attack on French-held Guadeloupe. He made an application for leave which was eventually agreed, but although he tried to obtain reinstatement as governor during the next few years, the office was never returned to him.

To attack Codrington, the new governor decided to revoke the St Kitts grants made by Codrington, and deprived Codrington of his land and of his investment in slaves, buildings, and equipment for its cultivation.<sup>36</sup> In addition, he questioned the legitimacy of Codrington's control of Barbuda, and demanded a complete accounting of revenues collected during Codrington's administration.<sup>37</sup> In the end, Codrington had to depart for Barbados, having complained to his friend the Earl of Orrery that 'it is impossible for me to live with our brute of a General – he is a perfect frenzy of avarice'.<sup>38</sup>

Codrington's departure did not mean that Parke was the victor, however. As a stranger in the colony, Parke had a much weaker patronage network than Codrington, whose family had been in the Caribbean for decades and shared interests with the local elites. Even though Codrington had left, his friends and allies remained and were hostile to Parke and impediments to his administration. Moreover, Parke's attitude to land redistribution posed a challenge to the interests of many other big planters and powerful families, increasing his isolation in the Leewards. While ruthlessly revoking the land grants made by his predecessor, Parke also made new grants to his supporters, in order to build up his own patronage network, and this naturally made people suspect his motives. One example of a recipient of a grant of land was Michael Lambert, who Parke appointed lieutenant governor of St Kitts, and who was granted

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<sup>36</sup> Miller, *Colonel Parke of Virginia*, p. 188.

<sup>37</sup> Ruth M. Bourne, 'Antigua, 1710: Revolution in Microcosm', in John J. Murray (ed.) *Essays in Modern European History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1951), p. 94.

<sup>38</sup> Codrington to Orrery, 19 September 1706, Codrington MSS Collection, Codrington Park, Gloucestershire, MS B, f. 19, cited in Miller, *Colonel Parke of Virginia*, p. 188.

plantations ‘in consideration of his good services as Lieut. Governor of said island and of his great losses in the late invasion of the Leeward Islands by the French’.<sup>39</sup>

## Violence and Judicial Corruption

As previously discussed, the fierce and factious politics in the Leewards and disputes over landed property had resulted in the murder of a number of politicians, as political opponents did not draw the line at violence if they thought it necessary. In 1702, Roger Elrington, the lieutenant governor of Nevis, was killed in a quarrel with David Chambers, captain of one of the queen’s men-of-war.<sup>40</sup> Elrington was a friend of Codrington the Younger, who had managed to put him into the position of lieutenant governor of Nevis, even though the island was dominated by Mead and his faction. Codrington reported that, ‘I had long desired Elrington to accept of the Government of St. Kitts, where his estate lay, but he told me Mr. Mead and Mr. Cole had so poisoned it with their venomous factions, that he would have nothing to do with it, and had rather lose his estate there than his reputation.’<sup>41</sup> After taking the position, Elrington successfully defended Codrington’s interests on the island, and testified for him several times when he was attacked by Mead.<sup>42</sup> His loyalty to Codrington ultimately led to his death. It is noteworthy that when the news of his death was brought to the Board of Trade, they displayed an indifferent attitude, expressing the opinion that Elrington’s death was because of his own misbehaviour, and as a result, on one was punished:

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<sup>39</sup> *CTB, Vol 23, 1709*, pp. 383-89, Treasury reference to Mr. Blathwayte, Surveyor and Auditor General of the Plantations, of the petition of Michael Lambert..., 8 Oct. 1709 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-treasury-books/vol23/pp383-389>].

<sup>40</sup> *CSPC, Vol 20, 1702*, pp. 295-305, An account of Col. Elrington’s Death, 10 May 1702 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol20/pp295-305>].

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, Gov. Codrington to the CTP, 10 May 1702 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol20/pp295-305>].

<sup>42</sup> *CSPC, Vol 19, 1701*, pp. 353-69, Lieut-Gov. Elrington to the CTP, 18 July 1701 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol19/pp353-369>].

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We are sorry for Col. Elrington's death; but without reflection on his memory, we must observe, that it was the duty of his place to have made use of the power of Government committed to him in punishing any insolence or misdemeanor against himself or others in a legal and judicial manner, and not personally to have made use of his cane or other weapon.'<sup>43</sup>

Murder or assassination within the political elites was not rare in the colonies. The colonial judicial system was usually under the control of local elites, which meant they could directly interfere or use their personal networks to deal with cases that arose from their own misconduct. The mother country was neither capable of intervening in colonial justice nor attempted to do so, due to the great distances which lay between it and the colonies, and the negligent attitude of the metropole to some extent encouraged colonial politicians to turn to violent methods. This can be seen in the death of Elrington, the later case of John Johnson, and also that of Daniel Parke.

Four years after Elrington's murder, another lieutenant governor of Nevis, John Johnson, who was also the chief commander of the colony, was killed around the time Parke arrived in the Leewards. John Johnson was murdered by a councillor, John Pogson, because of property disputes originating during the government of Codrington the Younger. As previously discussed, Pogson had kept possession of the *Manor of Godwyn* in St Kitts on behalf of William Freeman and James Norton, the previous lieutenant governor of St Kitts, but was evicted arbitrarily from the plantation by Codrington. After Codrington lost his office, he recommended one of his friends, John Johnson, to the position of lieutenant colonel and lieutenant governor. Pogson then took out his anger towards Codrington on Johnson. As Parke reported to the Board of Trade, 'Col. Johnson dyed Col. Codrington's martyr'.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> CSPC, Vol 20, 1702, pp. 581-88, The CTP to Gov. Codrington, 8 Sep. 1702 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol20/pp581-588>].

<sup>44</sup> CSPC, Vol 23, 1706-1708, pp. 213-30, [? Gov. Parke] to the CTP, 15 Sep. 1706 [consulted at

Pogson, however, was able to manipulate the judicial system with the assistance of his friends and was found not guilty, though Parke was convinced that ‘the evidence was very plain against him’.<sup>45</sup>

Although at odds with Codrington and his faction, Parke did not seek to ally himself with Codrington’s enemies. He was in fact resented by them due to his attempts to regulate the corrupted judicial system in the colony. To get Pogson convicted, Parke turned out the officers of the case and reported it to the Board of Trade, trying to charge Pogson with manslaughter. The case was brought before the attorney general in England, to whom Pogson’s trial was represented as having been ‘managed with great partiality and in an undue manner, and so as may in other cases be of evil example’.<sup>46</sup> The attorney general replied that since Pogson had been tried and acquitted of murder, he could not subsequently be tried for manslaughter, because those two indictments could not be tried at different times. However, there was a chance to appeal if this was done within a year and a day from the date of Johnson’s death. In any event, Pogson was not convicted, although he was discharged from his public employments by order of the crown.

This case led Parke to the realisation that justice was difficult to obtain in the colony – the judicial system was under the control of closely-related and substantial families which protected each other and, as a stranger to the islands, he did not have the capacity to alter that situation.<sup>47</sup> Parke subsequently encountered similar cases. A planter beat his maid to death, but the inquest concluded that she had poisoned herself. Edward Chester, the agent for the Royal African Company in the Leewards

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<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp213-230>].

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., pp. 276-86, Gov. Parke to the CTP, 31 Oct. 1706 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp276-286>].

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., pp. 366-87, W. Popple to Mr. Attorney General, 11 Feb. 1707 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp366-387>].

<sup>47</sup> This case impressed Parke deeply and two years later, in his correspondence with the Board of Trade, he wrote: ‘had there been a stranger Marshall, Mr. Poggson had been hanged for basely murdering Col. Johnson, and some others punished as they deserved’. See *CSPC, Vol 24, 1708–1709*, pp. 300-22, Gov. Parke to the CTP [2 of 3], 24 May 1709 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp300-322>].

and the husband of Parke's lover, threw a tankard at a merchant named Sawyer from Virginia, causing a contusion to the head from which he died. The coroner's inquest, however, found that he died of fits. Parke ordered the body to be publicly exposed in the street, to show every member of the jury the contusion. In his letter to the Board of Trade, Parke noted 'in three yeares I have been here there has noe one inhabitant [been] punished, neither hanged, whipped, pilloried, or so much as putt in the stocks', and he blamed this laxity on the private connections of officials.<sup>48</sup> It is not easy for us to know Parke's motives in saying all this. He may have intended to use it as an opportunity to enhance his authority as governor and break up the alliances among the planters, or he may merely have been trying to fulfil his responsibility to uphold justice in the colony. What is known is that Parke's interventions in court affairs earned him more resentment, and that as a result his salary was withheld – something that his predecessors had experienced when they did not cooperate with the assembly. As Parke complained, 'A friend of mine told me y<sup>t</sup> if I look'd into these things, notwithstanding the Law they would give me nothing for my House Rent, and truly I have found him a good prophet, for I have not received the vallue of 400<sup>l</sup>. tho I have been allmost two years wth. them'.<sup>49</sup>

## Illegal Trade

Parke's attempts to reverse land concentration and judicial corruption isolated him in the colony, and his robust measures against illegal trade compounded his isolation. Illegal trade was a common method of accumulating wealth for many members of the white elites, from governors to prominent merchants, and Parke's harsh attitude towards this enterprise was effectively an attack on these people. In addition, as was

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., pp. 370-408, Gov. Parke to the CTP, 26 June 1709 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp370-408>].

<sup>49</sup> *CSPC, Vol 23, 1706–1708*, pp. 680-701, Gov. Parke to the CTP, 6 Mar. 1708 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp680-701>].



the case with his conduct in relation to land grants, Parke's motives were suspect, since in combatting illegal trade he was also taking on his enemies.

As noted in chapter 1, smuggling in the Caribbean was difficult to monitor, as also were privateering activities. Empires overlapped, with French, Spanish, Dutch and British islands lying close together – St Kitts close to St Eustatius, Antigua to Guadeloupe, Barbados to Martinique, and Jamaica surrounded by a series of Spanish colonies, including Portobelo, Cartagena, Santo Domingo, and Hispaniola. Moreover, the Dutch entrepôt Curaçao was accessible from all of these islands. The colonies existed within a marine network reaching every corner of the Caribbean, and the area's numerous coves, isles, and inlets enabled smugglers to conduct trade secretly and to move on before attracting attention.<sup>50</sup> The Leewards' planters began to trade with Dutch merchants at a very early stage of the settlement, when the Dutch West India Company would come to the islands as harvests were coming in to exchange tobacco for European manufactures and provisions.<sup>51</sup> The English settlers were satisfied with Dutch-produced goods due to decades of trade with the Dutch.<sup>52</sup> In addition, the Leeward Islands had received less attention from English merchants than had other Caribbean colonies. For example, in 1677, only eleven vessels departed London with the Leeward Islands as their official destination, while forty ships travelled to Barbados and twenty-seven to Jamaica.<sup>53</sup> This influenced the price of the commodities in the Leewards; as the council of St Kitts observed, 'commodities reach us in a manner at secondhand, which raises the price of them 20 per cent. for us over our neighbours'.<sup>54</sup> The Royal African Company also under-supplied the Leeward Islands. The total number of slaves sent to them between 1643 and 1688 was only

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<sup>50</sup> Wim Klooster, 'Inter-imperial Smuggling in the Americas, 1600–1800', in Bernard Bailyn and Patricia L. Denault (eds), *Soundings in Atlantic History: Latent Structures and Intellectual Currents, 1500–1830* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), p. 142.

<sup>51</sup> Koot, *Empire at the Periphery*, p. 36.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>54</sup> *CSPC, Vol 10, 1677–1680*, pp. 559–79, The Council of St. Christopher's to LTP, 12 July 1680, [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol10/pp559-579>].

about 22,900.<sup>55</sup> Relatively neglected by English traders, inhabitants of the Leewards had no choice but to rely on commodities provided by other nations.

The corruption of local officials and the customs system also played a significant role. The lieutenant governor of Montserrat was Anthony Hodges, and the collector of customs was his nephew. As a result, according to Parke, ‘they absolutely governe that litle Island’, and Hodges ‘got a greate estate by Trade’.<sup>56</sup> Codrington the Younger, although himself proved to be involved in illegal trade, also observed that ‘there is so much ignorance, laziness or corruption in Naval and Customhouse officers, and so general a conspiracy in people of all ranks and qualitys here to elude the Aets of Trade, yt. I have ye mortification of knowing a hundred things are done every day, which I cannot possibly prevent, prejudicial to the trade and interest of England’.<sup>57</sup>

According to Governor Nathaniel Johnson’s report, the clandestine trade in the Leewards with foreign colonies was mainly based in Montserrat, which was used as an interchange by a Danish African company to smuggle slaves and conduct trade with the Spaniards.<sup>58</sup> Inhabitants of the Leewards provided Curaçao and St Thomas with ‘rum, sugar, cotton, indigo, provisions’, and also supplied the French privateers trading with these islands.<sup>59</sup> In October 1708, Parke wrote a long report about the illegal trade between the Leewards and Dutch and French islands, in particular between Montserrat and Guadeloupe. He argued that the illegal trade deeply hurt the interests of domestic merchants and the revenues of the mother country, since if the officers took their duty as they ought, ‘the 4½ p.c. would raise the Queen £1000 per

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<sup>55</sup> Koot, *Empire at the Periphery*, p. 128.

<sup>56</sup> *CSPC*, Vol 24, 1708–1709, pp. 104–23, Gov. Parke to the CTP, 1 Oct. 1708 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp104-123>].

<sup>57</sup> *CSPC*, Vol 19, 1701, pp. 202–09, Gov. Codrington to the CTP, 5 May 1701, [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol19/pp202-209>].

<sup>58</sup> *CSPC*, Vol 12, 1685–1688, pp. 550–65, Gov. Sir Nathaniel Johnson to LTP, 2 June 1688 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol12/pp550-565>].

<sup>59</sup> *JBTP*, Vol 2, Feb. 1709–Mar. 1715, pp. 83–98, Trade of Curacoa and St. Thomas, Nov. 1709 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/jrnl-trade-plantations/vol2/pp83-98>].

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annum more than it does'.<sup>60</sup>

In combatting smuggling, Parke was in many cases also aiming at his enemies. In his letter to the Board of Trade, he noted that a large number of planters were involving in smuggling, including the Codringtons and most of the customs officers.<sup>61</sup> The Codrington family was undoubtedly involved in smuggling activities. When Richard Randolph was appointed as an agent to the colonies and conducted a systematic survey of illegal activities, there was a rumour that several navy captains had traded with pirates in the Leeward Islands, while Governor Codrington the Elder did nothing to prevent this.<sup>62</sup> As for his son, Parke mentioned several times in his letter to the Board of Trade that he had participated in smuggling. To protect the illegal trade, Codrington the Younger appointed his agent Edward Perry, who had been raised by his father, as collector of customs in Antigua. As Parke averred, it was an irregular appointment, because Perry was a trader himself, and had 'near 3,000*l*. cargo last year from England, wch he sells by retail'.<sup>63</sup> Meanwhile, Edward Perry's brother, John, served as the provost marshal of the colony. The two brothers were the assistants of Codrington in his smuggling activities with the French and Dutch. Another of Parke's targets was his old enemy, Edward Chester, with whose wife he had an affair. Parke seized a sloop of Chester's, which came from Curaçao, and 'had great quantity of Holland and other manufactures of Europe on board'.<sup>64</sup> Another of Chester's sloops seized by Parke carried about forty slaves and was believed to be headed for the French colonies.

Parke's attitudes irritated the merchants, so they raised £5,000 and sent William Nevin to London with articles against him. Parke was treated with a combination of

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<sup>60</sup> *CSPC, Vol 24, 1708–1709*, pp. 141–51, Gov. Parke to the CTP, 14 Nov. 1708 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp141-151>].

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, p. 201.

<sup>63</sup> *CSPC, Vol 23, 1706–1708*, pp. 680–701, Gov. Parke to the CTP, 8 Mar. 1708 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp680-701>].

<sup>64</sup> *CSPC, Vol 24, 1708–1709*, pp. 104–23, Gov. Parke to the CTP, 1 Oct. 1708 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp104-123>].

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carrot and stick:

One Mr. Blake told him to tell me, if I would lett them trade quietly as before, it should be worth me more then my sallary...and upon my refuseall told me noe Governor could gett anything here except he winked at that trade, and that old Coll. Codrington got all his estate that way, and that if I resolved to be soe strickt, the merchants by one means or other would make me very uneasy.<sup>65</sup>

Despite expending great effort, Parke was unable to find enough assistants to search and seize illegal trade, and when he brought cases to court the judges often chose to support the defendants.<sup>66</sup> Most of Chester's cases were decided in his favour by the chief justice, Samuel Watkins, who was a friend of Codrington the Younger.<sup>67</sup> Parke realised that the essence of the problem was that people were 'linked together, either by relation or by intrest'.<sup>68</sup> It was evident that he was dealing with a large interest group that had existed for a long time and had made huge profits in this grey area. Parke's measures made him an enemy of the members of this group, as he was himself aware in 1708: 'I have been the longest without a complaint of any that ever was before me, nor doe I know any just cause they have now, except preventing theyr clandestine trade with the French and Dutch'.<sup>69</sup> Therefore, Parke suggested that 'the officers for the Revenue of 4½ p.c. should be all strangers and removed every three or four yeares, for when they come to be inhabitants, they durst not do their duty'.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Miller, *Colonel Parke of Virginia*, pp. 193-94.

<sup>67</sup> Bourne, 'Antigua, 1710', p. 94.

<sup>68</sup> *CSPC, Vol 24, 1708-1709*, pp. 104-23, Gov. Parke to the CTP, 1 Oct. 1708 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp104-123>].

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., pp. 83-104, Gov. Parke to Mr. Secretary Boyle, 29 Sep. 1708 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp83-104>].

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., pp. 104-23, Gov. Parke to the CTP, 14 Nov. 1708 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp104-123>].

## Constitutional Tensions and Violence

In August 1707, Parke proudly reported to the Board of Trade that he had won the favour of people in the Leewards: ‘all my predecessors have had complaints against them from some Island or other in less than six months after their arrivall, Coll. Codrington had severall in less than three...I have been here above a year, and believe you will not be troubled wth any publick complaint’.<sup>71</sup> One year later he was unable to make the same claim.

The quarrel between Parke and inhabitants of Antigua started with the issue of levying a tax to pay off the island’s debts, in particular its debts to the ships that provisioned the colony. At the same time as this issue arose, Parke advised the assembly to pass a law for the administration of justice relating to the irregular behaviour of some officers. After several days of disputes, Parke became convinced that it would be useful to dissolve the session and be rid of some ‘turbulent’ people, something which he had achieved in Nevis.

However, the new assembly converted the conflicts on these issues into a constitutional conflict, for it, according to Parke, ‘drew up a bill for Priviledges, wherein the Assembly makes themselves a Court of Judicature to fine and imprison etc.; they deny the Queen the negative voice, and severall other matters never heard of before’.<sup>72</sup> The assembly was dissolved by Parke after only three days, when its members refused to proceed on public business unless the governor granted the ‘unwarrantable priviledges’ and legislative supremacy they claimed. As Parke complained, ‘they went so farr as to send me a message that they would pass no law except I would lett their Speaker have the negative voice’.<sup>73</sup> In his report to the Board of Trade, he stated that the assembly attempted to achieve a legislative veto by

<sup>71</sup> *CSPC, Vol 23, 1706–1708*, pp. 518–37, Gov. Parke to the CTP, 4 Aug. 1707 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp518-537>].

<sup>72</sup> *CSPC, Vol 24, 1708–1709*, pp. 2–18, Gov. Parke to the CTP, 1 July 1708 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp2-18>].

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 64–83, Gov. Parke to the CTP, 24 Aug. 1708 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp64-83>].

arguing that a law was not in force until it was signed by both the governor and the speaker, and that the speaker should sign after the governor. Parke stated that none of the other islands pretended to anything like this (although the assembly of Jamaica also brought a similar claim, which will be discussed in chapter 4), and that even in the mother country ‘once a law has passed the House of Commons and Lords it is never sent backe, and when the Queen gives her assent to it, then it is a Law’.<sup>74</sup>

However, the author of a later pamphlet denied that the assembly was seeking a power of veto for the speaker, arguing that it was merely asking that laws passed by the governor and the council should first be signed the governor, and afterwards by the speaker, ‘as they ever had been’.<sup>75</sup>

For Parke, the assembly was seeking to be more than merely a part of the legislative process: it was seeking to become the whole government. He wrote, ‘Now they tell the people I have taken away all their libertys, though in a message to them I offer’d them all the priviledges the house of Commons pretended to, but they are for the privileges of the Lords, and the Queen’s prerogative too.’<sup>76</sup> The assembly sought to use bribes and the governor’s salary as bargaining tools: ‘if I would pass what Laws they desired, in short, one of their Members came to me early the next morning and gave me to understand that I should have a noble present, and also the thousand pounds as they call it paid me better then I had it last year for my house rent’.<sup>77</sup>

Parke’s predecessor had accepted the proposal: ‘[E]very time they met, they made him a present, and therefore he let them doe what they pleased’; so the assembly assumed that Parke would also give up the legislative veto and pass the bill for their privileges in exchange for his house-rent and some other ‘handsome

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., pp. 287-300, Gov. Parke to the CTP, 4 May 1709 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp287-300>].

<sup>75</sup> *Some Instances of the Oppression and Male Administration of Col. Parke, Late Governor of the Leeward Islands* (London [1713(?)]), p. 4.

<sup>76</sup> CSPC, Vol 24, 1708–1709, pp. 287-300, Gov. Parke to the CTP, 4 May 1709 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp287-300>].

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., pp. 2-18, Gov. Parke to the CTP [1 of 3]. St Xphers, 1 July 1708 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp2-18>].

acknowledgement'.<sup>78</sup> But Parke refused the proposal, and sent them a message desiring them to raise a tax, pay off the outstanding debts, and let his salary alone.<sup>79</sup>

In September 1708, the assembly sent a set of formal complaints against Parke to London. However, this action against Parke was unsuccessful, as the Board of Trade, after considering Parke's statements and the testimonials he had gathered from the inhabitants, judged the accusations to be 'false', 'irregular', and 'scandalous'.<sup>80</sup> Shortly thereafter, in April 1709, Nevin presented twenty-two articles against Parke to the Board of Trade, and petitions against him from the merchants of London, Bristol and Liverpool to the queen.<sup>81</sup> The main body of the charges related to abuses of power, arbitrary behaviour and maladministration.<sup>82</sup> For example, it was alleged that Parke had interfered with the judicial process when verdicts met with his displeasure, had threatened to turn out the justices in Chester's case, and had publicly declared that in the court of chancery, where he sat as the chancellor, he would be guided by no law or precedent, but by what he thought reasonable and equitable. Ironically, Parke was also accused of violating the acts of trade by turning a blind eye to some smuggling activities in return for bribes, including a payment of £150 from Chester for some brandy he smuggled. And he was accused in other instances of ordering unwarrantable seizures when no offense had been committed. Inhabitants also attacked Parke for his use of military force. For example, it was stated that he used his soldiers to break into people's houses, to beat people and seize their properties, and to conduct 'night adventures'.<sup>83</sup> Other charges related to his constitutional conflicts with

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., pp. 287-300, Gov. Parke to the CTP, 4 May 1709 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp287-300>].

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., pp. 370-408, Gov. Parke's Reply to the 22 Articles of Complaint, 26 June 1709 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp370-408>].

<sup>80</sup> Zacek, *Settler Society in the English Leeward Islands*, p. 226.

<sup>81</sup> *JBTP*, Vol 2, Feb. 1709–Mar. 1715, pp. 18-23, Mr. Nevin about complaints against Col. Parke, Apr. 1709 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/jrnl-trade-plantations/vol2/pp18-23>].

<sup>82</sup> *CSPC*, Vol 24, 1708–1709, pp. 254-69, Articles of complaint exhibited against Gov. Parke, 31 Mar. 1709 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp254-269>].

<sup>83</sup> [Anon.], *Some Instances*, p. 1.

the assembly. He was said to have denied its privileges, in particular the authority to exercise a veto and to appoint its own clerk. It was also claimed that he had altered the rules of election by requiring those elected to be freeholders of the place where they were elected, although no such qualification was required by tradition; and that he had manipulated elections by claiming authority to determine their validity, notably in the case of Edward Perry, who he refused to admit to take the oaths. All the alleged acts were presented as infringements of the assembly's constitution. The twenty-two articles compiled by the assembly attacked Parke from several angles, sparing no effort to have him removed from the position of governor.

In his response to the articles, Parke argued that what he had done was to try to get murderers like Pogson and Chester convicted, although his efforts had been in vain due to the corruption of the judicial system. He denied that he had threatened the justices, because he knew that it was hard to get people tried even when they committed crimes. As for the bribe he was alleged to have received from Chester, Parke argued that the value of the cargo was £1,500, and that if he had seized it, he could have gained a third of the prize as governor and another third for the seizing of it. It was impossible for him to prefer £150 to £1,000, he argued, especially considering that Chester was his enemy.

While accusations and counter-accusations were en route to London, the verbal and legal assault on the governor also became a physical one. This was a level of opposition and hostility that his predecessors and their counterparts in the other Caribbean colonies had never previously faced. According to Parke's report to the Board of Trade, one morning he received a message that there was a riotous meeting at the house of Edward Chester. When he walked by the house, people inside began to sing and make noises to affront him. The first time this happened, Parke ignored them. When it happened again, however, he sent constables to warn them. Thereupon the doors and windows were suddenly shut up, one of the constables jumped out of a window for fear, and another was wounded in the leg. In the end, the marshal



committed several people to the jail for a riot. In September 1709, the provost marshal Michael Ayon, appointed by Parke, reported to the Board of Trade about two assassination attempts against the governor. In the first attempt a captain was shot by mistake. The second attempt occurred after Parke's enemies heard that the Board of Trade had made a report in favour of Parke and that their complaints would not be inquired into; a notorious slave was hired to be the assassin, and Parke was wounded in the arm.<sup>84</sup>

Parke in response began to develop his military power. He won himself the support of the soldiers of Colonel Jones's regiment by issuing them brevets and petitioning for payments due to them which had been delayed by Jones. Colonial standing armies were usually closely tied to their commanders, who were responsible for their recruitment and wages, and who in turn thought of the soldiers as their 'property'.<sup>85</sup> According to these soldiers, they formerly belonged to Colonel Whetham's regiment, but when their officers were recalled, they were left in the colony under the command of Jones and did not receive any pay for more than three years. Furthermore, Jones reported full but false musters so that he could claim full pay and allowances from the paymaster, while the truth was that he could not assemble even a third of the regiment, as emerged when Parke sailed to relieve Montserrat from the French.<sup>86</sup>

With his answers to the articles, Parke also sent a letter expressing worries that his enemies would try to bribe the Board of Trade: 'one Gentleman...tells me Nevine offered your Lordships £30,000 security to prove all the articles, provided I might be suspended and Commissioners sent to hear it'.<sup>87</sup> If that happened, Parke wrote, it would be an injustice to him, since the commissioners sent out would be likely to live

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<sup>84</sup> [Anon.], *Truth Brought to Light; or, Murder Will Out; Being a Short, but True, Account of the Most Horrid, Barbarous, and Bloody Murther and Rebellion Committed at Antego* (London: printed for John Morphew, 1713), p. 1.

<sup>85</sup> Burnard, *Planters, Merchants, and Slaves*, p. 80.

<sup>86</sup> Webb, *Marlborough's America*, p. 273.

<sup>87</sup> CSPC, Vol 24, 1708–1709, pp. 370–408, Gov. Parke to the CTP, 26 June 1709 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp370-408>].

with his enemies and would probably be bribed. Parke was prescient about the result, although it is more likely that it was a consequence of disfavour in the mother country than that it was a consequence of corruption.

Parke's behaviour in assembling a military force was noticed in the mother country, particularly by the Whig leader and secretary of state Lord Sunderland, who had resented Parke's militarism for a long time and who tended to believe that Parke was slandering Jones.<sup>88</sup> Sunderland was unhappy about Parke's strategy of using the garrison to defend his own authority; his attempt to bypass the colonel to take control of the regiment left him subject to a suspicion of tyranny. Sunderland sent Jones a letter, informing him of the queen's 'displeasure that the troops she always designed to be employed for the protection and defence of her subjects should be made use of as instruments of their oppression', and of her command that he should examine the conduct of his regiment and prevent any disorders that might interrupt the examination of the several complaints against Parke.<sup>89</sup> Jones then wrote to Sunderland, reporting that he had found 'four sentinells of the Company of Granadiers commanded by Capt. Thoms. Newell guilty of several high outrages committed in Antigua', but that when he sentenced them to be whipped, Parke stopped the punishments, with the intention of encouraging the 'high disorders and abuses' committed by several officers and soldiers of his regiment, with which he had indeed 'co-operated...in person'.<sup>90</sup>

The situation was now not auspicious for Parke. In the mother country, Parke was disliked by the secretary of state, Sunderland, who helped to bring the petition against him before the Board of Trade. In the four islands of the Leewards, he only

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<sup>88</sup> It was widely believed that Sunderland had blocked Parke's commission to the rank of brigadier general, which Marlborough had promised he would receive when he took command of the Leewards. See Webb, *Marlborough's America*, p. 169.

<sup>89</sup> *CSPC, Vol 25, 1710–1711*, pp. 55–68, The Earl of Sunderland to Col. Jones. Whitehall, 25 Mar. 1710 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol25/pp55-68>].

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 273–93, Col. Jones to the Earl of Sunderland, 27 Nov. 1710 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol25/pp273-293>].

had support from St Kitts, whose lieutenant governor, Michael Lambert, was appointed by him. Montserrat was governed by Anthony Hodges, who was accused of smuggling by Parke; the merchants and inhabitants of Antigua resented him, and the lieutenant governor of Nevis, Walter Hamilton, was eager to take Parke's place.<sup>91</sup>

In February 1710, an order from the crown revoked Parke's commission as governor and directed him to return to England immediately to answer the charges against him in person. This order was accompanied by a commission to appoint Walter Hamilton as the lieutenant governor of the Leewards. Parke intended to obey the order, but when he learned that Sunderland had been replaced by the Earl of Dartmouth, a Tory secretary of state, he changed his mind. Convinced that this was a good opportunity for him to gain control of the situation, Parke wrote to Dartmouth to gain his favour and protection, presenting his conflict with the Antiguan planters as ideological – he was attacked, he stated, because he did not belong to the republican party, and, as for his enemies, Nevin was 'a Scotch Cammaronian' and Edward Perry 'a profess'd Presbyterian'.<sup>92</sup> Parke also plainly admitted that he was an object of Sunderland's disfavour, saying that when some captains in the colony did not obey an order of his and he threatened to suspend them, 'they laugh'd, and said my Lord Sunderland would restore them and suspend me'.<sup>93</sup> Parke's change of mind was ultimately to cost him his life.

## The Death of Daniel Parke: Two Versions of the Story

In June 1710, Parke reported to the Board of Trade the news of the deaths of two of

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<sup>91</sup> In November 1709, Walter Hamilton petitioned to be the lieutenant general of all the Leeward Islands. See *JBTP*, Vol 2, Feb. 1709–Mar. 1715, pp. 83-98, Col. Hamilton's petition to be Lieutenant General, Nov. 1709 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/jrnl-trade-plantations/vol2/pp83-98>].

<sup>92</sup> *CSPC*, Vol 25, 1710–1711, pp. 185-214, Gov. Parke to the Earl of Dartmouth, Antigua, 9 Sep. 1710 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol25/pp185-214>].

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

his enemies – Codrington the Younger and Hodges, the lieutenant governor of Montserrat. Six months later, however, it was the news of his own death that was reported to the mother country. Reports came both from his enemies and from his friends, in two different versions. Pamphlets were printed; testimonies, reports and personal correspondence were sent to the Board of Trade; and petitions were brought before the queen and privy council. Each side emphasised that the violence was started by the other. To Parke's opponents, the governor was a tyrant and a traitor, and they were defenders of liberty and freedom; to his defenders, the planters were rebels, and the governor was a martyr of the queen's prerogative.

The events leading to Parke's death began with his attempt to call a new assembly in Antigua to raise money for the payment of workmen and the repair of fortifications. The new assembly resumed its old dispute with Parke over the appointment of a clerk. According to his opponents, Parke first promised he would appoint the person the assembly nominated, but when they sent a person to be sworn in, Parke refused to do so. As a result, the assembly decided to send him a message as a whole body about their grievances, and called on him to withdraw from Antigua. Parke was unwilling either to receive or to hear the address, however, and this led to a quarrel between him and the representatives. Parke then told the speaker that he had committed a riot, and that he was going to put him in jail with three or four soldiers outside the door, who would only await a word of command to fire on him.<sup>94</sup>

Parke's friend Thomas Morris and the pamphlets in vindication of Parke presented another story. According to Morris's letter to the Board of Trade, the governor insisted that the choice of a clerk was a branch of the queen's prerogative, which he would not part with, and the reason he called the guards was because the whole assembly had broken into the council chamber, and had threatened that they would no longer admit him as the governor and would put him in prison.<sup>95</sup> According

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<sup>94</sup> *Some Instances*, p. 2.

<sup>95</sup> *CSPC, Vol 25, 1710–1711*, pp. 397–401, Thomas Morris to the CTP, 27 Feb. 1711 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol25/pp397-401>];

to George French, Parke's life was threatened: 'a blood thirsty man officiously offer[ed] his service to cut his throat'.<sup>96</sup>

The clash between Parke and the assembly proved to be the final straw. The assembly was adjourned for two days, during which time it raised about three to five hundred armed men in the name of defending the assembly. According to Parke's opponents, the lieutenant governor and the council of Antigua several times recommended to Parke that he should depart the island temporarily and dismiss his troops, receiving from Parke 'a most exasperating answer, telling them he despised their proposals, [and] that he had men enough to drive all the men in the island before him'.<sup>97</sup> Parke ordered all the soldiers on the island to rally at his house, and promised that those who stood by him 'should have all the plunder of the town and the plantations of all the Islanders that should be killed'.<sup>98</sup> However, he succeeded in gathering fewer than one hundred grenadiers by his side, most of whom were from Jones's regiment.

According to the account of Parke's opponents, on 7 December armed people accumulated in front of Parke's house, declaring they had no intention to hurt or injure his person, but asking him to discharge the troops and to visit some other islands. However, Parke not only refused to dismiss his troops, but also required them to bring five of the leaders of the opposition to him as hostages; this enraged the inhabitants, so that the armed people marched in two bodies, one commanded by captain Piggot, the other by captain Paynter. The firing was started by Parke and his army: 'the Governor's party fired first upon the inhabitants...after that there was a sharp fire kept up on both sides for some little time, and several on both sides killed and wounded'.<sup>99</sup> After Piggot entered the governor's house, he 'immediately begged

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*Truth Brought to Light*, p. 2.

<sup>96</sup> French, *The History of Col. Parke's Administration*, p. 53.

<sup>97</sup> [Anon.], *Some Instances*, p. 3.

<sup>98</sup> CSPC, Vol 25, 1710–1711, pp. 370–97, Lt. General Hamilton to Lord Dartmouth, Antigua, 23 Feb. 1711 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol25/pp370-397>].

<sup>99</sup> [Anon.], *Some Instances*, p. 3.

the Governor to surrender himself, assuring him that no hurt should be done to his person'.<sup>100</sup> Parke, however, fired on him, and one of Parke's soldiers shot him through the back. Piggot lost his own life 'whilst he was endeavouring to save the Governor's life'.<sup>101</sup> According to this version of the story, the inhabitants tried everything to avoid violence, but the governor was too stubborn to make any concession.

However, George French's *History of Col. Parke's Administration* and a pamphlet called *Truth Brought to Light* tell a different story. In this version, the assembly first issued a proclamation, declaring that 'the general was a traitor, and all those who would not take up arms against him, are deemed traitors and rebels to their country'.<sup>102</sup> After this, they sent a 'command' to require the governor to discharge his guards, and quit his government. On 7 December, Colonel George Gamble and Captain Nathaniel Crump, the speaker of the assembly, were sent to negotiate with the governor. After the negotiation, Parke agreed to appoint the clerk chosen by the assembly, and to consent to laws good for the island: 'he would pass them [the assembly's acts], provided they did not touch the Queen's prerogative'.<sup>103</sup> As for his 'guard', Parke promised to dismiss soldiers exceeding the number of his usual guard.<sup>104</sup> The representatives who came to negotiate 'were so well pleased with his answer...that they offer[ed] themselves as two of the hostages, and engage[d] to bring up four more with them'.<sup>105</sup> However, when the storm was about to blow over, the governor unexpectedly heard a march beat and saw the army marching against him. Even in that situation, 'the general did not permit anybody on his part to fire, till one of the soldiers on his guard was wounded; then they all fired by command, which they continued doing, till most of them were either killed or wounded'.<sup>106</sup> After a

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> French, *History*, p. 58.

<sup>103</sup> [Anon.], *Truth Brought to Light*, p. 2.

<sup>104</sup> French, *History*, p. 58.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, pp. 58-59.

<sup>106</sup> [Anon.], *Truth Brought to Light*, p. 2.

desperate defence with a much smaller number than the enemy, and with ‘most of the soldiers and others on the General’s side...killed, wounded, or deserted’, Piggot broke into Parke’s house and shot him in the thigh.<sup>107</sup> In the aftermath, Parke suffered some cruel tortures:

[T]hey strip him of his clothes, and tear his shirt from his body, the wrists and neck bands only remaining: they kick, spurn at and beat him with the Butts of their muskets, by which means, at last, they break his back: they drag him out into the street by a leg or an arm, and his head trails and beats from step to step of the stone stairs at the entrance of his house, and he is dragged naked on the coarse, gravelly, and stiff clayey street, which raked the skin from his bones.<sup>108</sup>

He was laid in the street for a time and died two hours later. Parke’s marshal, Michael Ayon, was in the house with him and was wounded after his surrender. The author of the *History*, George French, was also wounded.

French’s *History* presents Parke as a good governor, who ‘bravely lost his life in defence of the prerogative of the crown’.<sup>109</sup> His first concern was repairing the fortifications and improving the defence of the islands. He chose to stay in Antigua because, since ‘that island lay more open and exposed to the enemy, he thought his presence most necessary there, to answer any emergence’.<sup>110</sup> The laws and the courts of justice were defective and corrupt, so Parke served as judge of the court of equity, which resembled the high court of chancery in England.<sup>111</sup> As for Parke’s enemies, some of them illegally held their estates, and ‘their tenure would not bear the test of a court of equity’. Others were hostile to Parke because he took away their

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<sup>107</sup> French, *History*, pp. 62-3.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>109</sup> French, *History*, preface.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

employments.<sup>112</sup> This pamphlet collected many letters from local councils in vindication of Parke, including letters from the councils of Antigua and Montserrat. These letters averred that the articles against Parke were ‘not formed by the representative body of this island, but are matters concerted by the subtle combinations of some particular disgusted and disaffected persons’, who ‘under the specious colour and pretence of acting for the public good, artfully stir up dissension, to gratify their private piques and malice’.<sup>113</sup>

Apart from its interest for the London authorities and the inhabitants of the Leewards, the death of Parke also attracted some limited attention from both domestic and colonial newspapers. The *Evening Post* was the first newspaper to publish news of Parke’s death, three months after the murder occurred. It recorded the torments Parke suffered before his death: ‘they broke his back Bone, and dragg’d him by the Heels down the Steps, suffer’d his Head to fall from step to step; tore off his Shirt and reviled him, and shot him in many Places; after dead, expos’d his Privy Parts’.<sup>114</sup> The *Boston News-Letter*, one of the earliest newspapers to be published in the American colonies, also reported the case with a small paragraph, but did not subsequently follow it up.<sup>115</sup>

A few other newspapers followed the arrests and trials of the rebels, giving news of Ensign Henry Smith being committed to Newgate, Thomas Kerby being captured by Robert Lowther, and Samuel Watkins and Daniel Mackinen being committed to Newgate.<sup>116</sup> In 1712 the *Post Boy* showed its sympathy for Parke by publishing a

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., pp. 16-17.

<sup>114</sup> *Evening Post*, 10 Mar. 1711–13 Mar. 1711 [consulted at <https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?p=BBCN&u=warwick&id=GALE%7CZ2001367997&v=2.1&it=r&sid=bookmark-BBCN&asid=7b206046>].

<sup>115</sup> *Boston News-Letter*, 9 Apr. 1711 [consulted at [https://0-infoweb-newsbank-com.pugwash-lib.warwick.ac.uk/apps/readex/doc?p=ARDX&sort=YMD\\_date%3AA&f=advanced&val-base-0=park&fld-base-0=ocrtext&maxresults=50&docref=image/v2%3A1036CD221971FE08%40-EANX-1056622D8AEF4961%402346088-1056622D9C85658C%401-1056622DDB5321F-6%40Boston&firsthit=yes](https://0-infoweb-newsbank-com.pugwash-lib.warwick.ac.uk/apps/readex/doc?p=ARDX&sort=YMD_date%3AA&f=advanced&val-base-0=park&fld-base-0=ocrtext&maxresults=50&docref=image/v2%3A1036CD221971FE08%40-EANX-1056622D8AEF4961%402346088-1056622D9C85658C%401-1056622DDB5321F-6%40Boston&firsthit=yes)].

<sup>116</sup> *Post Boy*, 17 Nov. 1711–20 Nov. 1711 [consulted at <https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?p=BBCN&u=warwick&id=GALE|Z2001403477&v=2.1&it=r&sid=bookmark-BBCN&asid=1db8a60d>]; *Evening Post*, 1 Apr. 1712–3 Apr. 1712 [consulted at <https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?p=BBCN&u=warwick&id=GALE|Z2001403477&v=2.1&it=r&sid=bookmark-BBCN&asid=1db8a60d>].



letter written by some inhabitants of the Leewards in vindication of him.<sup>117</sup> In 1713, it published two more letters, one from inhabitants of Nevis and the other from inhabitants of St Kitts, conveying to the mother country that they were innocent of involvement in the murder, and that they ‘never made any public complaint against his said late Excellency [Parke]’.<sup>118</sup> These two letters were also cited in French’s *History of Colonel Parke’s Administration* in 1717.

These newspapers to some extent promoted the spread of Parke’s story, and the pamphlet *Truth Brought to Light* was laid before the Board of Trade. But the influence of such texts was very limited. For ordinary readers, the coverage was too scanty and too scattered to elicit great interest, and it did not lead to widespread discussion. For the authorities, there were more important things to consider than the just punishment of the rebels, namely, the security of the Leewards and the stability of other colonies. The rebellion was conducted by the cohesive local elites who dominated the colonial society, and the mother country could not take the risk of turning rebels against a governor into rebels against the crown.

## Aftermath

After Parke’s death, the strategy of the assembly was to develop as many alliances as possible, and, according to Thomas Morris, they put forth a proclamation declaring that all those who did not join them were rebels to their country. Parke’s remaining allies, who claimed themselves to be loyalists, wrote to the crown requesting protection. They were not only worried about their safety, but also concerned to remind the metropole that the assemblymen who had risen against Parke were a threat

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[warwick&id=GALE\[Z2001368208&v=2.1&it=r&sid=bookmark-BBCN&asid=73d283d9\]](https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?p=BBCN&u=-warwick&id=GALE[Z2001368208&v=2.1&it=r&sid=bookmark-BBCN&asid=73d283d9]); *Post Boy*, 23 Sep. 1712–25 Sep. 1712 [consulted at [https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?p=BBCN&u=-warwick&id=GALE\[Z2001403859&v=2.1&it=r&sid=bookmark-BBCN&asid=a5ca1f3f\]](https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?p=BBCN&u=-warwick&id=GALE[Z2001403859&v=2.1&it=r&sid=bookmark-BBCN&asid=a5ca1f3f])].

<sup>117</sup> *Post Boy*, 6 May 1712–8 May 1712 [consulted at [https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?p=BBCN&u=-warwick&id=GALE\[Z2001403632&v=2.1&it=r&sid=bookmark-BBCN&asid=1cdef75a\]](https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?p=BBCN&u=-warwick&id=GALE[Z2001403632&v=2.1&it=r&sid=bookmark-BBCN&asid=1cdef75a])].

<sup>118</sup> *Post Boy*, 23 Apr. 1713–25 Apr. 1713 [consulted at [https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?p=BBCN&u=-warwick&id=GALE\[Z2001404143&v=2.1&it=r&sid=bookmark-BBCN&asid=53c78f13\]](https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?p=BBCN&u=-warwick&id=GALE[Z2001404143&v=2.1&it=r&sid=bookmark-BBCN&asid=53c78f13])].

to the empire. Morris wrote to the Board of Trade, 'I am informed by one Mr. Mathew Bermingham, merchant of this Island, and of unspotted reputation, that he heard some of that party say, if H.M. injured any of them, they wou'd put the sword into other hands'.<sup>119</sup> Another member of Parke's faction, Isaac Royall, wrote to Michael Ayon, 'I heard severall of them within these three days say, that if H.M. resented what they had done, they wou'd serve some other Prince, for they were one and all, and if H.M. hang'd one, she shou'd hang all'.<sup>120</sup>

The danger of rebellion spreading was indeed something that greatly concerned England. When the news of Parke's death was received in the mother country, the Board of Trade was shocked. For the mother country, the most important thing was to prevent the French from taking advantage of the situation to attack the colony. Dartmouth, the secretary of state, had an emergency meeting with the Board of Trade, together with the attorney general and the solicitor general. At the meeting, they discussed the possibility of a French assault and the state of the colony's militia. Meanwhile, the Board of Trade immediately informed the other two governors in the Caribbean, Archibald Hamilton, who was en route to Jamaica, and Robert Lowther, who was en route to Barbados. It also informed the commander of the men-of-war for the West India trade, in case the French seized the opportunity to attack the colonies. Regarding the question of who Parke's successor should be, the agent of Nevis, Captain Jory, who was present at the meeting, recommended Walter Hamilton. However, in view of the power of the local elites, the Board of Trade decided to turn to a new candidate, Walter Douglas. The intention of the mother country was clear: it needed a person who had no existing interests or connections in the colony to take charge, lest the colony move further along the path towards a claim to independence.

Douglas arrived in the colony in July 1711, instructed to defend the crown's

<sup>119</sup> *CSPC, Vol 25, 1710–1711*, pp. 397–401, Thomas Morris to the CTP, 27 Feb. 1711 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol25/pp397-401>].

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 466–72, Isaac Royall to Mr. Ayon, Antegoa, 23 Apr. 1711 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol25/pp466-472>].

prerogative, put down disorder, and investigate Parke's death. In addition to these instructions, Douglas was told to capture between three and six of the main malefactors and, if possible, to send them back to England. As for the other people involved in the rebellion, they were all pardoned by a royal proclamation, 'wee being perswaded that many of the offenders were drawn into that rebellion and murder by the subtle insinuations, and by the influence of some of the chief advisers and promoters thereof'.<sup>121</sup> This proclamation was not unexpected. It would have been too expensive for the mother country to hold the empire together by force, and the British government was therefore reluctant to use military force against colonial riots. This attitude was not only apparent in the case of the Leewards but was also revealed in other colonial rebellions. The government had refused to interfere in tobacco-cutting riots in Maryland in the late seventeenth century, and it did not intervene in the riots which occurred in New Jersey and Massachusetts in the middle of eighteenth century.<sup>122</sup>

Douglas had his own plan to deal with the situation. He did not publish the pardon given with his instructions as soon as he took up his position, but waited until February 1712, when the inhabitants wrote to the Earl of Dartmouth, praying for a general pardon.<sup>123</sup> When Douglas arrived on Antigua, he immediately realised that it was still under the control of the rebels. The whole assembly of Antigua was involved in Parke's death, together with hundreds of militiamen, and, as a stranger, he lacked the political and military capacity to investigate the rebellion and send the offenders back. His predicament was similar to that of his unfortunate predecessor. The real objective of Douglas's investigation of Parke's murder was therefore not to resolve the case itself, but rather to divide the planter faction which dominated the island –

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<sup>121</sup> *CSPC, Vol 26, 1711–1712*, pp. 211–30, Proclamation of H.M. General Pardon to the inhabitants of Antigua, 6 Feb. 1712 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol26/pp211-230>].

<sup>122</sup> Olson, 'Parliament, Empire', in Pocock (ed.), *Three British Revolutions*, p. 293.

<sup>123</sup> *CSPC, Vol 26, 1711–1712*, pp. 272–93, The Earl of Dartmouth to Governor Douglas, Whitehall, 14 May 1712 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol26/pp272-293>].

though Douglas denied that this was so, saying that the attribution of such a motive to him was a fabrication on the part of his enemies. Douglas worried about the intimacy and friendship between the queen's troops and the rebels, and wrote to the secretary of state, Lord Dartmouth, that 'the spirit of rebellion is so infused into the majority of the people, that the same members are thought only the fittest persons to be their Representatives', and that he was 'every minute ready' to sacrifice his life.<sup>124</sup>

Douglas did try his best to fulfil his instructions, although he soon experienced tensions with the local elites. Before his arrival, Antigua was under the control of Walter Hamilton, who according to the testimony of the council of Antigua, always expressed a great deal of resentment against Parke and encouraged people to oppose him. After Douglas's arrival, the council exhibited fourteen articles against Hamilton, concerning his support for the opposition party and his attempts to hinder the examination of Parke's death.<sup>125</sup> The new governor wrote to the Earl of Oxford about the way Hamilton was impeding him in the fulfilment of his responsibilities, in particular his attempts to discover the main offenders in Parke's case. In response to his obstruction, Douglas suspended Hamilton. Douglas at length sent some officers who were engaged in the rebellion back to England, together with depositions and witnesses. The men who were returned included Captain Joseph Rooksby, Lieutenant Thomas Watts, and Ensign Henry Smith.<sup>126</sup> Several months later Douglas also sent depositions against Daniel Mackinen and Samuel Watkins, who had escaped to London after Parke's death but were arrested and imprisoned at Newgate.<sup>127</sup> Another

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid., pp. 211-30, Extract of letter from Major Douglas to Mr. Lewis, one of Lord Dartmouth's Secretaries, 11 Feb. 1712 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol26/pp211-230>].

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., pp. 272-93, Articles exhibited against Lt. General Walter Hamilton, during his administration as Governor in chief of the Leeward Islands, 9 Feb. 1712 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol26/pp272-293>].

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., Extract of letter from Major Douglas to Mr. Lewis, one of Lord Dartmouth's Secretaries, 11 Feb. 1712 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol26/pp211-230>].

<sup>127</sup> *CSPC, Vol 27, 1712-1714*, pp. 1-20, Gov. Douglas to the Hon. Erasmus Lewes, Secretary to the Earl of Dartmouth, Antigua, 10 July 1712 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol27/pp1-20>].

main perpetrator of the murder, Thomas Kerby, fled to Barbados but was captured by Barbados's governor, Lowther, and sent to London as well. Douglas also imprisoned some officers in Antigua, including Captain John Paynter, Captain John Kerr, William Hamilton, and John King, though all were soon bailed.<sup>128</sup> England did not take firm action against the people sent back. Smith was the only person arraigned for Parke's case. In June 1715, he was charged at the King's Bench in Westminster Hall with high treason, levying war against her majesty in the island of Antigua, and murdering Parke.<sup>129</sup> But Smith argued that he was covered by Douglas's prior pardon, and this was accepted by the jury. Later, the other offenders, including Samuel Watkins, Daniel Mackinen and Thomas Kerby, also successfully pled the queen's pardon, and were discharged without trial.<sup>130</sup>

## Conclusion

Parke's death was a result of diverse factors. Compared with other governors, he was wilful and headstrong, which contributed to his unwise decisions during the conflicts that cost his life. As an outsider, Parke did not have his own interests in the colony, which meant he was capable of being an impartial governor when dealing with colonial affairs. However, he was too lacking in partiality towards the existing interest groups, showing scant concern to achieve an accommodation with the inhabitants. His disputes with the inhabitants regarding the land problem, the corrupted judicial system, and illegal trade were not unique, but his disregard for the vested interests of the powerful local planters and his robust measures against them, resulted in resentments from different parties, especially because he was not flawless himself, either in his personal conduct or in the way he used his power.

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<sup>128</sup> *CSPC, Vol 26, 1711–1712*, pp. 241-54, John Wickham to [? Mr. Perry], Antigua, 21 Mar. 1712 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol26/pp241-254>].

<sup>129</sup> French, *History*, p. 81.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

Parke alienated the existing local interest groups from the time of his arrival and then attracted suspicion that he was using his public authority to attack his personal and political enemies. For example, his seizing of Edward Chester's sloops was regarded as persecution under the guise of an attack on smuggling. This made his position very vulnerable. Moreover, his militant disposition was read as a dangerous signal that the colonial people might lose their freedom to tyranny, and this made him an object of enmity to many in the colony, not just to the powerful interests. He did not hesitate to use military force to solve the problems he faced, but he failed to foster a good relationship with the forces he sought to rely on: some captains were deeply involved in the affair, while others, such as Captain Cunningsby Norbury and Captain Joseph Rookeby, chose to leave the island before the rebellion.

The position of governor of the Leeward Islands remained in the hands of local elites most of the time. Compared with domestic politicians, colonial ones undoubtedly enjoyed greater independence, and the mother country had no intention to control every aspect of colonial societies. As a result, local elites effectively shared sovereignty with the crown at the periphery of the empire. William Stapleton, the Christopher Codringtons, and other politicians acting with the authority of the governor, such as William Mathew and Walter Hamilton, all had large estates and extensive personal networks in the colony. The only two governors who came from outside the islands' elites ended up involved in scandals: Parke was killed, and Douglas was charged with false arrest, use of the queen's pardon as a means to enrich himself, the making of a false entry in the council register, acceptance of improper presents from the assemblies, and embezzlement of the communion silver issued to him upon his departure for the Leeward Islands. He was ordered home, tried before the King's Bench, fined, and sentenced to five years' imprisonment.<sup>131</sup> The fate of his successor indicates that Parke's miserable death was not only a result of his

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<sup>131</sup> Leonard Woods Labaree, *Royal Government in America: A Study of the British Colonial System Before 1783* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1964), p. 124.

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misbehaviour as a governor, but also a consequence of mighty local elites taking measures to defend their interests.

## Chapter 4: Constitutional Conflicts in Jamaica: A Case Study of Governor Archibald Hamilton between 1711 and 1716

The chapter focuses on the constitutional tensions and factionalism that pervaded Jamaican political culture. It first examines this in relation to trade and piracy, highlighting tensions between planters and merchants over the utility of, or damage caused by, piracy, and then in relation to planter politics, stressing the importance of the development of a Creolean planter interest that resisted colonial tax policies. Discussion then focuses in on the problems that Hamilton's revenue demands created in his relationship with the assembly, and on the factionalism that both rendered smooth government almost impossible and triggered a propaganda war. The concluding sections of the chapter explore how the resentments created culminated in accusations against the governor of corruption and self-interested behaviour, charges that initially proved successful in having him removed from office but which, in a final twist, Hamilton was able to refute on his return to England. Throughout, the chapter explores structural issues that led to challenges to the governor's authority and to poor relations between governor and assembly, but also to the personal interests that exacerbated and coloured these larger problems.

Richard Dunn argues that the Glorious Revolution led to the emergence of two patterns of colonial relationship, 'a West Indian kind and a North American kind'.<sup>1</sup> The former was tailored to the requirements of big sugar planters who were more disposed to accept 'dependent colonial status' than mainland settlers; the West Indian planters had regained their control over local politics after the Glorious Revolution, and desired more material and military support from the metropole.<sup>2</sup> Dunn's

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Dunn, 'The Glorious Revolution and America', in Nicholas Canny (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Origins of Empire* (5 vols, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), I, p. 465.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



argument to some extent explains why the West Indian colonies chose to remain loyal during the American Revolution but did not completely conform to the political climate of the colonies; particularly during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries when constitutional tensions prevailed in West Indian governments and the Caribbean planters fought bitterly for their constitution, liberty, and British identity with the crown and its colonial representative, the governor.

Since the establishment of representative governments in Barbados, Jamaica and the Leeward Islands, governors had been preoccupied by struggles with the assembly over revenue collection, accountability, authority boundaries, and general policies. Vulnerable during these conflicts, they were attacked for both public and private reasons, accused of offences including misuse of power, encroachment on the legislature's authority, and self-seeking behaviour such as illegal seizure, involvement in smuggling, and piracy. In contrast to the constitutional tensions between the metropole and the periphery, which were characteristic of the time of the American Revolution, disputes in the early eighteenth century were predominantly expressed as internal tensions in the colonies, in particular of rivalries between the governor and inhabitants, with the former usually being regarded as a representative of the royal prerogative. John Murrin notes that 'conflicts between governor and assembly remained frequent and often ill-tempered', and 'throughout the Caribbean, assembly scored striking gains at the expense of governors'.<sup>3</sup>

While constitutional tension in the colonies is a widely-discussed topic, as noted in chapter 1, most historians focus on American colonies, seeking to relate the constitutional ideology of the early eighteenth century to the revolutionary era.<sup>4</sup> Constitutional contention in the Caribbean remains understudied for some understandable reasons. One such reason is that although claims for liberty and

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<sup>3</sup> John M. Murrin, 'Political Development', in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole (eds), *Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Era* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), p. 436.

<sup>4</sup> See chapter 1, pp. 5-6.

constitution had been voiced since the early stages of settlement, the islands did not in the end join the continental colonies in the pursuit of independence, so historians have assumed that their constitutional demands were weaker than those of American colonies. Similarly, the plantation system of slavery usually attracts more interest, as the most significant feature that distinguished Caribbean colonial society from other colonies.<sup>5</sup>

That being said, some works focus on the constitutional history of the Caribbean, mainly on the development of Jamaica's constitutions. Agnes Whitson long ago argued that the key feature of the Jamaican constitutional crisis was the conflict between the crown's authority and colonial liberty. She examined Jamaican constitutional history by exploring the struggles in passing the perpetual revenue bill, the constitutional crisis of 1676, and the long-lasting quarrels between governors and the assembly. For Whitson, 'it was the clash of two fundamental principles: centralization against local autonomy'.<sup>6</sup> This clash was indeed a key trigger of Jamaican constitutional conflict. More attention has been paid to Jamaican constitutional problems in the 1760s, although these were primarily attempts to answer the question why Caribbean people did not choose the way of independence. Jack Greene, for example, investigates the Jamaican privilege controversy between 1764 and 1766, the period of the Stamp Act passed by parliament.<sup>7</sup> Greene's work contextualises the Jamaican assembly's defence of its privileges and the casting of doubt upon the authority of the Privy Council. He stresses constitutional tensions such as customary privilege versus prerogative, liberty versus arbitrary government, and local rights versus metropolitan power. The conclusion offered is that authority was constituted through a 'more or less continuous process of negotiation between metropolitan officials in both London and the colonies, on the one hand, and local

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 33-35.

<sup>6</sup> Whitson, *The Constitutional Development of Jamaica*, p. 158.

<sup>7</sup> Greene, *Negotiated Authorities*, pp. 350-93.

political power holders in the colonies, on the other'.<sup>8</sup> Aaron Graham explores the growing administrative capacity and political power of the legislature in his recent research on Jamaican legislation.<sup>9</sup> He maintains that the process of legislation and the transatlantic constitution enabled provincial assemblies to co-operate with the imperial government, resulting in a relationship between the two that was productive and competitive.<sup>10</sup> Another article, co-authored by Trevor Burnard and Aaron Graham, examines taxation and the extension of the fiscal-military state in Jamaica between 1721 and 1782. Instead of focusing on constitutional tensions around taxation, the authors argue that under the context of a security threat from both internal and external attack, white Jamaicans willingly paid relatively high rates of taxation 'because they were satisfied with what they got from the state. Furthermore, they believed they had a significant stake in the processes by which taxes were collected and spent'.<sup>11</sup> The article makes a convincing point that different treatment received from home contributed to differing attitudes of colonies towards taxation. However, this argument raises questions about why, if Jamaicans willingly accepted the high rate of taxation after 1720, revenue issues caused friction between governor and assembly before that date.

One explanatory factor has to do with the eventual settlement of a fixed revenue from the islands, something that was deeply contentious in the making but which, once achieved, then lowered tensions. While the assemblies of the two other main West Indian colonies, Barbados and the Leewards, adopted a perpetual 4½ per cent duty on their exports at an early stage of settlement, the Jamaican assembly did not pass any long-term revenue bill either for government expenditure or the maintenance of military defences. This caused the revenue problem in Jamaica to be more

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 392.

<sup>9</sup> Aaron Graham, 'Jamaican Legislation and the Transatlantic Constitution, 1664–1839', *THJ*, 61 (2018), pp. 327–55.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 355.

<sup>11</sup> Trevor Burnard and Aaron Graham, 'Security, Taxation, and the Imperial System in Jamaica, 1721–1782', *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 18 (2020), p. 461.

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sensitive, and struggles around it even more bitter. The planters were reluctant to pay additional taxes when they had already provided a certain amount of revenue to the crown, convincing them that expenditure towards the maintenance of government should instead lie with the mother country. Disputes abounded about what economic sections should be taxed: the planters proposed a levy on slave trade, while governors sought a land levy. Any attempt by governors to pass money bills inevitably led to conflict with the assembly, which saw its role as defending the islanders from the burden of heavy taxes and, more generally, encroachment of the crown authority. Furthermore, the revenue issue was also deeply related to the assembly's intent on using the purse strings as a bargaining tool to extend their authority in other colonial affairs in addition to financial issues, and to gain greater political independence. The issue of revenue gave financial leverage to the assembly over the executive, especially the governor who was vulnerable to disputes and bargaining while following instructions to pass money bills. This became a key trigger of conflicts between the executive and legislature.

Constitutional tensions in Jamaica were also accompanied by factionalism and the growth of a Creole party within the colony. The factions consisted of big planters and merchants using domestic political ideology inherited from home to bargain with the governor and defend their interests. Hence, some domestic resonances, such as the role of a 'country' persuasion and pressures for accountability were also replicated on the other side of the Atlantic. In the economic sphere, piracy and trade had been two concerns of colonial elites for a long period, and Jamaican elites found themselves divided into different factions revealing their divergent opinions about wealth accumulation. Later, a Creole party composed of big planters began to dominate the island and became a main force to fight against the governors on constitutional and economic issues during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century.

The government of Archibald Hamilton between 1711 and 1716 will be

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examined in this chapter. Hamilton was neither the first governor attacked and removed as a result of political contentions within the colony, nor was he the last, although he was the only Jamaican governor arrested after the precedent case of Sir Thomas Modyford in 1671, and it was interesting that both were arrested for their involvement in piratical activities. But his case is highly revealing of the constitutional tensions prevailing in Jamaica and other Caribbean colonies. It also highlights a combination of private and public factors in the constitutional contentions, especially when it came to the factionalism that divided Jamaican political elites, and the dilemma faced by governors in terms of their public authority and private interests. The trigger behind the attack was his intention to pass a revenue act for army provisions. The ensuing confrontation escalated into a series of constitutional disputes, with inhabitants complaining about ‘grievances’ and ‘oppressions’ committed by the governor, and the latter in turn criticising the assembly’s encroachments on his executive authority and its attempts to extend its own power beyond all limits. During the conflict, a Creolean party, with the help of country ideology from home, played a significant role in challenging the governor until he was arrested due to his private-seeking behaviour, namely his involvement in piracy.

### **The Context of the Jamaican Constitution and Country Ideology Inherited from Home**

As discussed in chapter 1, the factors underlying the long-lasting constitutional debates were complex. On the one hand, ideologies and issues were replicated from the mother country, including the assumption that the assembly’s primary function was to protect people from arbitrary rule and the issue of the king’s prerogative versus the people’s privileges. On the other, the specific situation of the colonies generated new ideological debates and problems such as the identity of colonial inhabitants, a

growing colonial awareness of the importance of self-government, and creolisation–anglicisation dynamics. Behind the clash of ‘centralisation’ and ‘local autonomy’ lay deeper interrelated ideological disagreements between the mother country and colonies regarding the nature of colonies, colonial people and the colonial assembly. The metropole always tried to emphasise the inferior status of the colonies as a periphery annexed to England, and defenders of the crown even argued that the colonies belonged to the king, rather than the nation.<sup>12</sup> Colonial people in both American and West Indian colonies were willing to accept their geographical marginality, but would never accept subordination in politics. Instead, they tended to claim themselves an extension of the mother country. As a result, the fear that the king’s prerogative would threaten people’s privileges and liberties was pervasive in colonial society.

The inheritance of country ideology is a good example of transatlantic interaction between the mother country and its colonies. Country ideology describes a system of opinion prevailing in the homeland in the later seventeenth and early eighteenth century and has been studied by many historians from different perspectives. J. G. A. Pocock examines the ‘neo-Harringtonian’ ideology employed in the political discourse of country gentlemen regarding issues of power, corruption, standing army, and constitutional balance.<sup>13</sup> Colin Brooks has also summarised six components of the country persuasion including provincialism, sense of place, the image of an England comprised of freeholder estates, its pessimistic tone in Augustinian atmosphere coupled with its defensive attitude and emphasis on responsibility.<sup>14</sup> David Hayton, on the other hand, has linked the ‘moral panic’ of the 1690s and the development of country ideology.<sup>15</sup> Pamela Edwards regarded country

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<sup>12</sup> Liam Seamus O'Melinn, ‘American Revolution and Constitutionalism in the Seventeenth-Century West Indies’, *Columbia Law Review*, 95 (1995), p. 119.

<sup>13</sup> J. G. A. Pocock, ‘Machiavelli, Harrington and English Political Ideologies in the Eighteenth Century’, *WMQ*, 22 (1965), pp. 549–83.

<sup>14</sup> Colin Brooks, ‘The Country Persuasion and Political Responsibility in England in the 1690s’, *Parliament, Estates and Representation*, 4 (1984), pp. 139–42.

<sup>15</sup> David Hayton, ‘Moral Reform and Country Politics in the Late Seventeenth-Century House of

ideology as a broadly oppositional, 'omnibus' response to fears of centralisation.<sup>16</sup>

Generally speaking, the usual demands of the country party included the encouragement of parliamentary scrutiny of the executive, the enactment of legislation to secure regular and frequent parliaments, and the control of the number of placemen and size of standing armies.<sup>17</sup>

Concern about standing armies was common in the American and Caribbean colonies, just as it was at home, throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the mother country, Robert Harley maintained that a standing army would endanger the liberties of Englishmen, enlarge the power of the monarchy, and threaten the constitutional government.<sup>18</sup> Country writer John Trenchard similarly argued that a standing army could be used by a tyrant to suppress his subjects. The country party cut the English army to 10,000 in the session 1697 to 1698 and, after a general election fought mainly on this issue, reduced it in the following session to a mere 7,000.<sup>19</sup>

As for the colonies, it is argued by O'Shaughnessy and others that in the late eighteenth century, Caribbean islands tended to be more willing than American colonies to support imperial garrisons and pay for local regiments; this was due to the extremely high ratio of slaves to colonists and the enduring threat of foreign attack. The difference in attitude is illustrated by the fact that in 1770, the year of the Boston Massacre, when the army became the chief symbol of tyranny in North America, the Caribbean assemblies requested more troops to police their slaves and to provide defence against foreign attack.<sup>20</sup> However, in the early eighteenth century the Jamaican assembly was deeply committed to the notion that these armies were

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Commons', *Past & Present*, 128 (1990), pp. 48-91.

<sup>16</sup> Pamela Edwards, 'Political Ideas from Locke to Paine', in Dickinson (ed.), *Eighteenth-Century Britain*, p. 300.

<sup>17</sup> Brewer, *The Sinews of Power*, p. 126.

<sup>18</sup> A. McInnes, 'The Political Ideas of Robert Harley', *History*, 50 (1965), pp. 309-22, cited in Lois G. Schworer, *No Standing Armies! The Antiarmy Ideology in Seventeenth-century England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), p. 162.

<sup>19</sup> W. A. Speck, *The Birth of Britain: A New Nation, 1700-1710* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided*, p. 56.

unnecessary during peacetime and likely to be a threat to people's liberty by placing them at risk of arbitrary government: 'our usual privileges, libertys and property are violated, our whole body contemptibly treated, the subjects' property invaded', protested the assembly in 1716.<sup>21</sup> As a result, inhabitants in Jamaica were always reluctant to raise money for quartering soldiers and attempted to preserve the assembly's independence, which caused a series of conflicts between it and the governor, as this chapter will discuss further.

Indeed, governors who had military backgrounds were viewed as a potential danger by colonial inhabitants, though such appointments were common: more than half of the governors or lieutenant governors appointed in the American colonies from 1660 to 1730 had experience of military service.<sup>22</sup> During the early eighteenth century, many colonial governors had been military colleagues of the Duke of Marlborough: the Duke's leading infantry commander, George Hamilton the Earl of Orkney, became governor of Virginia, and subsequently, Marlborough's long-time staff member, Colonel Alexander Spotswood, became lieutenant governor.<sup>23</sup> In the Caribbean, as we have seen, Colonel Daniel Parke was appointed governor of the Leeward Islands in 1706 and four years later Archibald Hamilton gained the office of Jamaican governor with the help of the Duke. There was no lack of defenders of the king's prerogative and centralised policies among this cohort. For example, Sir Francis Nicholson, who spent most of his life in North America as governor,<sup>24</sup> attacked proprietorial and charter rights by more than once recommending the elimination of all charter and proprietary governments. He also established

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<sup>21</sup> *CSPC, Vol 29, 1716–1717*, pp. 76–101, Representation of the Assembly of Jamaica to the King, 19 May 1716 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol29/pp76-101>].

<sup>22</sup> Stephen Saunders Webb, 'The Strange Career of Francis Nicholson', *WMQ*, 23 (1966), pp. 514–15.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 541.

<sup>24</sup> He was governor of South Carolina from 1721 to 1725, governor of Nova Scotia from 1712 to 1715, governor of Virginia from 1698 to 1705, governor of Maryland from 1694 to 1698, lieutenant governor of Virginia from 1690 to 1692, and lieutenant governor of the Dominion of New England from 1688 to 1689.



authoritarian military control in all colonies in which he served. In the two conquered colonies of New York and Maryland, Nicholson claimed that the inhabitants had no right to claim privileges as Englishmen due to their identity as conquered people.<sup>25</sup> In 1711 Nicholson sought to build ‘a standing force and a title of Captain Generall over all the plantations on the Continent’, a plan that was supported by the contemporary Governor of New York, Lord Bellomont, and General Robert Hunter. It was fully adopted by the Board of Trade in 1713 as a policy objective from that time.<sup>26</sup>

These precedents caused more worry for Jamaican inhabitants because, unlike other Caribbean colonies, the island had been taken by an English force from Spain in 1655 and remained under military government for a long period. Despite a representative government having been established, the fear of a return to military control and the consequent loss of freedom hung over the Jamaican people, especially when most governors had a military background. As one of them, Governor Archibald Hamilton complained in 1715, the opposing faction tried to get rid of him, and *referred to themselves* as the country party: ‘the dissatisfyed, who call themselves the Country party, have had no small encouragemt. from the intelligence they have had of my not being supported from home, as I might have expected, consequently gave them hopes of my being recalled’.<sup>27</sup>

To avoid the influence of military force, in 1705 the assembly passed an act that excluded foreigners from serving either in civil office or the militia during Governor Handasyd government. In 1706, it passed an ‘Act ... to provide an additional substance for H.M. officers and souldiers, etc’, which contained a clause disallowing any officer or soldier to ‘use, exercise or enjoy any civil Commission, power, place or authority, or in the Militia in that Island’. Another clause laid ‘a penalty on all persons not being native-born subjects of England, Ireland or the Plantations in America, that

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<sup>25</sup> Webb, ‘Francis Nicholson’, p. 522.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 542.

<sup>27</sup> CSPC, Vol 28, 1714–1715, pp. 122–41, Gov. Lord A. Hamilton to the Earl of Orkney, 25 Mar. 1715 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol28/pp122-141>].

shall use, exercise or enjoy any Commission, civil or military'.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, if any officer or soldier married a Jamaican local, he would lose all his money raised. Later, in 1707, as an imitation of the self-denying ordinance of the mother country in 1645, the assembly decided to prevent people who undertook civil employment – such as councillors, judges, and assemblymen – from serving in regiments, and military officers from sitting on the assembly. These provisions clearly displayed Jamaica's anxiety around the possibility that it might lose its freedom and be oppressed by military force.

Another issue related to the objectives of the country persuasion was that of the assembly's endeavours to promote scrutiny of the government's accounts. The debate about whether the government should be accountable to the legislature in its arrangements concerning the public finances paralleled a discussion in the mother country. Most promoters of financial scrutiny were country politicians attempting to use the powers of the commission to examine administrative expenditure.<sup>29</sup> For them, effective scrutiny would minimise the possibility of the misuse of revenue and curtail corruption. However, some politicians were concerned about the side-effects of the commission. For example, as early as the 1660s the Earl of Clarendon argued that there was a tendency among parliamentarians 'to extend their jurisdiction to cases they have nothing to do with', which, he stated, was 'such a new encroachment as had no bottom'.<sup>30</sup>

Despite the many disputes that arose in the motherland relating to the issue of government accountability, a public accounts commission became an effective means of compromise in conflicts between the executive and legislature. In 1689, for example, to sustain war with France and maintain government expenditure, William

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<sup>28</sup> *CSPC, Vol 23, 1706–1708*, pp. 166–84, Attorney General to the CTP, 9 July 1706 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp166-184>].

<sup>29</sup> Brewer, *Sinews of Power*, p. 122.

<sup>30</sup> Paul Seaward, 'Parliament and the Idea of Political Accountability in Early Modern Britain', in Maija Jansson (ed.), *Realities of Representation: State Building in Early Modern Europe and European America* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 55.

III delivered to the Commons accounts relating to the national revenue in return for a full grant of the revenue he sought. This practice soon became a tradition. But the process of parliamentary scrutiny was also formalised. In 1691 a statutory commission was established with a membership that included many of those who had argued for parliamentary or external scrutiny of government finances.<sup>31</sup> It is hard to deny that this commission to some extent benefited the public finances. As many recent historians have argued, the commission afforded the lower house greater authority to inspect public moneys, providing MPs with more information when they formulated fiscal schemes, and through examination of public accounts in detail the commissioners were able to give backbenchers and those of a 'country' persuasion the confidence and resolve to question the crown's proposals and policy.<sup>32</sup>

As for Jamaica, the issue of whether the assembly had the right to inspect treasury accounts was treated differently by different governors. For example, in 1686, when Lieutenant Governor Molesworth tried to persuade the assembly to raise money to suppress rebels, he placed the revenue accounts before it.<sup>33</sup> Yet, in 1701 when Governor William Beeston sought to pass a revenue act for quartering soldiers, a fierce quarrel between the governor and assembly was triggered by the latter's intention to inspect the accounts of the King's Bounty, money that was granted to people suffering as a result of the earthquake of 1692 and the French invasion two years later. The assembly asserted that the money had been misused by the governor, 'for that this House very well know that several sufferers have had no share of the Bounty'.<sup>34</sup> Hence, they insisted on inspecting the account of the money before passing a new bill. Beeston refused the requirement of the assembly and retorted that

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>32</sup> J. A. Downie, 'The Commission of Public Accounts and the Formation of the Country Party', *EHR*, 91 (1976), pp. 33–51; Brewer, *Sinews of Power*, p. 122.

<sup>33</sup> *CSPC, Vol 12, 1685–1688 and Addenda 1653–1687*, pp. 200–09, Lieu-Gov. Molesworth's speech to the Assembly of Jamaica, 1 June 1686 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol12/pp200-209>].

<sup>34</sup> *CSPC, Vol 19, 1701*, pp. 330–39, Minutes of Council in Assembly of Jamaica, 4 July 1701 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol19/pp330-339>].

he and the council had disposed of the money ‘according to his Majesty’s trust and directions, and that they are to be accountable to nobody else’.<sup>35</sup> For the governor, the assembly had ‘assumed to themselves such powers as do not in any wise belong to them, and such as were never before offered at in the former Assemblys of this island’.<sup>36</sup> Evidently, the issue of accountability was in this debate directly connected to revenue issues and constitutional rivalries in the colony.

Jamaica has been referred to as the colony that ‘fired the first shot in the long political struggle between mother country and colonies which preceded the open war’.<sup>37</sup> As people of a conquered colony, Jamaicans had, since the very early stages of settlement, endeavoured to achieve formal confirmation that they lived under the protection of English law and could enjoy the same rights and privileges as their continental counterparts.<sup>38</sup> During the process, revenue was used as an important bargain tool by the assembly in exchange for a promise to confirm their identity and privileges, which will be seen in the following discussions. According to a report by Governor Thomas Lynch, the crown’s revenue on the island consisted of ‘quit-rents, fines, forfeitures, escheats, licenses for taverns, and an impost on strong liquors’.<sup>39</sup> Before the perpetual revenue was settled in 1728, three main medium-term revenue acts were passed in Jamaica. The first was the Impost Act passed under Lynch in 1683, which was enforced for twenty-one years; in return, the king confirmed nearly all other acts during that period, but did not declare English law to be in force.<sup>40</sup> The Impost Act was the most significant form of tax in Jamaica, laying duties on strong

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., Minutes of Council in Assembly of Jamaica, 1 July 1701 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol19/pp330-339>].

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., pp. 347-53, Minutes of Council in Assembly of Jamaica, 11 July 1701 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol19/pp347-353>].

<sup>37</sup> Metcalf, *Royal Government and Political Conflict in Jamaica*, p. 2.

<sup>38</sup> Greene, ‘Liberty and Slavery’, pp. 55-56. Greene examines Jamaican people’s struggles for liberty and the identity of Englishness, which were pursued via the claim they were free-born Englishmen who enjoyed the same inherited rights as their continental counterparts.

<sup>39</sup> *CSPC, Vol 11, 1681–1685*, pp. 495-511, Description of Jamaica, dedicated to King Charles II, 20 Sep. 1683 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol11/pp495-511>].

<sup>40</sup> Keith, *Constitutional History of The First British Empire*, p. 131.

liquors brought to the island, and was later broadened by the inclusion of a licence fee required of all retailers of strong liquors, duties on imported sugar, tobacco, indigo, ginger and cocoa. There were also minor sources of revenue including the quitrents from crown grants of land and the proceeds from fines and escheats, which were by royal consent appropriated for local use.<sup>41</sup> Later, imported slaves also provided revenue for the government.<sup>42</sup> The second was a revenue act passed in 1688 during the government of the Duke of Albemarle but never implemented. At the time of its passage it did not have a time limitation, but its legitimacy was disputed by some planters and merchants who alleged that the election of the assembly that passed it had been illegal, and the law therefore void. Although this act was not enforced in the end, the Board of Trade suggested in 1701 that the king should use it as an alternative if the assembly continued refusing to pass a new revenue bill. The third act, another twenty-one-year measure, was passed in 1703 under Governor Handasyd. This was accomplished before the expiry of the Impost Act passed by Lynch and after lengthy bargaining by the assembly.

After many years of struggle, the first perpetual revenue bill admitted by both metropole and colony was passed by Governor Robert Hunter in 1728. The Act granted £8,000 a year to the crown, and was achieved due to the crown's agreement to confirm the rights of Jamaican people and the laws previously passed. According to the pamphleteer Veridicus, writing in 1754, this act constituted 'a fair, honest and mutual contract' between the king and Jamaican people when the king acknowledged that 'all the Privileges, Immunities, Freeholds and Possessions' of Jamaicans would become 'perpetual'.<sup>43</sup> The compromises made by the mother country and by

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<sup>41</sup> Spurdle: *Early West Indian Government*, pp.114-115.

<sup>42</sup> CSPC, Vol 15, 1696–1697, pp. 8-27, Gov. Sir William Beeston to LTP, 15 June 1696 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol15/pp8-27>].

<sup>43</sup> Veridicus, *The Merchants, Factors and Agents Residing at Kingston in the Said Island, COMPLAINANTS, Against The Inhabitants of Spanish-Town, and of the Four Adjacent Parishes, and Against the Members of the Honourable Assembly, Annually and Constitutionally Held at Saint Jago de la Vega, and Against the Planters, Freeholders, Settlers, and Chief Body of the People of the Island of Jamaica: THE RESPONDENTS CASE* (London, 1754), pp. 8-10, cited in Greene, *Creating the British Atlantic*, p. 170. Veridicus ('truth teller') might be the pseudonym of

governors during the conflicts over revenue indicate the extent to which control over revenue was an instrument with which the assembly could achieve its political ends.

Apart from struggles to pass a perpetual revenue act, another bone of financial contention between 1680 and 1720 concerned the introduction of additional money bills to maintain the military and government. The essence of the dispute centred around who should pay for the additional expenditure. To take quartering money as an example, the colonies believed that they should be supported by British regiments in their defence without paying extra fees, as they already paid large amounts of tax to the homeland. The mother country, on the other hand, insisted that colonies should undertake the cost of regimental maintenance from their own finances. During the debates, the assembly also took the opportunity to enhance its control of colonial finances. In 1686, when the island suffered the threat of a slave-rebellion, Lieutenant Governor Hender Molesworth disputed with the assembly about how to raise money to cover the military expense. Molesworth reported to William Blathwayt that ‘they are willing to have the parties paid and their estates secured, but they do not wish to be at any charge themselves’.<sup>44</sup> The planters proposed to lay duty on ‘exported negroes, an additional duty on wine, an impost on all goods imported in foreign bottoms (viz., the Assiento), and an impost on money and bullion exported’. Molesworth rejected this proposal as it violated his instructions and ‘the King would never consent that the money raised by duties on foreign merchandise should be applied to such a use as securing ourselves against our own slaves’.<sup>45</sup> The assembly did not change its mind even when Molesworth tried to make a compromise: ‘if they agreed to vote 1,000*l.* to be paid to the suppressors of the negro rebellion before

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Thomas Frearon, chief justice of Jamaica from 1756 to 1764. For more information about the pamphlet, see Jack P. Greene and Craig Yirush (eds), *Exploring the Bounds of Liberty: Political Writings of Colonial British America from the Glorious Revolution to the American Revolution* (3 vols, Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2018), II.

<sup>44</sup> *CSPC, Vol 12, 1685–1688*, pp. 209–24, Lieu Gov. Molesworth to [William Blathwayt], 5 July 1686 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol12/pp209-224>].

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

Christmas, he [Molesworth] would consent that the remaining debts should be charged on an Act for additional duties on imports'.<sup>46</sup> In the end, Molesworth dissolved the assembly. There were many similar cases in the following years, and military expenditure became an enduring problem that troubled Jamaican governors, especially in terms of the money for quartering regiments sent from home. More importantly, it combined with factional politics, the growth of Creole party, as well as politicians' self-interested behaviour, escalating the constitutional rivalries between the governor and assembly.

## **Factionalism in Jamaica**

During political disputes with governors, colonial inhabitants always claimed their intention to defend their constitution and public welfare. But they were in fact also influenced by their private interests and ambitions, which could produce inconsistent policies, and partisan and factional behaviour. In other words, the reality of politics—removed from the 'ideal' constitutional framework and claims—consisted of working relationships achieved by cooperation, negotiation, and competition between different political interests, and this was so both in domestic and in colonial politics.

### Disputes about Trade and Piracy

As an island lying at the centre of the Caribbean, Jamaica had natural advantages to conduct both piratical and trade activities: it expanded English influence in the heart of the Caribbean due to its strategic location and provided an ideal opportunity for Britain to trade directly with Curaçao, the most important Dutch base in the region, along with Spanish America. During the 1680s, Jamaica elites were divided into a

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., pp. 239-53, Minutes of Council of Jamaica, 24 Sep. 1686 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol12/pp239-253>].

‘piracy faction’ consisting of those who used piratical activities to accumulate wealth and a trade faction, and ‘asiento party’ as referred to by Zahedieh, comprised of big planters and merchants who gained huge profits from the slave trade and smuggling, and resented piratical activities due to the impact on trade with the Spaniards.<sup>47</sup>

Around the interests of the trade and privateer factions revolved the political contests at Jamaica for many years, and power shifted between the two factions.

The representative of the piracy faction was Sir Henry Morgan, the famous privateer who fitfully administered the government between 1670 and 1680.<sup>48</sup> Morgan had led a series of plunders against Spanish colonies with the support of Governor Thomas Modyford (who served between 1664 and 1671), including attacks on Portobello and Panama, which won him huge wealth and a reputation as a national hero. Jamaica had been peculiar among the West Indian colonies in its connection to piracy. As Whitson commented, ‘It did not concern itself overmuch with trade and the growing of sugar, tobacco and cotton; buccaneering absorbed its energies and overshadowed everything else.’<sup>49</sup> This might be exaggerating the situation, but in the so-called ‘golden age’ of piracy, Port Royal was an ideal base for predatory activities and it was normal for buccaneers to ship their prizes back to the port, which made it one of the wealthiest cities in the colonies.

In Jamaica, efforts to prevent illicit trade were ineffective due to the lack of regulations. Theoretically, the captain of a vessel was expected to present clearance papers to customs officials to check his cargo, but as Kingston was the only port with customs authorities in Jamaica, it was easy for merchants to load any cargo they

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<sup>47</sup> Nuala Zahedieh, ‘Regulation, Rent-seeking, and the Glorious Revolution in the English Atlantic economy,’ *Economic History Review*, 63 (2010), p. 880.

<sup>48</sup> Numerous studies on Henry Morgan were published at the beginning of the twentieth century. For example, C. H. Haring, *The Buccaneers in the West Indies in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Methuen, 1910); Philip H. Gosse, *The Pirates' Who's Who* (London: Dulau and Co., 1924), Francis R. Hart, *Admirals of the Caribbean* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1923); E. A. Cruikshank, *The Life of Sir Henry Morgan: With an Account of the English Settlement of the Island of Jamaica, 1655-1688* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1935). For more details, see Larry Schweikart and B. R. Burg, ‘Stand by To Repel Historians: Modern Scholarship and Caribbean Pirates, 1650–1725’, *The Historian*, 46 (1984).

<sup>49</sup> Whitson, *Constitutional Development of Jamaica*, p. 39.



wanted through other Jamaican ports.<sup>50</sup> For inhabitants, piratical activities were considerably more profitable and less socially demeaning, compared with working in sugar plantations like slaves.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, the open amity between administrators and seafarers, as well as a certain fluidity between the titles of merchantman, privateer, and pirate made the situation more complex.<sup>52</sup> Sir Henry Morgan was a good example of the blurred categories, since as a privateer he was appointed as governor of Jamaica. Due to these close ties, warships assigned to the island neglected to defend its coast when employed as convoys for vessels trading at Spanish ports.<sup>53</sup>

Although piracy brought huge profits, another group, namely consisting of big planters and merchants was active. The trade faction, or ‘asiento party’, as it is referred to by Zahedieh, was led by Thomas Lynch who served as governor of the island between 1671 and 1674 and again between 1682 and 1684.<sup>54</sup> Lynch emphasised the safety problems and huge loss of involvement in privateering wars, and argued that ‘privateering and planting are two things absolutely incompatible’.<sup>55</sup> For him, the suppression of piracy would be good for the future: ‘If Jamaica have easy government, be defended from enemies, and supplied with negroes and servants, and have no privateering, in six years it may produce as much sugars as Barbadoes.’<sup>56</sup> In fact Lynch owned promising plantations in Jamaica and was a devoted representative of planter interests against those of piracy.<sup>57</sup> He was also heavily involved in smuggling and the slave trade by establishing private business links in Spanish cities and joined other merchants, such as Hender Molesworth, the Royal African

<sup>50</sup> George Metcalf, *Royal Government and Political Conflict in Jamaica*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>51</sup> Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, p. 109.

<sup>52</sup> Douglas R. Burgess, *The Pirates’ Pact*, p.216.

<sup>53</sup> Curtis Nettels, ‘England and the Spanish-American Trade’, p. 5.

<sup>54</sup> Zahedieh, ‘Regulation, Rent-seeking’, p. 880.

<sup>55</sup> *CSPC, Vol 7, 1669–1674*, pp. 296-311, Sir Thos. Lynch to Sec. Lord Arlington, 25 Dec. 1671 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol7/pp296-311>].

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 475-87, Lieu Gov. Sir Thos. Lynch to the Council for Plantations, 4 Apr. 1673 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol7/pp475-487>].

<sup>57</sup> At his death he owned 21,438 acres and a mansion of thirteen rooms. See Trevor Burnard, ‘Lynch, Sir Thomas’, in *ODNB* [<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/17260>].

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Company's agent.<sup>58</sup>

The profits made by trade, in particular the slave trade, were no less than those of piracy. According to Zahedieh, 'The cargoes taken to Spanish markets were largely made up of European and Mediterranean manufactures, particularly linens and silks, ironware, and liquor.'<sup>59</sup> In exchange, the Spanish colonies provided Jamaica bullion, hence active trade activities also saved Jamaica from scarcity of money, 'While other English colonies largely used commodities as currency, Jamaica used coins.'<sup>60</sup> The slave trade was a traditional sector of trading activities. As Curtis Nettels summarises, 'a contact between Jamaica and the *assiento* runs through the two decades before 1700.'<sup>61</sup> When Lynch and Molesworth controlled the government, slaves were sold to the Spaniards at almost twice the island price: those sold to islanders for £17 were sold to the Spaniards for around £40 with few additional costs, and at least a third of slaves delivered to Jamaica between 1682 and 1686 were re-sold to the Spanish.<sup>62</sup> The trade faction monopolised the slave trade, manipulated slave prices and made huge profits through exporting a large number of slaves to the Spanish. However, this reduced the slave supply and caused a rise in slave prices in Jamaica itself; thus the trade faction was complained about by some planters for making profits at the cost of other people on the island. In 1684, Governor Lynch was confronted by Henry Morgan and his allies, Colonel Byndloss and Charles Morgan, who whispered that he had been bribed and was partial to the Royal African Company. As a result, Lynch removed these three from the council.

The shift in power between the trade and piracy factions also accompanied constitutional tension in Jamaica. Charles Howard, first Earl of Carlisle, arrived in 1677 as governor with orders to pass a permanent revenue bill. In response two big

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<sup>58</sup> Nuala Zahedieh, 'The Merchants of Port Royal', p. 579.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 582.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 583.

<sup>61</sup> Nettels, 'England and the Spanish-American Trade', p.2.

<sup>62</sup> TNA, PRO, CO 138/6, address of Assembly and Council of Jamaica, 26 July 1689, fos. 287–93, cited from Zahedieh, 'Regulation, Rent-seeking', p. 878.

planters, Samuel Long and William Beeston, led the opposition in the assembly to fight against it under the name of the defence of liberty. The real reason, however, was Carlisle's alliance with Henry Morgan, which impeded their trade. In 1680 Beeston returned to England with Long to present the assembly's case to the lords of trade and plantations, and successfully negotiated the reappointment of Lynch as governor in 1682.<sup>63</sup>

Partisan and religious divisions were also evident between the two factions: the privateers criticised Lynch's behaviour of encouraging dissenters. Lynch, for his part, referred to Morgan's faction as a "drunken silly little party", complaining that 'Sir Henry and Captain Morgan have set up a special club ... where (especially when the members are drunk), the dissenters are cursed and damned'. The result, he concluded, was that 'people began to take notice that it looked as if he hoped to be thought head of the Tories; consequently I must be of the Whigs.'<sup>64</sup> Clearly, Lynch was regarded as a Whig due to his enthusiastic in trading with Spain and open mind in religious terms. However, it is also noteworthy that the terminology of party was seldom applied in colonial political discourse, as at local level in England, and party spirits seemed to influence colonial politics in a more subtle way, such as intertwining with local factional politics through changing provincial personnel and the appointment of governors, which will be discussed in chapter 5.

The contentious sparring between the trade and piracy factions dominated Jamaican politics for a long period, with alternations in power occurring after the time of Lynch and Morgan. When Molesworth, Lynch's friend, succeeded the latter in 1684 he spared no effort in suppressing the Morgan faction. A later governor, The Duke of Albemarle, chose to side with Morgan and in opposition to the slave traders during his

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<sup>63</sup> See P. B. Austin and Nuala Zahedieh, 'Beeston, Sir William' in *ODNB* [<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/1955>]. Ironically, when Beeston took the position of governor in 1693, he had great difficulty persuading the assembly to vote for taxes as well, which will be discussed later.

<sup>64</sup> *CSPC, Vol II, 1681–1685*, pp. 2-15, Gov. Sir Thomas Lynch to LTP Jamaica, Nov 2, 1683 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol11/pp532-545>].

administration between 1687 and 1688.<sup>65</sup> Albemarle was a cousin of Governor Thomas Modyford, who had supported Morgan's privateering activities in the 1670s. His anti-Spanish prejudices and kinship with Modyford made him a natural ally of the privateers.<sup>66</sup> During his government, big planters were removed from public office including the Chief Justice Samuel Bernard and councillors John Bourden, John White and Samuel Barry. Further, measures were taken to attack the trade with Spain, including the seizure of Spanish ships for trading contrary to the Act of Navigation, high taxes levied on exported slaves, and an act that raised the value of pieces-of-eight, which eroded the value of Royal African Company debts in the colony.<sup>67</sup> Yet, the Duke's administration only lasted for a year and, after his death, all planters suspended by him were restored and the planter faction again dominated colonial politics.

### Planter Politics

With the passage of time, a Creole party consisting of big planters grew in importance. This faction, as their predecessor planters, claimed to be defending their constitution in fighting with the governors over revenue issues, but were also pursuing their private interests during the process. As previously discussed, local elites successfully dominated the colonies by controlling legislatures, judiciaries, and economies after generations of development. While governors came and went, these elites became the enduring and effective leaders of colonial politics and, in addition to being English subjects, they had a new identity in the languages of contemporary observers – the creole.<sup>68</sup> According to Ian Steele, it was after the 1680s that the

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<sup>65</sup> Zehedieh, 'Regulation, Rent-seeking', pp. 879-80.

<sup>66</sup> Bliss, *Revolution and Empire*, p. 197.

<sup>67</sup> Zehedieh, 'Regulation, Rent-seeking', pp. 879-80.

<sup>68</sup> The word *creole* originated from a Spanish word *criollo*. The word had different meanings in different American colonies such as Peru, Brazil, and Louisiana. Sometimes it could be used to refer to people of European descent who were born in the New World, and sometimes it applied to slaves born locally. In Jamaica, the word was applied to those who were born in and committed to

notion of *creole* was applied by English officials, or newly arrived immigrants, to their own compatriots born in the Caribbean, mainland colonies or those who were long settled there.<sup>69</sup> These individuals served on the assembly, held positions on the council or other public offices on the island and, more importantly, combined their demands for constitution with personal rent-seeking motivations. Such actions blurred the line between private and public in their political feud with governors. For example, their disputes with governors were not only about money bills, but also about their economic interests, and the accompanying constitutional claims were also regarded as measures encroaching on royal prerogative and defend private interests under the name of public good.

During Lord Inchiquin's administration (1690 – 92), Jamaica established a committee consisting of assemblymen and councillors who were big planters, such as Peter Beckford the Elder, Samuel Bernard, John Bourden and Nicholas Lawes. The remit of the committee was to dispose of money raised for the solicitation of the island's affairs in England but, according to Inchiquin, 'its chief use was to solicit against a Governor'.<sup>70</sup> Inchiquin complained that the members had controlled the assembly to fight against his government:

Certainly so scandalous an Assembly was never chosen. At least two-thirds of them sit up drinking all night, and before they are cool next morning to vote whatever is put into their hands by Beckford, Bernard, Lawes and their agents, Lloyd and Harrison, in the Assembly, who have made themselves heroes of the faction and whose advice tends to the destruction of all government.<sup>71</sup>

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the area and used in relation to both white inhabitants and black slaves. See Edward Kamau Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole society in Jamaica, 1770–1820* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. xiv-xv.

<sup>69</sup> Steele, *The English Atlantic*, p. 234.

<sup>70</sup> CSPP, Vol 13, 1689–1692, pp. 113–27. Gov. Lord Inchiquin to LTP, 12 Aug. 1691 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol13/pp113-127>].

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

The disputes between Inchiquin and the elites centred on the revenue issue. The governor suggested raising money via land tax, while the planters proposed a levy on the slave trade and imported wines, which Inchiquin referred to as ‘the life of the place [Jamaica]’.<sup>72</sup> This was actually the old question of who should pay for the maintenance of government and defence of the island: the king and his revenue on trade, or the planters and their estates? Furthermore, the disagreements between the governor and planters reflected their divergent opinions on the slave trade. Although some big planters had interests in the slave trade (like Beckford, who was a nephew of Thomas Lynch and himself was an agent of the Royal Africa Company), they did not seem keen on the Asiento trade (or maybe the monopolised slave trade by the African company): ‘The truth is that most of the imported negroes and abundance of provisions, being exported by the Assiento and under their umbrage, the planters cannot carry on their plantations, however profitable the export trade, without three thousand negroes annually for their own sole use.’<sup>73</sup> In addition, the defence of the colony was under threat due to the trading activities: ‘Again the ships of war sent for our defence have been constantly employed in convoying the Assiento's ships, though in the meanwhile our coasts are exposed to the depredations of the French to the ruin of small settlers and poorer people’.<sup>74</sup>

Inchiquin’s motivation for rejecting a tax on the slave trade was suspicious for the planters, considering his involvement in that trade: ‘The reason for Lord Inchiquin's refusal to pass the bill for a tax on exported negroes is clear enough, for though we gave him £2,000 out of it, yet he had that much without us from the Spaniard’.<sup>75</sup> As Samuel Bernard complained later, a tax on the slave trade ‘would

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., pp. 583-96, Account of the calling, proceedings and dissolution of the last Assembly of Jamaica, Jan. 1692 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/-america-west-indies/vol13/pp583-596>].

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., pp. 583-96, Account of the calling, proceedings and dissolution of the last Assembly of Jamaica, Jan. 1692 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/-america-west-indies/vol13/pp583-596>].

have taken the money out of his private purse and put it into the public', in particular 'when the Assembly seemed to decline to raise money for hire of sloops that the King's frigates might guard the Spanish Assiento'. Furthermore, in Inchiquin's two years' administration, 'no Governor had ever so much money in so short a time—£15,000 is well within compass—nor strove so earnestly to get it.'<sup>76</sup>

Similar disputes about money continued to trouble later governors. During Governor Beeston's government in the Nine Years War, regiments were sent to Jamaica to defend the island and protect its Spanish Indies market, creating new financial issues and constitutional disputes in the process.<sup>77</sup> While Governor Beeston was trying to pass an act for the quartering of the army, he was attacked by the assembly on suspicion of misusing the king's Bounty, which had been granted at the time of the earthquake in 1692, as discussed earlier.<sup>78</sup> The assembly pressed for an account of the Bounty money and, after its rejection, suggested a levy on the quartering money; in this way it could also meddle in the usage of the Bounty.<sup>79</sup> Beeston complained that the assembly was controlled by a group of people who were 'never used to such business, nor acquainted with the constitution nor laws of the Island'. He noted that they 'were industriously chosen by the artifices of some men on purpose that they might lead them to oppose all things for the service of the King and Country'.<sup>80</sup> As for the proposal to use the king's Bounty for quartering, it 'subjected H.M. Treasury of the Island for paying Quarters of the Officers ... by which they made themselves the disposers of H.M. Revenue, contrary to any authority they have

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[america-west-indies/vol13/pp583-596](https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol13/pp583-596)].

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., pp. 616-34, Samuel Bernard to [Earl of Nottingham?], 18 Apr. 1691 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol13/pp616-634>].

<sup>77</sup> Nettels, 'England and the Spanish-American Trade', p. 17.

<sup>78</sup> *CSPC, Vol 19, 1701*, pp. 330-39, Minutes of Council in Assembly of Jamaica, 1 July, 1701 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol19/pp330-339>].

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., pp. 347-53, The House sent up a message to H.E, 12 July 1701, [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol19/pp347-353>].

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., pp. 378-86, Gov. Sir William Beeston, to the CTP, 30 July 1701 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol19/pp378-386>].

therein, and to H.M. Commands about it.’<sup>81</sup> For Beeston, the assembly’s behaviour was an encroachment on the king’s authority and revenue, and its members ‘sturred up to believe that what a House of Commons could do in England, they could do here, and that during their sitting all power and authority was only in their hands, and that they could call all persons and things under their disquisition’.<sup>82</sup> Beeston blamed this on Hugh Totterdale, an Irish immigrant who influenced affairs in Jamaica for a very long time.<sup>83</sup> But, like his predecessor, Beeston’s impartiality was suspected: he made profits in the Spanish slave trade, for example, ordering Naval Officers that ‘no negroes goeing to the Spaniards but who paid him [the Naval Officer] 20*l.* per head for me, as had been usual to my predecessors’.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, he also drew criticism for his use of naval vessels to convoy traders.<sup>85</sup>

The money problem continued in Governor Thomas Handasyd’s time during 1702 and 1711. Handasyd was instructed to press the assembly for absolute provision for quartering the regiments under penalty of their being recalled. The Impost Act passed by Thomas Lynch in 1684 was about to expire, so he was also instructed to inform the assembly that if it did not pass a suitable revenue bill, the Queen would give assent to the Act passed by the Duke of Albemarle in 1688.<sup>86</sup> Handasyd complained about the bad temper of the assembly when it came to money: ‘The chief

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., pp. 16-20, Gov. Sir William Beeston to the CTP, 19 Aug. 1701 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol19/pp415-459>].

<sup>83</sup> Totterdale was expelled from the Assembly by Handasyd in 1704 for “create[ing] a jealousy between the Governor, Council and Assembly and the Queen’s liege people and to bring the Governor and Government into contempt.” See *CSPC, Vol 22, 1704–1705*, pp. 26-31, Information by Robert Hotchkyn, Attorney General of Jamaica, against Hugh Totterdell, 30 May 1704 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol22/pp137-157>]. However, in 1706 Totterdale was elected as an assemblyman for Port Royal, and undertook the position of speaker. He represented St. David in 1709–11, but was expelled in 1712. In 1714 he was chosen as speaker again. See Frank Cundall, *The Governors of Jamaica in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century* (London: The West India Committee, 1937), p. 35.

<sup>84</sup> *CSPC, Vol 19, 1701*, pp. 16-20, Gov. Sir William Beeston to the CTP, 19 Aug. 1701 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol19/pp415-459>].

<sup>85</sup> P. B. Austin and Nuala Zahedieh, ‘Beeston, Sir William’ in *ODNB* [<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref.odnb/1955>].

<sup>86</sup> Frank Cundall, *The Governors of Jamaica*, p. 28.



thing they demurr at is the quartering of the officers and soldiers that are left of the two regiments, and without quarters it is impossible for them to subsist.’<sup>87</sup> He mentioned that there was a Creolean party made up of country-born people in 1703, ‘they being this Sessions most of them Creolians are at as great variance with those born in England as if they themselves were not descended from English parents’.<sup>88</sup> Handasyd commented that Peter Beckford, one of the Creolean leaders, and his whole family had ‘been constantly a disturbance of the tranquility of H.M. subjects ever since I have been in the Government’.<sup>89</sup> It was his contention that the Creoles were unwilling to bestow Jamaican offices upon any Englishmen, nor allow themselves to be called Englishmen. During the period of bargaining, Handasyd himself was referred to by the assembly as having the ‘scandalous name of arbitrary’.<sup>90</sup>

Although he did not pass a perpetual revenue bill, Handasyd ultimately managed to pass one that covered the following twenty-one years. It is unclear as to why the Assembly made the concession, but it was possibly because the new revenue bill was tacked with a clause confirming the Assembly’s former Laws. As a reward, he became a full governor of Jamaica in 1704. However, the assembly was only willing to pass a quartering act for a short period and renew it when necessary, with the Creolean issue arose again in 1706: ‘Most of the Assembly being Creolians, born in this country, cannot bear English Government, but are still contriving to entrench on H.M. prerogative.’<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> *CSPC, Vol 21, 1702–1703*, pp. 431–51, Lt.-Gov. Handasyd to the CTP, 23 May 1703 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol21/pp431-451>].

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 650–62, Lt. Gov. Handasyd to the CTP, 27 Aug. 1703 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol21/pp650-662>].

<sup>89</sup> *CSPC, Vol 24, 1708–1709*, pp. 270–86, Earl of Sunderland to the CTP, 6 Apr. 1709 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol24/pp270-286>].

<sup>90</sup> *CSPC, Vol 22, 1704–1705*, pp. 329–49, Gov. Handasyd to Sir Charles Hedges, 17 Dec. 1704 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol22/pp329-349>].

<sup>91</sup> *CSPC, Vol 23, 1706–1708*, pp. 323–41, Gov. Handasyd to the CTP, 27 Dec. 1706 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp323-341>].

## The Revenue Problem in Hamilton's Government

Archibald Hamilton assumed the governorship in 1711 when the island was still in a factional maelstrom and Governor Handasyd 'was every day expected to be succeeded' by him.<sup>92</sup> A privileged family background and navy service experience made Hamilton an ideal governor for Jamaica and also gave him confidence in dealing with the sophisticated problems there. Hamilton was from a Scottish noble family and volunteered for naval service at fourteen years of age. During his time at sea he accompanied James Kendal, the Barbados Governor, on his journey to the West Indies in 1690 and later served as aide-de-camp to the Governor of the Leeward Islands, Christopher Codrington.<sup>93</sup> Before his appointment as governor in Jamaica, Hamilton took part in the 1708 general election and was elected MP for Lanarkshire. His brother, the Duke of Hamilton, being a member of the Whig party was assisted by some Junto lords during the Jacobite invasion scare, and Hamilton himself supported the ministry in the vote for the impeachment of Dr. Sacheverell, the divisive High-Church cleric. Two years later, Hamilton was appointed governor of Jamaica with the support of the Duke of Marlborough.

Hamilton's first objective was to raise money for the provision of the armies, like his predecessors. In 1712, he addressed the assembly about the necessity of making effectual provisions for the treasury, the repair of Queen House, and additional subsistence to soldiers. But as usual, the planters were unwillingly to pay for the army themselves. After Hamilton's arrival in Jamaica, the first two sessions of the assembly showed members' willingness to support his government through some moves such as appointing committees to examine and report on the state of the treasury and pass a

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<sup>92</sup> "A View of the Proceedings of the Assemblies of Jamaica", in *Occasional Papers on the Assiento and the Affairs of Jamaica*, (London: 1716), p. 2.

<sup>93</sup> David Wilkinson, 'HAMILTON, Lord Archibald (1673–1754), of Motherwell, Lanark., and Riccarton and Pardovan, Linlithgow', in Eveline Cruickshanks, Stuart Handley and D. W. Hayton (eds) *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1690–1715* (5 vols, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) [consulted at <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1690-1715/member/hamilton-lord-archibald-1673-1754>].

bill to grant additional subsistence to soldiers. However, the good relationship between the governor and assembly did not last long. The next sessions were heated and full of altercation. Claims were made against a standing army in time of peace, although for Hamilton, ‘nothing more was proposed then the usual quartering and subsistence from the country they have allways had’.<sup>94</sup> In addition, some assemblymen absented themselves and the assembly could not reach a quorum to make any decision. In the end, Hamilton dissolved the assembly in October 1713.

When a new assembly met in November, Peter Beckford the Younger, one of the wealthiest planters, was chosen as Speaker. This new session presented an address claiming that the assembly would provide six months’ provisions (this strategy of paying for six months at a time would be repeatedly pursued by the assembly in the future), which meant the support for soldiers would be continued until the end of May 1714.<sup>95</sup> But, as before, the opposition party in the assembly still argued against a standing army remaining on the island in a time of peace, as well as playing the trick of absenting themselves from the meeting to disrupt the assembly’s work. Meanwhile, they encroached on the executive authority by denying the council’s right to amend money bills and assuming themselves the right to review the king’s regiment without consulting the governor. As a result, after sitting for two months, this assembly was dissolved by Hamilton in December 1713, for ‘undutyfull and unwarrantable proceedings’ that ‘are chiefly owing to two or three factious and unquiet spirites amongst them’.<sup>96</sup>

Meanwhile, the problem of factionalism repeatedly disrupted Hamilton’s work in

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<sup>94</sup> *CSPC, Vol 27, 1712–1714*, pp. 243–49, Gov. Lord A. Hamilton to the CTP, 27 Oct. 1713 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol27/pp243-249>].

<sup>95</sup> However, after the six months had lapsed, the burden fell on Hamilton himself and the costs in the end amounted to £2,076 6s 3d. This debt was later allowed by the Board of Trade to be paid from the colonial revenue. See *CSPC, Vol 29, 1716–1717*, pp. 55–70, H.M. Warrant to Gov. Lord A. Hamilton, 10 Apr. 1716 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol29/pp55-70>].

<sup>96</sup> *CSPC, Vol 27, 1712–1714*, pp. 302–25, Gov. Lord A. Hamilton to the CTP, 22 Mar. 1714 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol27/pp302-325#highlight-first>].

subsequent assemblies. After having paid for the provisions for half a year, another assembly was summoned by Hamilton in November 1714. After the election, Hamilton feared ‘there is too much ground to suspect it will still be a troublesom Assembly, there being a small majority of the same kidney the last was of’.<sup>97</sup> Hamilton proved to be prescient as one month later he wrote another complaint letter to the Board of Trade about how this assembly was dominated by a factious spirit:

in their first sessions but of three days, which ended in a prorogation to the 18th Jan. next, they have exceeded all former presidents, and sufficiently shewn themselves ... Ever since the prorogation they have been in close cabal, and a Petition, Remonstrance, or something of that nature is prepared, and subscriptions solicited without admitting the subscribers into the secret, except such as they can fully confide in, more then that it is for the good of their country ... If these proceedings are not factious I know not what faction is.<sup>98</sup>

While realising the situation, Hamilton still gave a speech to the assembly in December 1714 calling for another bill, but to no avail. As a result, this assembly was dissolved by Hamilton in January 1715. At that time, the regiment in Jamaica had been reduced to two companies, each consisting of one hundred men.<sup>99</sup>

The new assembly called in October 1715 was referred to by Hamilton’s enemies as ‘the most corrupt and unfair’ one, because they saw it has the product of electoral manipulations by Hamilton and his faction. The assembly complained that in some places ‘none was to have notice of elections but those they were sure would vote for their interest and that only the morning or night before the election, in another place

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<sup>97</sup> *CSPC, Vol 28, 1714–1715*, pp. 122–41, T. Parkes to Mr. Popple. 24 Mar. 1715 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol28/pp122-141>].

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> “A View of the Proceedings of the Assemblies of Jamaica”, in *Occasional Papers on the Assiento and the Affairs of Jamaica*, (London: 1716), p. 19.

the election was closed upon a signal made by Stewart to the Sherrieff's Deputy.<sup>100</sup>

But even with this attempted gerrymandering, Hamilton still did not achieve the compliant session he wanted. At a meeting on 31 October, the governor communicated to the assemblymen the king's letter and gave an address about the weak and defenceless condition of Jamaica. However, his speech did not win him much political support or sympathy, partly because of the planters' anti-military ideology – as previously discussed – and partly due to their unwillingness to pay the large sum of money from their own pockets. In a report of 1716, the inhabitants complained that 'Jamaica has been the only of H.M. Coloneys that supplied the army with an additional subsistence wherein above £150,000 hath been expended by the said Island, during and since the late war'.<sup>101</sup> They granted money every six months because they worried that if the regiments were recalled, the money would 'not be applied to the use of white people but would sink in the Treasury of the Island'.<sup>102</sup>

### **Factionalism during Hamilton's Administration**

For Hamilton, tensions in the colony were blamed on people using the excuse of the public good to achieve their personal ends. Indeed, the individuals he named were in fact complained about by his predecessors. For example, in 1714 Bolingbroke recognised the existence of this faction, noting that 'the authority of governor is now so low' and 'some of those very persons who now disturb the Government of Jamaica, have always attempted the same under former Governors successively, from the time of Sir Willm. [William] Beeston ... but through the support those Governors have had

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<sup>100</sup> *CSPC, Vol 29, 1716–1717*, pp. 76-101, Representation of the Assembly of Jamaica to the King, 19 May 1716 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol29/pp76-101>].

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9-28, Memorial presented by Francis March and others (? merchants concerned in Jamaica) to the CTP, in vindication of the Assembly of Jamaica, against the Governor's representation, 21 Feb. 1716 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol29/pp9-28>].

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

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from the Crown, and Ministry, their faction has been kept from the height they are now arrived at'.<sup>103</sup>

Hamilton identified Peter Beckford the Younger, as one of the main opponents to his government: he had 'dureing the course of my Government here distinguished himself, not only when a Member of the Assembly, but likewise as their Speaker, by a continued opposition to whatever I thought necessary to propose for the support of the Government and interest of the Island.'<sup>104</sup> Another enemy was Hugh Totterdale, who led the opposition in the assembly during the administrations of Governors Beeston and Handasyd. Both belonged to the Creolean party that fought the governors for decades.

The contentions between Hamilton and the Creoleans had many facets. There were some colours of 'country ideology' in relation to passing money bills for the maintenance of the army. The planters resented attempts to do so and worried about the danger of army and tyranny, in particular when the burden was to fall on the planters instead of the king's revenue. In addition to conflicts over public issues, Hamilton also disputed with planters in terms of private interests. For example, Hamilton chose to support the South Sea Company's monopoly of the slave trade. One of his allies, Richard Rigby, was a factor of the Company. Planters criticised the monopoly, 'if an exclusive Company for the trade to Africa should prevail it must wholly discourage all persons from coming to settle in this Island and put your Majtie's. subjects now here upon thoughts of abandoning their estates and removing to some other places'.<sup>105</sup> Additionally, as governor, Hamilton's involvement in piracy was also resented by the planters, as was the duty on exported slaves that he sought to

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<sup>103</sup> *CSPC, Vol 27, 1712–1714*, pp. 302-25, Abstract of occurrences in Jamaica during Lord A. Hamilton's Government, 18 Mar. 1714 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol27/pp302-325>].

<sup>104</sup> *CSPC, Vol 28, 1714–1715*, pp. 141-61, Gov. Lord A. Hamilton to the CTP, 26 Apr. 1715 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol28/pp141-161>].

<sup>105</sup> *CSPC, Vol 27, 1712–1714*, pp. 302-25, Lord Bolingbroke to the CTP, 18 Mar. 1714 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol27/pp302-325>].

impose. In March 1716, Francis March and other merchants on the island complained about Hamilton's intention to press the assembly to levy a duty of 20s. per head of slaves for payment of public debts. He concluded that 'Many of the members of the Assembly, as exporters of negroes are greater sufferers thereby than the Company.'<sup>106</sup>

The disputes between Creoleans and the governor concerned not only constitutional issues, but also Hamilton's other administrative affairs. For example, early in Hamilton's administration, he had a violent dispute with Rear-Admiral Sir Hovenden Walker, Commodore of the Jamaican Squadron. According to Hamilton, when he tried to send Banett, his agent, to Petit Guavas for the exchange of prisoners, Walker ordered Hosier, the Captain of *Salisbury*, to refuse to carry Basnett without reason. However, Walker retorted that the real reason for Hosier's refusal to carry Basnett was not because he received an order from him, but because he did not receive an order: 'I am surprised you should imagine a Captaine of a man of warr should receive any person without my order.'<sup>107</sup> Hamilton noticed Walker's friendships with several Creolean assemblymen who opposed his government and hinted that he was encouraged by these people to act against him: 'But as I think I may venture to conclude yt. Admirall Walker has acted with very great indiscretion, so nothing has more surprized me than to have found particular friendships and intimacys made by him with Mr. Beckford, Mr. Totterdale and Mr. Carver.'<sup>108</sup> More importantly, Walker's men-of-war stationed in Jamaica were supposed to protect the island's trade but were instead involved in carrying slaves and cargo, and ironically demanded prohibitive fees for providing convoys to the Spanish coast, showing little interest in chasing privateers of any nationality.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>106</sup> *CSPC, Vol 29, 1716–1717*, pp. 1-14, Francis March and others to the CTP, 8 Mar. 1716 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol29/pp28-49>].

<sup>107</sup> *CSPC, Vol 27, 1712–1714*, pp. 130-52, Rear-Admiral Walker to Gov. Lord A. Hamilton, 14 Feb. 1713 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol27/pp130-152>].

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 85-102, Gov. Lord A. Hamilton to the CTP, 22 Nov. 1712 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol27/pp85-102>].

<sup>109</sup> Nuala Zahedieh, 'Commerce and Conflict: Jamaica and the War of the Spanish Succession', in

The case was brought before the Board of Trade which, upon hearing it, decided to support Hamilton and resolved that ‘the sailing of the *Salisbury* after refusing to take him on board is a very great affront to H.E.(the governor)’s authority and may be of ill consequence to H.M. service in these parts.’<sup>110</sup> It further noted that ‘permitting men of war to carry negroes and merchandizes must be very prejudicial to the fair traders and therefore we hope will be prevented for the future.’<sup>111</sup> Walker was then recalled. After the case, the Board of Trade advised the Admiralty to give instructions to captains of men of war to obey the directions of Governors to serve the island during their stay. However, the Admiralty refused to acquiesce and proposed to ‘keep them to a strict performance of that necessary duty, which is expected from them, and so prevent their being otherwise employed at the will of the Governours.’<sup>112</sup>

## Disputes over Gubernatorial Authority

In the context of intertwined revenue problems and factional rivalries, constitutional frictions between the governor and inhabitants increased, the most significant of which was a debate about the extent of legislative and executive powers. From the governor’s perspective, revenue bargaining was viewed as an endeavour by the assembly to illegally extend its power and encroach on executive authority, or was used by factional members to defend their private interests. The assembly, however, perceived themselves to be exercising the privileges of ‘free-born’ English subjects in defence of their liberty.

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A. B. Leonard and David Pretel (eds), *The Caribbean and the Atlantic World Economy: Circuits of Trade, Money and Knowledge, 1650–1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 75–76.

<sup>110</sup> *CSPC, Vol 27, 1712–1714*, pp. 130–52, Resolutions of the Council of Jamaica, 14 Feb. 1713 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol27/pp130-152>].

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 195–214, CTP to Gov. Lord A. Hamilton, 20 July 1713 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol27/pp194-214>].

<sup>112</sup> *CSPC, Vol 28, 1714–1715*, pp. 122–41, Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to Mr. Secretary Stanhope, 28 Mar. 1715 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol28/pp122-141>].



The assembly took many measures to exclude the influence of the council and governor by enhancing its independence in controlling colonial affairs. In 1713 it passed a bill to empower seven members of the assembly to depute agents for the purpose of ‘soliciting the public Affairs of Jamaica in Great Britain’, supplying £1,200 for that purpose. Apart from appointing its own agents, the assembly also claimed other privileges for itself, for example, the right to petition the monarch and to adjourn without the governor’s leave, another historic problem in Jamaica.<sup>113</sup> When Handasyd was in Jamaica, he complained in 1708 that the assembly tried to adjourn itself for three months without his leave. He thought this ‘a great intrenchment on H.M. prerogative’ and he responded by dissolving the assembly.<sup>114</sup> In Hamilton’s time, in 1714, the assembly managed to adjourn itself for a month.<sup>115</sup> The assembly’s argument for its behaviour also stemmed from its imitation of the House of Commons:

The laws and usage of the Assemblys of that Island are to be assimilated to the laws and usage in England, and if it be the right of the Commons of Great Britain to adjourn longer than from day to day, it seems to be the original intent of the Crown as well to grant such a liberty to that little body of Freemen, as it does in general to institute the Legislative power of the Island in the nature of an epitome of the English Parliament.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> *CSPC, Vol 29, 1716–1717*, pp. 9-28, Memorial presented by Francis March and others (? merchants concerned in Jamaica) to the CTP, in vindication of the Assembly of Jamaica, against the Governor’s representation, 21 Feb. 1716 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol29/pp9-28>].

<sup>114</sup> *CSPC, Vol 23, 1706–1708*, pp. 708-15, A letter from Handasyd to the CTP, 31 Mar. 1708 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol23/pp708-715>].

<sup>115</sup> *CSPC, Vol 27, 1712–1714*, pp. 302-25, Gov. Lord A. Hamilton to the CTP, 22 Mar. 1714 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol27/pp302-325>].

<sup>116</sup> *CSPC, Vol 29, 1716–1717*, pp. 9-28, Memorial presented by Francis March and others to the CTP, 21 Feb. 1716 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol29/pp9-28>].

Extending and monopolising financial power was another key target of the assembly. In the late seventeenth century, the assembly allowed the council an informal share in the design of tax bills, but from the beginning of the eighteenth century it controlled the power completely. After 1715 the assembly even claimed the sole right to pass money bills, insisting that the council retained only the right of rejection, not of amending.<sup>117</sup> Governors and council argued that this was against tradition, for both the journal of the assembly and the minutes of the council showed that amendments made to revenue bills and provisions had been discussed during a free conference.<sup>118</sup> In addition, to enhance its authority in the passing of money bills, the assembly sought to control the collection and distribution of public money, nominate the officers who took charge of financial affairs, and inspect how public money was used.

The assembly also attempted to get rid of the council's influence over elections. In 1715, the assembly claimed that no member of the council had the right to vote in the election of any member to serve in any assembly, since such interventions were seen as an infringement of the liberties of the people of the island.<sup>119</sup> This irritated the council: 'They [the assembly] began now to tell us that wee must not only not amend mony bills but wee must have no hand in providing for the peopling our country'.<sup>120</sup>

The debates grew into a propaganda war between the governor and assembly about the nature and boundaries of their respective authorities, with both sides complaining about encroachments from the other. Although it was not easy to identify the impact of these printed documents, the fact that islanders chose to publish them in London, and appeal to a domestic readership to some extent, revealed the interplay between domestic and colonial discourses. In 1714, a pamphlet entitled *The Groans of*

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<sup>117</sup> Spurdle, *Early West Indian Government*, p. 112.

<sup>118</sup> Whitson, *Constitutional Development of Jamaica*, p. 138.

<sup>119</sup> 'A View of the Proceedings of the Assemblies of Jamaica', in *Occasional Papers on the Assiento*, p. 23.

<sup>120</sup> *CSPC, Vol 29, 1716–1717*, pp. 107–28, Representation of the Council of Jamaica to the CTP, 12 June 1716 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol29/pp107-128>].

*Jamaica* was published in London, which consisted of correspondence between an anonymous Jamaican inhabitant and his friend. This pamphlet, according to the publisher, was aimed at revealing some ‘grievances’ and ‘oppressions’ from the governor that caused contentions and animosities in the colony. The overwhelming power of the governor’s authority and his multiple roles, as the publisher put it, was one of the key problems:

The Governor of Jamaica is not only CAPTAIN GENERAL, and Commander in Chief of that Island, and other the Territories thereunto belonging, and likewise CHANCELLOR, and Vice-Admiral thereof, but has also the sole Power of nominating, appointing, continuing, turning out, and putting in again, at Pleasure, as often and whomsoever he will, all and every one of the Judges of all the other Courts of Judicature, throughout the said island; and likewise the Power of calling, continuing, adjourning, proroguing, dissolving, and issuing new Writs, for succeeding Assemblies, at Pleasure, without any manner of Limitation, as to time or other ways.<sup>121</sup>

Two years later, another collection of pamphlets named *Occasional Papers on the Assiento, and the Affairs of Jamaica* was published in London to refute the charges levied in *The Groans of Jamaica*, with letters written to a member of parliament to explain the situation of trade and plantations in Jamaica. It also detailed reports and memorials from the Jamaican council regarding the bitter political feuding between the colonial governor and the assembly.

The *Occasional Papers* refuted allegations that the governor enjoyed too much power and described the misbehaviour of the assembly. For example, the assembly’s disrespect of the king’s instructions and reluctance to pay for the provision of the two

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<sup>121</sup> *The Groans of Jamaica, Expressed in a Letter from a Gentleman Residing There, to His Friend in London* (London, 1714), p. vi.

companies was noted, along with the allegation that it 'chose members well affected the Government' in Kingston.<sup>122</sup> Another charge was that the assembly nominated its own commissioners for the Receipt of Public Monies (who thereby by-passed the receiver-general), and this move was criticised by the council as a waste of public money, since the new officials took a cut of the revenue as a handling charge:

the Publick Money has been transfer'd from one Hand to another, till some has been charg'd with 9, some with 13, and some with 17 *per Cent*. Commission ... the Publick had been charg'd with above 5000*l*. for extraordinary Commission in a very few Years, more than would have been, in case the Money had been paid into the Hands of Receiver-General, according to his Majesty's Directions.<sup>123</sup>

The tract also criticised the assembly's encroachments on the authority of the governor and council and attempts to extend its own power without limit: 'this assembly ... have declared themselves a House of Commons, and have assumed all the Privileges of it, and acted with a much more unlimited Authority.' Moreover, it was suggested that some were 'strengthening themselves with the Pretences of publick Good', and seeking to 'bring the Island into the utmost Confusion and Disorder'.<sup>124</sup>

Furthermore, the tract argued, a revenue act introduced by the assembly, 'An Act to Impose Duties on Several Commodities', was also the assembly's attempt to manage colonial finance bypassing the crown's official and was another misuse of money. It granted to several commissioners a portion of the money, much more than the amount that would have been paid to the receiver-general, and left only £3,000 to

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<sup>122</sup> 'The Representation and Memorial of the Council of the Island of Jamaica', in *Occasional Papers on the Assiento*, p. ii.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>124</sup> 'The Representation and Memorial of the Council of the Island of Jamaica', in *Occasional Papers on the Assiento*, p. iv.

the governor. More importantly, the pamphlet accused some assemblymen of pursuing private interests under the pretence of the public good, suggesting that ‘a few designing Men [to] carry on private Ends and Prejudices, must at their Pleasure, bring the Island into the utmost Confusion and Disorder’.<sup>125</sup>

The Jamaican assembly’s pursuit of authority and rights was also attacked by the Board of Trade as an encroachment on the king’s prerogative. In April 1715, the Board sent a report to the king that expressed great resentment about the activities of the Jamaican assembly, particularly in ‘claiming the sole right of passing mony-bills, refusing the Council the liberty of amending such bills, and in assuming to themselves the power of adjourning at pleasure without the concurrence of the Governor’.<sup>126</sup> It resolved that the assembly of this Island had no power ‘to Adjourn themselves without [his] leave, for a longer time than *De die in diem*’.<sup>127</sup> In addition, the denial of the council’s right to amend money bills was ‘groundless’ and considered to infringe the crown’s prerogative, hence it would not be allowed. Moreover, the Board proclaimed that the assembly was an institution called and elected by virtue of the governor’s commission ‘under the Broad Seal of the Kingdom of Great Britain’, instead of its own will:

They only sit as an Assembly and are part of the Legislature, as is also the Council, by virtue of a clause in H.M. Commission to your Lordship, without which they cou’d not be elected and sit in Assembly, and consequently their assuming a pretended right no ways inherent in them, is a violation of the Constitution of Jamaica, and is derogatory to H.M. royal prerogative.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> ‘The Representation and Memorial of the Council of the Island of Jamaica’, p. iv.

<sup>126</sup> *CSPC, Vol 28, 1714–1715*, pp. 141–61, CTP to Mr. Secretary Stanhope, 25 Apr. 1715 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol28/pp141-161>].

<sup>127</sup> *CSPC, Vol 26, 1711–1712*, pp. 147–70, CTP to Gov. Lord A. Hamilton, 22 Nov. 1711 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol26/pp147-170>].

<sup>128</sup> *CSPC, Vol 27, 1712–1714*, pp. 349–62, CTP to Gov. Lord A. Hamilton, 21 June 1714 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol27/pp349-362>].

In November 1715, the assembly of Jamaica ordered its speaker to send another address to its agents in Britain, without consulting the governor or council. Three months later, the Board of Trade discussed the question of whether the assembly had a right to present an address to the King directly through its agents rather than the governor and council. In the reply of the Board, mention was made of two precedents of the assembly petitioning separately from the governor and council by its agents: the first case was Virginia in 1701, about which the Board of Trade stated that such practices ‘would prove of very ill consequence, except only where those representations contain’d matter of complaint against Governors’. The second was Barbados in 1705, of which the Board confirmed again that ‘the only cases wherein the Commissioners for Trade thought this practice allowable were, when the Addresses contain’d matter of complaint against the Governor for maladministration, or when he refus’d to transmit or represent what they desir’d’.<sup>129</sup> Since the address sent by Jamaica did not contain any complaint against the present governor of Jamaica for maladministration, the Board of Trade resolved that this method of presenting the address should be refused.

## The Recall of Hamilton

In a report to the Board of Trade, Hamilton, convinced that the resentments of inhabitants not directed against him personally but rather at his office, noted ‘your Lopps. will not find the least pretence of any grievance or complaint that can tend any way personally to effect[affect] me, but the whole has proceeded from my complying, even in a gentle manner, with what my duty indispensably required of me.’<sup>130</sup> He was

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[indies/vol27/pp349-362](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol27/pp349-362)].

<sup>129</sup> *CSPC, Vol 29, 1716–1717*, pp. 9-28, CTP to Mr. Secretary Stanhope, 17 Feb. 1716 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol29/pp9-28>].

<sup>130</sup> *CSPC, Vol 28, 1714–1715*, pp. 48-61, Gov. Lord A. Hamilton to the CTP, 10 Dec. 1714 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol28/pp48-61>].

thus of the opinion that this was part of the Creolean plan to oust a royal governor and put forward one of their own instead. This assumption was reasonable considering Hamilton's quarrels with the planters about revenue for the maintenance of army, and the line between the executive and legislative authorities. However, some of Hamilton's predecessors who were Creoleans suffered the same problems over money issues and authority disputes like him; individuals such as Hender Molesworth and William Beeston. More importantly, Hamilton's own conflict of interest weakened his argument, since his recall was directly due to his rent-seeking behaviour through piratical activities.

During Hamilton's government, two Jamaican vessels (one belonging to Captain Edward James, the other to Captain Jennings) robbed treasure valued at 120,000 pieces-of-eight from Spanish wrecks under the guise of halting piracy. Captain Don Juan del Valle of Spain believed this piracy to have been committed by persons in government, so demanded that Hamilton return the silver and punish the captains involved. In the meantime, a pamphlet entitled *Articles Exhibited Against Lord Archibald Hamilton* circulated in Port Royal, which exposed more of Hamilton's involvement in piratical activities.<sup>131</sup> For example, Hamilton was part-owner of a sloop named *Bennet* commissioned to rob Spanish treasure ships under the pretence of suppressing pirates, with the governor himself gaining one-third of the prize.

Hamilton's enemies seized this chance to attack. They ordered Deputy Secretary Samuel Page to leave Jamaica secretly in order to lay evidence of Hamilton's misbehaviour before the Secretary of State. There, he was to deliver evidence about the vessels identified by Don Juan del Valle as the *Eagle* and *Barsheba* as having plundered the Spaniards on the Florida shore (with the former having sailed out twice).<sup>132</sup> The king was petitioned with the complaint that Hamilton was influenced

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[indies/vol28/pp48-61](#)].

<sup>131</sup> *Articles Exhibited against Lord Archibald Hamilton, Late Governor of Jamaica: With Sundry Depositions and Proofs relating to the Same* (London, 1717).

<sup>132</sup> *CSPC, Vol 30, 1717–1718*, pp. 50-68, List of 10 vessels commissioned by Gov. Lord A. Hamilton, delivered by Mr. Page, Deputy Secretary of Jamaica, to the Secretary of State, 5 Oct.

by some corrupt persons and ‘wickedly appl[ied] his authority to support their corrupt designs’.<sup>133</sup> This corrupt clique was said to consist of John Stewart, Richard Rigby, and William Broderick, and this triumvirate frequently pursued the governor’s interest under the pretence of the King’s prerogative. The assembly also noticed that Rigby had been secretly dispatched to England in 1712 to solicit the Ministry, ‘whilst Stewart and Broderick industriously aspersed many of your Majesty's subjects here and Broderick by his circular letters to the Freeholders threatned all those who would vote against the Governor's intrest, which he called Prerogative’.<sup>134</sup> Moreover, Stewart and Broderick prevailed with the governor to remove the principal planters and inhabitants from civil and military office, and to assign them to ‘persons of scandalous characters and indigent fortunes and of known disaffection to your Majesty’, including labelling some as Papists and Jacobite. In addition, the triumvirate also manipulated the elections of the Assembly, and supported republicanism by

intending not only to raise sedition but to lessen the planters (of known loyalty and integrity to your Majesty) and best families of this Island in the opinion of her late Majesty, and render most men of any fortune in this Island odious in the esteem of ye people, the better to influence the elections of a second Assembly.<sup>135</sup>

The assembly delivered formal charges against Hamilton relating to his arbitrary government and misuse of power. The indictment included allowing several members of his first assembly a privilege against any law suits for two years, in order to gain their votes; suspending the president of the council for holding differing political

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1717 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol30/pp50-68>].

<sup>133</sup> *CSPC, Vol 29, 1716–1717*, pp. 76-101, Representation of the Assembly of Jamaica to the King, 19 May 1716 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol29/pp76-101>].

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*



opinions; manipulating legislation and judicial affairs; and encroaching on the assembly's power. All these charges attacked Hamilton's attempts to use his authority as governor to undermine his political enemies and encroach upon the operations of the legislative authorities.<sup>136</sup>

Other accusations of misbehaviour, however, related purely to Hamilton's private interests and his violation of royal instructions. He was accused of commissioning and financing piratical activities. In addition, it was claimed that an agent had been sent by Hamilton to Hispaniola to negotiate trade with the French, and that the latter and other foreigners were allowed to trade on the island under the pretext of supplying themselves with necessities to cover the breach of navigation laws. Moreover, French indigo and sugar was allowed in exchange for Jamaican gold and silver which, the assembly argued, would be destructive to the Jamaican economy.<sup>137</sup>

In the context of the assembly's use of the purse strings as a bargaining instrument, it is unsurprising that Hamilton turned to piracy and illegal trade to increase his or his government's income. In Hamilton's defence, piracy had provided military protection for the island; he claimed that British vessels had been robbed by Spain under the pretence of commissions to guard its coasts for a long period. Some vessels were seized on the coast on suspicion of trade or were detained without any proof of their having traded, and without any legal condemnation.<sup>138</sup> Moreover, British settlements were also plundered and robbed by Spanish vessels from Cuba and Trinidad, a claim proven by the inhabitants of Jamaica:

Since the cessation of arms concluded between Great Britain and Spain, 1712, a great number of sloops and vessels belonging to H.M. subjects in

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<sup>136</sup> *CSPC, Vol 29, 1716–1717*, pp. 76–101, An account of the maladministration in Jamaica during the Government of Lord Hamilton, 19 May 1716 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol29/pp76-101>].

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> *CSPC, Vol 29, 1716–1717*, pp. 107–28, Gov. Lord A. Hamilton to the CTP, 12 June 1716 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol29/pp107-128>].

Jamaica and laden with very valuable effects have been pyratically and unjustly taken and seized by Spanish vessels and by them carried into Trinidad and other Spanish ports etc.<sup>139</sup>

As a result, Hamilton arguably had no choice but to grant commissions to some Jamaican privateers, despite the threat that they could take advantage of these commissions to commit piracy. Meanwhile, Hamilton further defended himself by claiming that it was common for people in Jamaica to conduct illegal trade and piratical activities, even those who attacked him for this activity. The *Mary*, for example, was owned by Lewis Galdy and Daniel Axtell, two assemblymen. The *Tyger*, whose owners were friends of Samuel Page, was the first vessel complained about by Captain Don Juan del Valle, while Page advocated that it had ‘returned innoxious’. Hamilton admitted that the *Eagle* and *Barsheba* had committed hostilities on the Spaniards at the wrecks, but argued that they only took one-fourth part of the value. Further, he stated that the *Eagle*'s second sail was at the request of several merchants, particularly Henry Sharpe whose cargoes were taken by a pirate, so the *Eagle* was dispatched to trace the pirate and retake Sharpe’s vessels. As for the *Barsheba*, it had privately escaped the Island contrary to Hamilton’s command.<sup>140</sup>

Yet none of these excuses helped Hamilton to remain in office. The reason given for his removal in May 1716 was his illegal seizure of Spanish cargoes: ‘there having been several abuses committed of late under the covert [cover] of Commissions granted by the said Lord Archibald Hamilton to the prejudice of the Treaties between this Crown and that of Spain’.<sup>141</sup> Hamilton’s removal nevertheless sparked an intense

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., pp. 177-81, Petition of Edward James, John Beswick, William Hay-man and other Merchants residing in Jamaica to H.R.H. Prince of Wales, Guardian of the Realm, 3 Sep. 1716 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol29/pp177-181>].

<sup>140</sup> CSPC, Vol 30, 1717–1718, pp. 50-68, Remarks on preceding, 5 Oct. 1717 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol30/pp50-68>].

<sup>141</sup> CSPC, Vol 29, 1716–1717, pp. 76-101, Mr. Secretary Stanhope to the CTP, 19 May 1716 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol29/pp76-101>].

factional war in Jamaica. The instructions appointed Peter Heywood, who had been removed by Hamilton from the Council and the office of Chief Justice several months prior, as the new acting governor. Heywood was also appointed as Commander in Chief to inquire about 'any robberies or piracies committed by persons commissioned by the Lord Archibald Hamilton upon the Spaniards in the Gulph of Florida or elsewhere', and 'to send the Lord Archibald Hamilton home under arrest'.<sup>142</sup> After sending Hamilton to jail, Heywood petitioned to dismiss the group of councillors siding with Hamilton, including John Stewart, Richard Rigby, Thomas Bernard, James Archbould, John Ayscough, John Sadler, and Richard Elliston. Thomas Bernard was also removed from the Chief Justice as the only remaining key member of Hamilton's faction—William Brodrick had left with Hamilton and two others, John Peake and Valentine Mumby, were dead.

However, the dominance of the Heywood faction proved short-lived. The manner in which Heywood took this opportunity to attack others also irritated the remaining councillors in Jamaica. Nicholas Lawes, with Francis Oldfeild, John Moore, William Bowles, William Wood, and Samuel Bernard sent an address to voice their disagreement regarding the removal of so many people, claiming the persons Heywood had removed had always 'endeavoured to support the Governor's administration', and 'those who [were] displaced [by Hamilton] have always opposed H.M. Government, and have given up the Council's right to amend money bills'. Moreover, it was alleged that the enquiry into the charges against Lord Hamilton had been partial and that he had been sent home without any proof or witnesses to support them.<sup>143</sup> In the end, Heywood was removed by the Board of Trade.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> *JBTP, Vol 3, Mar. 1715–Oct. 1718*, pp. 134–46, Journal, May 1716: Journal Book R [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/jnl-trade-plantations/vol3/pp134-146>].

<sup>143</sup> *CSPC, Vol 30, 1717–1718*, pp. 50–68, Anonymous Memorial, giving reasons for restoring to the Council of Jamaica those who were put out upon the removal of Lord Archibald Hamilton, 10 Oct. 1717 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol30/pp50-68>].

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 68–77, CTP to Mr. Secretary Addison, 11 Oct. 1717 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol30/pp68-77>].

Indeed, Hamilton counter-attacked. In October 1717, he presented to the Board of Trade a paper outlining the misbehaviour of the Jamaican assembly. He detailed its adjournment without leave from the governor; denying the Council any right to amend money-bills; and refusing to make provision for the subsistence of the king's army.<sup>145</sup> The Board resolved that the accusations against Hamilton 'seem to have been chiefly grounded upon the affidavits of Walter Adlington and Samuel Page present Deputy Secretary to Jamaica', whose character was found unreliable.<sup>146</sup> It found that the accusations against Hamilton had been a means used by the Jamaican assembly to remove him from his position.<sup>147</sup> Following the acquittal, Samuel Page, who had been the main agent presenting the accusations against Hamilton, was removed from the office of deputy secretary and his other offices on the island.<sup>148</sup> Yet Hamilton seemed not to have ambitions to return. After he returned to England, he stood as a parliamentary candidate in Lanarkshire and won a by-election in December 1718, a victory which marked the beginning of a lengthy parliamentary career.

Tensions continued to be very high in Jamaica. The government was now in the hands of Nicholas Lawes, who reported that 'the heats and animosities which have govern'd their passions ... made it absolutely necessary (after a long forbearance) to put an end to the Sessions'.<sup>149</sup> The assembly still asserted its right to adjourn itself, denied the council's authority in amending money bills, and sought to make the king's revenue accountable to it, as well as disputing with the council about agent appointment.<sup>150</sup> Clearly, the disputes regarding revenue issues and the boundary

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<sup>145</sup> *JBTP*, Vol 3, March 1715–October 1718, pp. 269-84, Journal, October 1717, Journal Book S, [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/jrnl-trade-plantations/vol3/pp269-284>].

<sup>146</sup> *CSPC*, Vol 30, 1711–1718, pp. 77-96, CTP to Mr. Secretary Addison, 24 Oct. 1717 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol30/pp77-96>].

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 168-86, CTP to Mr. Secretary Addison, 5 Feb. 1718 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol30/pp168-186>].

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, Order in Council, 9 Feb. 1718 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol30/pp168-186>].

<sup>149</sup> *CSPC*, Vol 31, 1719–1720, pp. 1-21, Gov. Sir N. Lawes to the Council of Trade and Plantations, 31 Jan. 1719 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol31/pp1-21>].

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 272-92, Same to CTP, 6 Dec. 1719 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol31/pp272-292>]; *Ibid.*, pp. 323-52,

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between executive and legislative authorities could not be solved by the recall of the governor, and the problems lasted throughout the whole eighteenth century.<sup>151</sup>

## Conclusion

The Hamilton case illustrates a combination of public claims and private motivations at play in the disputatious politics of Jamaica. Factionalism had played an important role in colonial administration, and in the constitutional rivalries between centre and periphery, or provincially between the governor and assembly. In Jamaica, the issue of trade and piracy predominated people's concerns as well as the constitutional claims, and undoubtedly led to disputes among different interest groups, in particular as the planters grew and formed a Creolean party that controlled local society in every aspect. The Governors' position was delicate as well, for on one hand they needed to guarantee the enforcement of domestic policies, and on the other they sought to defend their private interests, even though the latter made their claims of defending royal prerogative suspicious and less convincing. As a result, during constitutional contentions, governors and assemblies usually attacked each other, which not only plunged colonial politics into chaos, but also triggered political scandals in the colonies. Governors accused the assembly of pursuing private interests under the pretence of the public good and disrupting the daily work of government, while the assembly responded by charging governors with using the name of the king's prerogative to oppress people and gain personal advantages.

One explanation for the constitutional disputes in the colonies is the colonists' fear of tyranny and anxiety that the crown's prerogative was not properly limited, especially considering the extensive authority of governors. As Greene argues,

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Thomas Bernard, a Councillor of Jamaica, to John Chetwynd (a Commissioner for Trade and Plantations), 4 Feb. 1720 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol31/pp323-352>].

<sup>151</sup> Greene, *Negotiated Authorities*, pp. 350-93.

colonial governors never suffered the explicit restrictions that parliament successfully imposed on the Crown in England and, as a result, the spectre of an unlimited prerogative continued to haunt colonial legislators.<sup>152</sup> This was reasonable, but was only part of the story. Unlimited prerogative was an ideal claim of the crown, and from the chaos and scandals in Jamaica it is clear that the measures taken by the local assembly in fact placed tremendous strain on metropolitan policies and the governor. Furthermore, apart from the lack of limitation in the power of governors, the dysfunction of other colonial institutions also triggered political chaos in Jamaica. As discussed in this chapter, both the governor and assembly proclaimed that their authorities were encroached on by the other, which proved that not only were the governor's authorities without limits, but that the power of the assembly was improperly defined.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, Jamaican inhabitants were still fighting for their constitution and privileges as Englishmen.<sup>153</sup> The issues were never settled despite a series of negotiations and compromises. In the 1760s, constitutional contentions continually disturbed the island, and were in fact an extension of previous quarrels: the assembly was still bargaining for the right to appoint revenue officers, and fighting against attempts by the mother country to add the suspending clause into colonial legislation. For the Jamaican assembly, the suspending clause requirement was an unacceptable threat both to people's rights and the colonial constitution. As for the power to appoint revenue officers, the assembly declared that it was its 'undoubted right' to 'raise and apply monies for the services and exigencies of government, and to appoint such person or persons for the receiving and issuing thereof, as they shall think proper'.<sup>154</sup> The Board of Trade also discovered that the Jamaican assembly had extended its jurisdiction over a wide range of activities, including the auditing of public accounts, the regulation of the militia, and even the

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<sup>152</sup> Greene, 'Political Mimesis', p. 351.

<sup>153</sup> Greene, *Creating the British Atlantic*, pp. 140-207.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

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making of orders and regulations concerning the king's troops stationed in Jamaica.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p. 143.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

Between 1680 and 1720, Caribbean societies were animated by conflicts and tensions carried over from the metropole and arising from both internal structural issues and the clash of personal interests. This chapter aims to summarise the development of Caribbean political culture by analysing Caribbean stories in a broader imperial framework. The formation of a fiscal-military state during this period, accompanied by trade regulation, increasing taxation, and military expenditure, deeply influenced the colonial economy and its politics. The legacy of the Glorious Revolution resulted in debates about assembly authority in the colonies, with country ideology also replicated there. In addition, colonial politicians sometimes attached themselves to domestic parties or patrons, using the language of the party to attack their enemies. All of these influences were deeply embedded in the formation of Caribbean political culture and social ideologies. Meanwhile, the white community, dominated by planters and merchants, was linked to and divided by different interests in the spheres of politics, culture and economics. Private factors including kinship, marriage, friendship, personal rivalries and resentments also contributed to the complex interpersonal network of Caribbean society.

The chapter will also identify the flawed colonial system's structural problems. Within the constitutional sphere there were many deep-seated tensions, such as over the relationship between the governor and assembly, the executive and legislative authorities, and the extension of English common law. The blurred line between private and public interests led to concerns about the impartiality of the government. Legislatures and councils sometimes, such as under the government of Granville and Crowe in Barbados, became the playthings of political factions that pursued personal advantage under the guise of promoting public goods. Accompanying factional politics led to shifts in power differentials between groups and purge-like changes in institutional personnel, which disrupted public affairs and caused social disorder. In



addition, political decisions made by previous governors could be overturned by successors.<sup>1</sup> Ambiguity also caused problems in colonial governance, for domestic policies were implemented in a way that left many grey areas of which local officials were able to take advantage. The enforcement of domestic policies, such as trade regulations, often provoked local resentment, and the issue of illegal trade and piracy proved an enduring sore-point. Governors often found themselves ‘caught between the edicts of the metropole and the wishes of the locals’.<sup>2</sup>

## Anglicisation and Creolisation

As outlined in chapter 4, a Creolean party dominated Jamaican politics for a long period from the late seventeenth century; indeed, Creolisation also existed in Barbados and the Leewards. Moreover, confronted with the denial of their Englishness and criticism of their characters from the mother country, Creolean people found themselves plunged into a paradox. On the one hand, they claimed their English identity and demanded freedom as an English subject, while on the other they strove to rid the colony of the central authority’s influence and distinguish themselves with domestic compatriots in politics within a highly self-governing political framework. Some scholars have referred to this phenomenon as the tension between Anglicisation and Creolisation. The theory of Anglicisation was first discussed by John Murrin in his doctoral thesis examining the impact of English culture on the American colonies.<sup>3</sup> The formulation was further promoted by Jack Greene who posited that there were two contrasting forces working behind the scenes in colonial society: the first concerns the inherence from domestic ‘traditions, cultural

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<sup>1</sup> One example of this is provided by the second assembly called by the Duke of Albemarle in Jamaica in 1688. The acts passed by this assembly were declared null and void, due to it having been illegally elected by the governor.

<sup>2</sup> Martin Daunton, ‘Afterword: Mercantilism and the Caribbean Atlantic World Economy’, in Leonard and Pretel (eds), *The Caribbean and the Atlantic World Economy*, p. 292.

<sup>3</sup> John Murrin, ‘Anglicizing an American Colony: The Transformation of Provincial Massachusetts’ (Ph.D. thesis, Yale University, 1966).

imperatives, and conceptions of the proper social order' that pulled colonies in the direction of Anglicisation. The second refers to the experience that developed from 'the inhabitants' learning through a process of trial and error,' which enabled them to meet the need for their societies to function effectively within their specific social environment, pushing colonial society in the direction of Creolisation.<sup>4</sup> This Anglicisation-Creolisation dynamic is supported by other scholars, such as Robert Olwell and Alan Tully who argue that 'Creolisation was a centrifugal force that worked to create cultures defined by their surroundings rather than by their origins,' and 'the desire of colonial British Americans to remake themselves and colonial society in British ways, and the resulting effects, have been termed anglicization.' Anglicisation, in their opinion, was largely a form of imitation and aspiration, rather than based on inherence or experience.<sup>5</sup> In the Caribbean stories, we can see both of the two forces worked to shape colonial societies in the spheres of politics, economy and social ideology.

#### Extension of Fiscal-military State to the Caribbean

To consider the pull of Anglicisation, it is necessary to examine the extension of the fiscal-military state in the colonies. The Anglo–French war brought about profound military, bureaucratic and financial changes in both the mother country and the colonies between 1680 and 1720. This period witnessed a financial revolution that reshaped the English banking and credit system. The huge national debt, and extremely high interest payments it necessitated, forced the crown to improve revenue collection policies, and the founding of the Bank of England, a symbol of the

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<sup>4</sup> Jack Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), p. 169.

<sup>5</sup> 'Introduction' in Robert Olwell, and Alan Tully (eds), *Cultures and Identities in Colonial British America* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), pp. 10-11.

financial revolution, was proof of the increasingly competent state.<sup>6</sup> The size of land and naval forces, and the number of troops deployed in battle, increased significantly, with military officers and men becoming permanent and professional.<sup>7</sup>

Corresponding to this change in the size and nature of the military was an increase in concern about the dangers that were or might be posed by a standing army. Country ideology regarded a standing army as a threat to constitutional liberties since an army could be used to crush autonomy. The country parliamentary campaign therefore appealed for a reduction in the number of placemen in the Commons and for a smaller military.<sup>8</sup> The Disbanding Bill of 1699 was successful for the country party in England. Military reform was accompanied by an improvement in the government's administrative capacity, with an increase in the number of people employed by central government. The fiscal and military departments burgeoned, with new offices established and administered by committees or boards - including the Board of Trade, which was established in 1696. Geoffrey Holmes estimates that there were 114 commissioners sitting on eighteen different government boards in 1714, and that by the 1720s there were approximately 12,000 permanent employees in government service.<sup>9</sup> The employees of the customs service increased in number from 1,313 in 1690 to about 1,750 by 1716.<sup>10</sup>

The Caribbean islands were understood to serve multiple roles in the formation of the fiscal-military state. They were the frontline of the Anglo-French war, and were important to trade through the supply of sugar and other consumables to the mother country; furthermore, they consumed British goods and benefited from the supply of slaves. The threat posed by other Caribbean empires and the potential for a slave revolt worried Caribbean people who often complained about their

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<sup>6</sup> Bliss, *Revolution and Empire*, p. 223.

<sup>7</sup> Aaron Graham and Patrick Walsh, 'Introduction', in Graham and Walsh (eds), *The British Fiscal-Military State*, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> W. A. Speck, *Stability and Strife: England, 1714-1760* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Geoffrey Holmes, *Augustan England: Professions, State and Society, 1680-1730* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1982), pp. 244, 255, cited in Brewer, *The Sinews of Power*, p. 53.

<sup>10</sup> Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty*, p. 125.

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vulnerability, and sometimes begged for military support from home. Simultaneously, however, the inhabitants of the colony were also concerned about their liberty and army costs, in particular during peacetime. Like the inhabitants of the mother country, they complained about the risk posed to liberty by the existence of a standing army. These concerns were heightened by the appointment of governors with military backgrounds and voices in the home country asserting the inferiority of the colonies relative to England. The settlers, meanwhile, did not want to pay extra money for the maintenance of the army beyond what they already paid revenue to the mother country, which they believed should be used on colonial expenditure, including the military.

As trading centres, the Caribbean colonies were significantly affected by the financial revolution at home. For example, when the English government prohibited the export of sterling coins and the Recoinage Act 1696 provided for the melting down of irregular coins, the colonies suffered a shortage of coin and were obliged to turn to substitutes. Local planters took advantage of the situation not by turning to the fiscal solutions seen in Britain, but by manipulating the value of the substitutes, and this became an important factor in factional disputes between planters and merchants in Barbados. Like the landed elites in the mother country, the planters in the colonies proposed a land bank scheme, although it was quickly rejected by the Board of Trade. In addition, the growing importance of trade interests during the process of financial revolution led to tighter regulation of trade, which triggered a series of conflicts in the Caribbean.

### The Impact of Partisan Spirits

The impact of party politics on colonial politics was also noteworthy. Before the reign of George I, political advantage shifted between the Whigs and Tories in England, and during the reign of Queen Anne, from 1702 to 1714, partisan spirit reached its peak.

No other ten-year period in early modern English history witnessed as many elections as the period from 1701 to 1710, which saw no fewer than six elections. English people were living through an era of almost constant electioneering.<sup>11</sup> Though Anne was inclined towards the Tories, she tried to avoid complete dependence on one party at the beginning of her reign. While appointing Tory leaders to the more influential posts, she also included Whigs in the Cabinet in 1702.<sup>12</sup> Yet the antagonism between the two parties remained heated, and continued after Anne's death. According to Speck, 'In 1714 the ruling class was so bitterly divided that many feared a civil war might break out on Queen Anne's death. Both houses of parliament were locked in angry debates, and the constituencies in frequent disputes. In 1715 there were at least 110 contested elections in England and Wales, and 156 in 1722.'<sup>13</sup> Local offices were also influenced and 'the lord lieutenancies, county militias and commissions of the peace were purged and purged again'.<sup>14</sup>

Considering the close links between the Caribbean colonies and home country, it is unsurprising that partisan rivalries extended to the colonies. Olson has discussed how, as the political fortunes of Whigs and Tories waxed and waned at home, the competing interests in the colonies, which were attached to different domestic politicians, found themselves in or out of favour in Whitehall and Westminster.<sup>15</sup> One example in the colonies is that of the Leislerians and anti-Leislerians in New York. The Leislerians cultivated relationships with the Whigs in England when the anti-Leislerians controlled the government through Lord Cornbury, who had been appointed governor by the Tories.<sup>16</sup> Colonial politics also found other expressions in the mother country. For example, London's Jamaica Coffee House was established in

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<sup>11</sup> Speck, *The Birth of Britain*, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>13</sup> Speck, *Stability and Strife*, p. 146.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Olson, *Making the Empire Work*; Olson, *Anglo-American Politics, 1660-1775: The Relationships Between Parties in England and Colonial America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973).

<sup>16</sup> James Leamon, 'War, Finance and Faction in Colonial New York: The Administration of Governor Benjamin Fletcher, 1692-1698' (PhD thesis, Brown University, 1961).

1674, and became a well-known meeting place for merchants, shipmasters, and others concerned with Jamaica.<sup>17</sup> Between 1697 and 1709 the Board of Trade received fifty-one petitions from English groups on behalf of American interests.<sup>18</sup>

Although not common, we can see the presence of partisan spirits in both colonial political discourses and political practices. One such example is when some members of the Jamaican council established a ‘Loyal Club’ and expressed their resentment against dissenters. In response, the colonial inhabitants labelled them Tories and referred to the governor who opposed them, Thomas Lynch, as a Whig (see chapter 4). A similar situation also occurred in the American colonies. In Maryland, Lord Baltimore called the custom collectors ‘notorious Whigs’ and stated in public that the witnesses appearing against Shaftesbury were ‘stout sinners and Irish blades’.<sup>19</sup>

Shifts in party dominance sometimes influenced the appointment of colonial governors and officials, as well as the political atmosphere of the colonies. One good example is Robert Lowther, Governor of Barbados between 1710 and 1720. Bolingbroke, an important Tory leader, served as secretary of state and ensured that Lowther was removed from his position. He was replaced by William Sharpe, president of the council, who was an opportunist during the Paper Act disputes discussed in chapter 2. Sharpe realised this represented a good opportunity to attach himself to Bolingbroke’s camp and wrote to express his loyalty; in it he stated, ‘it shall always be my ambition to obey your commands’, and begged Bolingbroke to ‘take me into your protection’.<sup>20</sup> However, with the Whigs once again controlling the government after Anne’s death, the appointment and re-appointment of officers, including governors and holders of patent offices in the colonies, caused an

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<sup>17</sup> Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery*, p. 65.

<sup>18</sup> Alison Gilbert Olson, *Making the Empire Work: London and American Interest Groups, 1690–1790* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 52.

<sup>19</sup> Bliss, *Revolution and Empire*, p. 230.

<sup>20</sup> CSPC, Vol 27, 1712–1714, pp. 349–62, President Sharpe to Lord Bolingbroke, 14 June 1714 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol27/pp349-362>].

earthquake in Barbadian politics. In November 1714, Lowther was reappointed as governor by the Whig Secretary of State, Charles Townshend. In December, Townshend ordered the Board of Trade to remove William Sharpe and his allies and return those removed by him to their places.

Lowther returned to Barbados in May 1715, and soon realised the ‘uneasiness and dissatisfaction’ occasioned by Sharpe’s alterations to the government and criticised his Jacobite and Francophile policy.<sup>21</sup> The shadow of partisan politics continued to hang over the colony. Later, Lowther was involved in disputes with the Bishop of London due to the latter’s intention to erect an ecclesiastical court in Barbados with the help of his commissary, William Gordon, and two other clergymen named Acourt and Dominick Langton.<sup>22</sup> Lowther accused Gordon of being factious and openly spreading the Jacobite cause, while referring to the clergymen as ‘monstrous Toryes’.<sup>23</sup>

Lowther’s story was a good example of party politics influencing colonial personnel, and how colonists sought the support of domestic patrons. It is also noteworthy that in many situations partisan spirit affected the colonies in more subtle ways than the assigning of labels, which therefore demanded more research to trace the interpersonal networks between domestic and colonial politicians.

### Instability in the Caribbean White Society

Sarah Barber examined the complex interpersonal relations in the Caribbean, arguing that ‘white, male political affinity, inheritance, network, patronage, faction, and party

<sup>21</sup> *CSPC, Vol 28, 1714–1715*, pp. 314–27, Gov. Lowther to the CTP, 25 Oct. 1715 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol28/pp314-327>].

<sup>22</sup> *CSPC, Vol 30, 1717–1718*, pp. 24–30, Mr. Secretary Addison to the CTP, 3 Sep. 1717 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol30/pp24-30>].

<sup>23</sup> *CSPC, Vol 29, 1716–1717*, pp. 303–22, Committee of Correspondence in Barbados to the Agents of Barbados. Barbados, 17 May, 1717 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol29/pp303-322>].

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clouded the nature of “Connection””.<sup>24</sup> Caribbean society was dominated by merchant groups and landowners who, together, controlled sugar plantations and trading activities, and comprised the membership of the assemblies and councils. The growing influence of these two groups was due to the prosperity of their plantations and trade activities, which in turn increased that prosperity. Wealth inequality in the West Indies and its oppressive extraction became a significant feature of Caribbean society. The largest planters occupied most of the land and had most of the slaves, while ordinary white men owned only a few slaves each. As for the merchants, they supplied provisions in the early stages of settlement, but later came to control the trade in sugar and the importation of slaves.

The disputes between landowners and merchants lay in many facets of economic and political activity. For example, economic conflict occurred when it came to the debt between each group, in particular when the planters, as debtors, sought to delay payment and even shrink the value of their debts to merchants (see chapter 2). Furthermore, the competing economic interests between both groups also caused tensions, with the merchants attempting to monopolise commercial activities, especially the slave trade, and control the price and supply of commodities. However, the planters tended to manage their own business by appointing factors at home and promote free trade. Taxation was another trigger of dispute. As in the case of Jamaica, planters always resisted revenue on land and sought to place the burden on trade. Under these circumstances, it is unsurprising that fierce conflict occurred over political affairs between the two groups over the issues of election, legislation, the appointment of officials, and enforcement of policies.

Although England and the Caribbean were both economically dominated by landowners and merchants, the relationship between these groups in the Caribbean was different from those in the home country. At home, the growth of economically dynamic and politically ambitious landed proprietors and members of merchant elites

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<sup>24</sup> Barber, *The Disputatious Caribbean*, p. 7.



contributed to the socio-political instabilities of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, although Plumb notes a growing stability in terms of societal acceptance of its political institutions and of those classes of men or officials controlling them.<sup>25</sup> From the late seventeenth century, the commercial classes began to influence English foreign and military policies, as the burden of public debt made the government increasingly financially dependent upon the merchant community.<sup>26</sup> The story, however, was the opposite in the Caribbean. At the early stage of settlement, planters relied on the provisions brought by merchants and depended on them to transport and sell their produce. Planters thus found themselves at the mercy of merchants. As time passed, however, and the big planters expanded their production, accumulated more capital, hired agents at home and built connections with the buyers themselves, they became less dependent. Power in the colonies shifted from merchants to planters. In the mother country, the landed interest and the monied interest opposed one another in disputes about taxation, foreign policy, economic interests and religion. But in the Caribbean, the landed and merchant interests became more closely aligned because of the economic isolation of the colonies, and they would sometimes cooperate when they had shared or similar interests. For example, the big planters and merchants in Jamaica worked together to fight against piracy and develop colonial trade. They also colluded in evading regulations from home.

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<sup>25</sup> Stone, 'The Results of the English Revolutions', pp. 26-29; J. H. Plumb, *The Growth of Political Stability in England, 1675-1725* (London: Macmillan, 1967), xvi.

<sup>26</sup> About the rise of the mercantile community and its influence, see Gauci (ed.), *Regulating the British Economy*; P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, 'Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Expansion Overseas I. The Old Colonial System, 1688-1850', *EHR*, 39 (1986), pp. 501-25; A. R. Dilley, 'The economics of empire', in Sarah Stockwell (ed), *The British empire: Themes and Perspectives* (Oxford : Blackwell, 2008), pp. 101-29; Julian Hoppit, *Britain's Political Economies: Parliament and Economic Life, 1660-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Roberts and Kynaston (eds), *The Bank of England*; P. G. M. Dickson, *The Financial Revolution in England: A study in the Development of Public Credit, 1688-1756* (Farnham: Ashgate, 1967).

## A Flawed Colonial System with Structural Problems

### Constitutional Legacies and Problems

Julian Hoppit has argued that the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century was an age of anxiety, during which the nation was ‘unable to solve old problems’ and became ‘entrapped by ... new ones’; during this time, the entirety of society became highly politicised and was dominated by political contest.<sup>27</sup> During this period, debates about the nature of the crown – its authority and relationship to the people – occurred on both sides of the Atlantic, as did contentions about the common law, the constitution, English liberty and rights. In the mother country, people challenged the divine right of the crown and its prerogatives. Whigs conceptualised their relation to the monarch as a contract, and laid claim to free-born liberty under the protection of the common law. They supported a constitutional government, which ensured a balance of power; this was understood as an ideal mixture that ensured the necessary checks and balances to prevent the inevitable excesses of unlimited authority.<sup>28</sup> After the Revolution of 1688, Tories at home also sought greater accountability, and to restrain excessive or corrupt spending, although some still clung to notions of divine right and the prerogatives of the crown.<sup>29</sup>

Transatlantic inheritance of constitutional ideology shaped the administrative framework of colonial government, but also caused contentions in colonial politics. During the period between 1680 and 1720, colonists lived in a society under the legacy of the Glorious Revolution, sharing similar concerns with people in the home country, and experiencing tensions between the people’s liberty and the royal prerogative and between central control and local independence. In the Caribbean,

<sup>27</sup> Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty*, p. 5.

<sup>28</sup> Lawrence Stone, ‘The Results of the English Revolutions of the Seventeenth Century’, in Pocock (ed.), *Three British Revolutions*, p. 94.

<sup>29</sup> Daniel Szechi, *Jacobitism and Tory Politics, 1710–14* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1984); Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne*; Linda Colley, *In Defiance of Oligarchy: The Tory Party 1714–60* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Clyve Jones (ed.), *Party and management in Parliament, 1660–1784* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1984).

these ideologies were manifest in constitutional tensions between executives and legislatures: suspicion of the royal prerogative was expressed in conflicts with governors, in which local assemblies claimed to stand against governors as the guarantors of the people's liberty. Colonists claimed the same privileges as inhabitants of the mother country, arguing that their entitlement to these privileges was a return for their efforts in expanding the empire. The legislatures insisted that they owed their existence to the people's will, similar to the House of Commons at home, rather than the governor's writ.

In the mother country, parliamentary authority was established through the Civil War, Glorious Revolution, and Hanoverian succession, and were evident in negotiations and appeasement within the government. But the revolutionary impulse played out differently in the colonies where the authority of the Westminster Parliament was denied by colonial inhabitants, who maintained that their contract was with the crown. During the Civil War, crown loyalists in Barbados refusing to admit parliament's authority even claimed that they were linked to those at the centre only by ties of ethnic identification and shared culture.<sup>30</sup> After the restoration, adherence to the crown endured but it was tempered by the demands of colonial assemblies. Theoretically, the crown enjoyed powers in the colonies which were not enjoyed at home, particularly in the royal colonies including those in the Caribbean. This is evident in the extensive powers granted to governors, as discussed in the introduction. But whereas royal powers were reduced in the homeland after 1688, governors in the Caribbean *retained* the authority to veto legislation, prorogue and dissolve the assembly, dismiss judges, and create courts.<sup>31</sup> Constraints on kingship introduced during the two seventeenth century revolutions failed to reach a satisfactory extent for colonists in the colonies. In this sense, the Glorious Revolution was only half-finished in the colonies, and colonial people turned and sought other measures to restrain the

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<sup>30</sup> Pestana, *The English Atlantic*, pp. 162-65.

<sup>31</sup> Bailyn, *The Origins of American Politics*, pp. 66-68.

executive power of the royal governor, such as controlling the finance of the government and claiming as many privileges as they could. In these circumstances, although proclaiming their loyalty to the crown, colonial people distrusted their governors and sought to constrain them in ways reminiscent of the domestic struggle to subordinate royal to parliamentary power.

The relationship between governor and assembly also enables us to consider the parallels and differences between the domestic and colonial legislatures. In England, one of the biggest legacies of the Glorious Revolution was that the monarch was willing to work with parliament, rather than against it. This facilitated parliament in smoothly extending its powers at different levels of society, and parliamentary sovereignty gradually took the place of royal sovereignty. In the colonies, by contrast, antagonism concerning authority between governors and assemblies was repeated and heated, more like the situation at home before the Revolution.

Although the settlers did not admit the extension of parliamentary authority over the colonies, they tried to model their assemblies on the motherland. Hence, Stephen Foster and Evan Haefeli argue that the parallel lines of the Commons at home and assemblies in the peripheries stirred up tensions between England and her colonies: ‘the House of Commons was also consolidating its power at the same time as the colonial assemblies. When these two parallel lines of development finally crossed (as they can in history, if not in geometry), there was a predictable train wreck.’<sup>32</sup> This argument is reasonable, especially considering the independence of the American colonies, but the ‘train wreck’ not only arose from the consolidation of powers of both the Commons and assemblies, but also found its early expression in the essential differences between the House of Commons and assemblies.

The increasing role of parliament in the government was accomplished through a series of legislative acts. For example, the Triennial Act 1694 secured the regular

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<sup>32</sup> Stephen Foster and Evan Haefeli: ‘British North America in the Empire: An Overview’ in Stephen Foster (ed), *British North America in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 8.

election and summoning of the parliament every three years, the Act of Settlement 1701 established the principle that the monarch was ultimately selected by parliament, while the navigation acts enabled parliament to operate directly on colonial trade. Taxation also guaranteed the growing presence of parliament in administrations. Before the Glorious Revolution, the king had a lifelong revenue granted to him in England because of a tradition whereby the king could 'live of his own'. For example, parliament in 1661 provided Charles II with a permanent revenue. Later, in 1685 it voted to supply a revenue for life to James II; as a result, he was able to run the government and build up a large standing army without consulting parliament.<sup>33</sup> However, the Revolution changed this and the limiting of revenues granted from customs and inadequacy of the total royal income were deliberate measures intended to ensure that parliament was summoned regularly.

The assemblies of the Caribbean followed a different trajectory and failed to achieve a consensual framework like that of the mother country and parliament. Assembly legislation required not only the consent of the governors, but also that of the mother country, which blocked their attempts to confirm privileges through their own legislation. Moreover, the colonial assemblies never enjoyed the same privileges as parliament at home, either theoretically or in practice. The Act of Settlement enabled parliament to legitimately influence the selection of a monarch's successor, and the monarch to some extent ruled through parliament. But in the colonies, the governor was responsible to the crown, not the assembly. Governors regarded themselves as defenders of the royal prerogative, and their commission and instructions from the mother country were effective weapons in conflicts with local legislatures. The summoning of the assembly was also controlled by the governor's hand. One of the reasons argued by planters in Jamaica when refusing to pass a perpetual revenue bill was that if the governor secured perpetual revenue, he would no longer need the assembly because, unlike the metropole, there was no guarantee of

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<sup>33</sup> Stone, 'The Results of the English Revolutions', p. 67.

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regular assemblies in the colonies.

Regarding the constitutional roles of the assembly, colonial inhabitants emphasised the equivalence of its constitutional position to that of the House of Commons, while the metropole regarded it as a grant of the crown and governor. For colonial inhabitants, the governor's authority was respected due to the people's acceptance, not because of the commission from the homeland.<sup>34</sup> The colonial government was understood by colonists to be established in conformity with English law, instead of by the crown's prerogative as claimed by the metropole. From the point of view of the mother country, conversely, English common law and liberty were restricted to England, which was deemed superior to other dominions. Exporting liberty was not a priority and each of the king's dominions enjoyed a different quantum of liberty. These viewpoints, which distinguished England from other imperial domains, shaped constitutional contentions and ideological disputes in the colonies and undercut the pretensions of assemblies to achieve the same privileges as parliament.

In this situation, anxiety about gubernatorial tyranny dominated the strife between governors and legislatures, and colonial people intentionally eroded the former's authority, especially when governors were financially dependent on the assemblies both for their salary and the means to fund government expenditure. Without enough funds to guarantee the regular functioning of government, they sometimes resorted to irregular funding sources, such as seizing prizes and conducting illegal trade or receiving gifts from the legislature, although this behaviour also arose suspicion about their self-promotion motivations.

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<sup>34</sup> For example, Governor Codrington the Elder, of the Leeward Islands, mentioned that it was the people's own acceptance of the governor rather than his commission that engendered their respect. See *CSPC, Vol 13, 1689-1692*, pp. 171-86, Lieu. General Codrington to LTP, 11 Nov. 1689 [consulted at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol13/pp171-186>].

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### Blurred Lines between Public and Private

The thesis has argued that private factors were also at stake in disputatious colonial politics. These include individual political ambitions and self-promoting behaviour, economic disputes, and personal resentments, which usually hid under the cover of claims about the public interest. As a result, it was common that colonial politicians attacked one another for pursuing private interests in the name of the public good.

To some extent, the blurred line between public and private interests was allowed in the early modern political tradition. For example, it was common for governors to use their own money on government expenditure, and the incomes of revenue collectors were decided by the amount received. The association between public position and private gain was a subtle question both in England and her colonies, and the tension between private and public was a significant factor in disputes in Caribbean society. As Dirks comments, ‘the scandals that came from both private profiteering and imperial aggrandizement were the necessary features of a system of conquest, expansion, and exploitation’.<sup>35</sup>

The blurred line between public and private interests was frequently trodden on, or overstepped, in the Caribbean; public authority was used to intervene in private issues, and public goods a cover for self-seeking behaviour. There were tensions between the public authority of officials and their private profits, especially in the case of governors who came to the colonies bearing the instructions of the crown but also with a desire to increase their personal wealth. This was especially true for governors in the Caribbean where the position of governor was usually profitable due to the prosperous sugar plantations and trade activities. In political practice, their personal incomes were influenced by the fulfillment of public responsibilities and relations with inhabitants, for the payment of governors’ salaries were decided by the assemblies. Besides, it was common for governors to use their private money for

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<sup>35</sup> Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire*, p. 26.

public affairs, and in return the public might grant them money under the guise of different pretexts. To take Barbadian Governor Richard Dutton as an example, while he continually complained about his expenses, his enemies reckoned that he spent no more than £3,000 during his stay on the island and extracted nearly £18,000 in salary, perquisites, bribes, and a so-called ‘present’ from the assembly.<sup>36</sup> In addition to acquiring money through public channels, governors also used their power to solve private problems, for if public money and private funds were intertwined, it seemed reasonable for governors to use their public authorities to earn personal profits. For example, Governor Crowe interfered in cases of chancery, and manipulated several cases to his advantage. The tension between public responsibilities and private pursuits was a frequent cause of accusations against governors. This undoubtedly triggered concern about the misuse of power and corruption.

The tension between private and public is evident not only at the level of individual office holders, but also in the conduct of social groups for whom faction and party could function as a cover for private interests. In Jamaica, whether the colonial drive for independence rested on English traditions or was born of colonial social conflict and self-seeking behaviours is a complex question. The alternatives are not mutually exclusive: constitutional rivalries could in part be a consequence of both ideological convictions and personal ambition.<sup>37</sup> For example, the successful resistance of the implementation of Poyning’s law in Jamaica was a victory for the planter class, which gained ascendancy over other social groups on the island. After that victory, the planters frequently used constitutional tools to fight against governors. As for the Leewards, people’s resentment against Governor Parke was also a combination of public and private issues: the big planters and merchants attacked Parke under the name of fighting against his arbitrary administration, but what was really at stake was that his behaviour threatened their political and economic interests

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<sup>36</sup> Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, p. 100.

<sup>37</sup> Weir, “‘The Harmony We Were Famous For’”, p. 489.



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in estates, political powers and trading activities.

In addition, the causes of conflict between politicians were also presented in a hybrid form as combinations of private and public factors; personal resentment was usually a key trigger of political accusations. For example, Governor Christopher Codrington the Elder was attacked by Timothy Thornhill, the major general of Barbados who was sent to help the Leewards fight against the French between 1689 and 1692, due to disputes around the distribution of prize money. Thornhill complained that Codrington had ordered his regiment to remain in Antigua, intending thereby to protect his own estates. In addition, he alleged, Codrington had seized a large proportion of the prize, including 800 slaves who he had transferred to Antigua, despite the council of war having decided that the plunder should be equally divided. The contentions between Richard Dutton and John Witham, his lieutenant, in Barbados were also triggered by personal rivalries and jealousy over salary, and eventuated in Witham accusing Dutton of scandalously misusing his authority. The fairness of the complaint was always doubted in this situation, for those who were attacked argued that their enemies were using the name of public good to achieve their own private ends, hence the accusations brought by them were scandalous and unreliable.

### Flexibility and Ambiguity

When discussing the reasons behind the American Revolution, Olson argues that throughout most of British imperial history, parliamentary law was created and administered with a flexibility and responsiveness to local pressures which kept it from being either unpalatable or ridiculous.<sup>38</sup> This flexibility enabled colonists to enforce imperial law and make adjustments according to actual situations, tempering the impact of domestic legislation and reducing tensions to a tolerable level. Bliss

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<sup>38</sup> Olson, 'Parliament, Empire', in Pocock (ed.), *Three British Revolutions*, p. 291.

expresses a similar opinion about the balance between the demands of the centre and local interests:

stability, perhaps, had been the main aim, and stability required a legitimate, widely acceptable locus of authority. But in pursuit of stability Englishmen confronted the problems presented by rapid social and economic change, and thus learned to like the idea of powerful, positive governments, governments which could act to secure the interests of dominant social groups.<sup>39</sup>

However, flexibility did not always guarantee harmony. It also gave rise to ambiguities and grey areas in colonial administrations, leaving local officials to improvise and justify their actions as suited their interests; colonial politics was characterised by ambiguity and, of course, disputes. In the Caribbean, flexibility was sometimes apparent in the differences between claims and practice. The appointment of patent officers may be taken as an example. Theoretically, the most important patent offices, including that of the customs commissioner, were granted by central government – this being intended to limit gubernatorial power. However, the office holders were usually reluctant to leave England and therefore commonly appointed deputies to take charge of their office, while they received large sinecure incomes.<sup>40</sup> As a result, the effective exercise of such positions fell to local inhabitants who became a powerful force in colonial factional politics and caused disputes about pluralism in colonial administration. In political practice, some governors obeyed instructions relating to patent offices while others did not. Governor Thomas Modyford of Jamaica complained about the inconvenience of having patent officers in the colony, criticising them as ‘proud, careless, and indiligent in their work’, and apt to ‘carry out orders according to their own opinions, instead of the Governor’s

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<sup>39</sup> Bliss, *Revolution and Empire*, p. 247.

<sup>40</sup> Morley Ayearst, *The British West Indies: The Search for Self-government* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1960), p. 21.

wishes'. In addition, he wrote, they 'mind their own profit more than his Majesty's service'.<sup>41</sup> Governor Crowe tried to appoint a naval officer himself, but was accused of violating his instructions. In the Leewards, however, provost marshal Michael Ayon was appointed by Governor Parke in 1709 when the previous incumbent left office.

Another example of the gap between claims and conduct concerns the presents received by governors, which were formally prohibited by the mother country but continued to be offered and accepted in the colonies under different pretexts. Gifts sometimes functioned as a tool of the assembly in negotiations with the governor, being given in return for a compromise on his part in public affairs. Flexibility was also evident in the changing policies pursued by domestic institutions, such as the shifting trade regulations in the Caribbean and the varying attitudes towards piracy (as discussed in chapter 1). The central government passed prohibitive acts regarding overseas trade from time to time, but exceptions were made in practice to maximise English interests. As for piracy, privateering activities were at times in accordance with national interests and sometimes not, and the attitudes of the mother country shifted correspondingly. At local level, governors often chose to turn a blind eye to privateering activities for the sake of the huge profits obtainable from this form of enterprise. When domestic policies were communicated to provincial officials, they were in practice able to adjust their implementation to their own interests.

## **Conflict, Scandal and Empire**

Conflict and scandal enable us to understand not only the divisions but also the unity of Caribbean society. The many tensions in the colonies were testament to the existence of opposed forces, but also how those forces counterbalanced one another.

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<sup>41</sup> *CSPC, Vol 12, 1685–1688 and Addenda 1653–1687*, pp. 637–38, Sir Thomas Modyford's reasons for the inconveniences of settling the Secretary's, Surveyor's, and Marshal's places for life, and by patent, 1672 [consulted at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol12/pp637-638>].

The crown achieved what it needed from the colonies through the exercise of its prerogative to collect revenue, while the inhabitants defended their liberty and independence through seeking to control revenues and adopting constitutional ideals from the mother country. Governors came to the islands with commissions and instructions, but were allowed to enforce them with flexibility and had opportunities to pursue private profit. Gubernatorial flexibility was not unrestricted, of course; to a significant extent, governors were hemmed in by the dynamics of colonial politics and limited in their power due to their tenuous connections with their provinces, and the need to co-operate with local elites.<sup>42</sup>

Historians have examined the different roles plagued by scandal in the development of early modern society. For instance, scholars such as Alastair Bellany and Lawrence Stone linked Jacobean court scandals to two revolutionary ‘preconditions’: the weakening of the authority of the principal political institutions, and the rise of anti-court ideology.<sup>43</sup> For Stone, the emergence of court scandals delegitimised the crown’s authority, and provided an ideological base for the Civil War. Dirks has argued for the existence of a relationship between scandal and the formation of the empire. In his opinion, scandal was a factor in empire emerging as a dominant phenomenon in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It allowed the empire to be ‘reformed’ and enabled its problems to be concealed behind a screen of scandal.<sup>44</sup> Anna Clark’s perspective is similar to that of Stone and Dirks. She maintains that the crown’s prerogative was undermined by misconduct, causing parliament’s function as a court to lose credibility and, furthermore, scandal helped radicals to shift constitutional debates away from the problem of the king versus

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<sup>42</sup> Bailyn, *Origins of American Politics*, pp. 66-69.

<sup>43</sup> Lawrence Stone, *The Causes of the English Revolution 1529–1642* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 79-91, 105-08, cited in Alastair James Bellany, *The Politics of Court Scandal in Early Modern England: News Culture and the Overbury Affair, 1603–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 9. See also Alastair Bellany and Thomas Cogswell, *The Murder of King James I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015); Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

<sup>44</sup> Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire*, pp. 30-31.

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parliament, and towards the problem of parliament versus the people.<sup>45</sup>

Conflict and scandal in the Caribbean had greater impact on colonial governments. For the mother country, the accusations repeated in England were a form of information sharing between the centre and periphery, which provided opportunities for the mother country to enhance its control of colonial affairs through playing the role of umpire. The actions of colonists seeking the support of domestic patrons and allies also enhanced the interplay between English and colonial politics. The appointment of agent, which helped to develop a tradition of colonial lobby, played a more important role in the colonies during the late eighteenth century (to be discussed later). In addition, the changeable governorships to some extent helped to achieve a balance between the power of different political groups, as a reshuffle of administrative personnel usually accompanied the recall and appointment of governors. Hence, factions opposed to one another frequently dominated the government at different periods.

It is noteworthy that colonial people seldom directly complained about the crown, even though they sometimes petitioned against domestic policies. Governors absorbed most of the resentments of colonial inhabitants arising from domestic policies or from how those policies were implemented. They played a buffering role, mitigating the tensions that existed between the mother country and its colonies. As a result, governors were usually cast as the principal protagonists in political scandals. From the perspective of empire building, it was through the fight against governors that colonial inhabitants developed a tradition of defending their freedom of trade, and later demanded control over their internal affairs and taxation.<sup>46</sup> Governors were the imagined tyrants in the colonial narrative and, willingly or otherwise, had to play the role of middlemen moderating tensions between the metropole and periphery. For those in the colonies it was much easier to blame a governor who directly controlled

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<sup>45</sup> Clarks, *Scandal, The Sexual Politics of the British Constitution*, pp. 211-12.

<sup>46</sup> Greene, 'Liberty and Slavery', p. 56.

colonial affairs than fight against the central government. And for the mother country, recalling a governor was a relatively easy way to be seen to address conflicts that were too deep to be resolved. In this sense, governors sacrificed their reputations, and sometimes governorships, in the cause of preventing out-and-out contention between Britain and its colonies. Conflict and scandal therefore became integral to the management of systematic tensions over both sides of the Atlantic, although they could never ameliorate those tensions at a fundamental level. The drawbacks of this model were revealed in the independence of America in the late eighteenth century, but for the Caribbean, development throughout the eighteenth century helped to build close connections with the mother country and led it in a different direction to America.

In the early eighteenth century, Caribbean colonies developed many connections and shared numerous similarities with the Americans. The mainland colonies provided necessities for the Caribbean, such as rice from South Carolina, wheat and bread products from the middle colonies.<sup>47</sup> The West Indies meanwhile supplied slaves, sugar and molasses to America. People travelled between the colonies; for instance, colonists from Barbados formed an important pioneer group settling in South Carolina, introducing slavery and the plantation system.<sup>48</sup> Constitutional ideology was also shared between the settler societies of America and the Caribbean. To take revenue as an example, just as governors in the Caribbean struggled with revenue issues, the assemblies of New York, Virginia, Maryland and New England also refused to pass money bills or passed them with conditions attached, even at times of urgent need.<sup>49</sup> In New York, quit-rent was unpopular among colonists. Hulsebosch states, 'Those who owned large, sparsely settled tracts as speculative investments could not raise the money to pay those quit-rents from the land itself.

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<sup>47</sup> Foster and Haefeli: 'An Overview' in Foster (ed), *British North America*, p. 4.

<sup>48</sup> Sarah Yeh, 'Colonial Identity and Revolutionary Loyalty: The Case of the West Indies', in Foster (ed), *British North America*, p. 2.

<sup>49</sup> Guttridge, *The Colonial Policy of William III*, p. 148.

Many colonists simply considered their property to be allodial.<sup>50</sup> The permanent revenue of Virginia on exported tobacco was granted as an exchange for terminating Poyning's Law, which was similar to the passage of perpetual revenue in Jamaica (discussed in chapter 4).<sup>51</sup> As in the Caribbean colonies, how American inhabitants challenged the authority of colonial government was influenced by factional rivalries. New York was divided by a feud between English and Dutch settlers, Anglicans against another sect, and city merchants versus landlords. Pennsylvania suffered from contentions between Quakers and the Penn family proprietors. Maryland experienced a perpetual quarrel between the assembly and the proprietors of the colony, the Calverts.<sup>52</sup> North and South Carolina also witnessed disputes between rival migrant groups from Britain, Barbados and Virginia.<sup>53</sup>

All this raises a question: when mainland counterparts sought a way to independence in the late eighteenth century, what made the Caribbean colonies choose to stay loyal with the mother country, given the context of close economic connections and shared constitutional ideologies between the two? There are multiple answers to this question. One is provided by scholars such as George Metcalf and Andrew O'Shaughnessy, that the Caribbean faced a greater danger of slave revolts due to the large size of the plantations and their slaveholdings, as well as the military threat from other states in the Caribbean, hence their greater dependence on the military support of the mother country than their North American counterparts.<sup>54</sup> Economically, due to the single industry structure of sugar production, the Caribbean colonies relied heavily on provisions from England to maintain daily life, together with the supply of slaves upon whom the new sugar production relied. Also, the British Caribbean was dependent on the domestic market, since its sugar producers

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<sup>50</sup> Hulsebosch, *Constituting Empire*, p. 61.

<sup>51</sup> Robert M. Bliss, *Revolution and Empire: English Politics and American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), p. 237.

<sup>52</sup> Foster and Haefeli: 'An Overview' in Foster (ed), *British North America*, p. 6.

<sup>53</sup> Richard R. Johnson, 'Growth and Mastery: British North America, 1690-1748', in Marshall (ed.), *Eighteenth Century*, p. 296.

<sup>54</sup> Metcalf, *Royal Government*; O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided*.

were unable to compete with the price of sugar offered by rival French producers.<sup>55</sup> Explanations are also offered from the perspective of socio-political developments. For example, when discussing why Jamaica did not rebel, T. R. Clayton maintains that there were socio-political differences between Jamaica and American colonies. For Clayton, in America, the political ambitions of economically successful craftsmen or the middle-class white were blocked by merchant-planter dominance of the provincial legislature, thus resistance was used as a tool to achieve upward political mobility.<sup>56</sup> In Jamaica, however, the majority of skilled labourers were black people and the provincial elite 'had not become pessimistic about their personal political or economic prospects, nor was there any significant social challenge to gentry hegemony'.<sup>57</sup> Foster and Haefeli argue that with the passage of time inequality grew in the American colonies with the simultaneous development of an Anglicised hierarchy of wealth and power; it did not, however, create the unbridgeable fissures that divided society in Britain. In the West Indian colonies, in particular Jamaica, the planters enjoyed a great opportunity for promotion into the aristocracy by moving back to England having amassed huge wealth.<sup>58</sup> Culture and identity are also taken into consideration. O'Shaughnessy argues that Caribbean inhabitants tended to treat the islands as little more than temporary abodes, and regarded themselves as British sojourners – as evidenced by their absenteeism and preference for sending children back home to be educated.<sup>59</sup> This argument has been developed by Sarah Yeh, who posits that unlike American inhabitants who grew disenchanted with metropolitan society and embraced their own regional identities, the Caribbean colonists always tried to maintain their cultural bonds with the mother country and embrace their Englishness.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided*, p. 36.

<sup>56</sup> T. R. Clayton, 'Sophistry, Security, and Socio-Political Structures in the American Revolution; or, Why Jamaica did not Rebel', *THJ*, 29 (1986), pp. 337-38, p. 341.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 321, p. 340.

<sup>58</sup> Foster and Haefeli: 'An Overview' in Foster (ed), *British North America*, pp. 20-22.

<sup>59</sup> O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided*, p. 36.

<sup>60</sup> Yeh, 'Colonial Identity', in Foster (ed), *British North America*.



To understand the factors that lay behind the different choices made by the Caribbean and America, it is important to trace the relationships of American and Caribbean society with the motherland, and the divergences between them. In fact, competing relationships existed between them during empire building. For example, American and Caribbean colonies blamed each other for draining resources when it came to financial regulations imposed by the mother country (see chapter 2). The attempts of mainland colonies to purchase sugar and molasses from other west Indian colonies, bypassing the British Caribbean, also caused disputes. These conflicting interests became important factors that prevented the Caribbean from joining America, in particular in the later period when the political presence of West Indian interests in Britain grew due to absenteeism.

It was generally believed that the Caribbean colonies, compared with their American counterparts, built a closer connection to the mother country. This was partly due to the fact that, as royal colonies, the Caribbean's finances, legislation and political institutions were under the direct watch of England. Their revenue was managed by domestic departments, and royal governors and patent offices were appointed by the crown. More importantly, Caribbean colonists understood the importance of finding domestic allies and sending agents to influence domestic attitudes from an early period, either in defence of their reputation or to promote their interests. With the passage of time, the connections between England and Caribbean became closer due to the growing number of absentees and their increasing parliamentary presence. From the middle of the century, or even earlier, more and more absent colonists returned to England with huge wealth earned in the colonies. These individuals either entered parliament or accepted other public office roles; William Beckford of Jamaica was a good example.<sup>61</sup> The West Indian lobbying group

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<sup>61</sup> The Beckford family was one of the wealthiest in the Caribbean, and played a significant role in the Creole party that fought against governors in Jamaica. For more about Peter Beckford, see Gauci, *William Beckford*.

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also played more significant role in influencing imperial policies, as noted by Gauci.<sup>62</sup> In this sense, the voice of planters in the Caribbean was better heard in England than America, as proven by the passage of the Molasses Act in 1733, which was generally regarded as a victory of the West Indian lobby against its American counterpart. The divergent interests and different treatments received from the mother country, therefore, might be important factors that contributed to the different decisions made by the Caribbean and American colonies, when it came to the problem of independency.

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<sup>62</sup> Perry Gauci, 'Learning the Ropes of Sand'.

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