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Institutional Copying in the 20th Century: The Role of 14,000 British Colonial Officers

By Valentin Seidler*

Abstract

Did individual British officers determine the institutional development of former colonies? The article presents a new research program into institutional reform and economic development based on a new dataset f 14,000 biographical entries of senior colonial officers in 54 British colonies between 1939 and 1966. The rich data permit a new methodological approach towards the question of how institutions are copied into countries. It puts a radical focus on the individual actors involved in the institutional reforms before independence. The article discusses fundamental information on the British colonial service and presents preliminary analyses from within the new research agenda.

JEL Codes: B52, H83, N40, O43, O17, O19, P48

1. Introduction: A Research Agenda Around Institutional Copying and Bricolage

In 1927, the British established the East African Governor's Conference with the aim of harmoniously exploiting the fisheries in Lake Victoria. Under this umbrella representatives from Tanganyika (today Tanzania), Kenya and Uganda met once or twice a year to discuss fishing quotas (Tvedt 2010, 117).

In hindsight, the relevance of this body vastly exceeded the management of fish stocks. The cooperation between the three colonies gradually evolved into the East African High Commission, a predecessor of today`s East African Community, which coordinated a broad portfolio from veterinary research to railroad traffic in the three colonies.[1] Somewhat neglected by economists and historians alike, the East African High Commission's headquarters in Kenya

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[1] In this article, the term 'colony' is used for all types of dependent territories (such as protectorates) which were under the administration of the Colonial Office in London.

employed over 800 British administrators, economists, statisticians, customs officers, railway engineers, and – of course – fishery experts. They brought with them human capital which was scarce in this area in the 20th century and which was much needed when the colony underwent intensive state building efforts in preparation for its independence.[2] After independence in 1963, some of these men took up advisory positions in what was now the Kenya civil service. Others moved on to remaining colonies or retired. Although the role of human capital in long-term economic growth has been discussed at length (see for example Acemoglu et al. 2014; Glaeser et al. 2004), we know very little about how individual colonial bureaucrats influenced the institutional development of the colonies in which they worked.

The paper discusses a research program originating from on a newly created digital dataset of the biographical entries of over 14,000 colonial officers, who served in the British Empire from 1939 to 1966.[3] Similar to modern international organization today, the British maintained personnel records of their staff. Formats and criteria of inclusion fluctuated over the centuries, but between 1939 and 1966 personnel records were collected in a consistent and systematic manner for those territories administered by the Colonial Office in London. Between 1939 and 1966, the number of these territories fluctuated. After the war, 54 single territories existed. Of these, 45 gained independence in the 20th century while nine are still British today.[4] The records of colonial personnel contain granular details about an officer's education, training and career steps. Because the colonial service employed a wide range of professions, the career tracks of the men and women who ran and eventually wound up the British Empire will be interesting for many academic disciplines. One could think of questions related to medical history or tropical health, mining, forestry, and more. The outline given in this article reflects my personal interest in the connection between institutions and long term economic growth. The aim of this article is therefore twofold: First, I will lay out the fundamental background knowledge necessary when working with this data. This will be done in more detail, because the details in the records might be misinterpreted without the

[2] Between 1939 and 1966, a total of 837 colonial officers worked for at least one year in the East African High Commission or one of its many bodies (e.g. the East African Railways and Harbours Administration).

[3] The digital collection was established at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton from 2014 to 2015. I am grateful to Prof. Dani Rodrik for his invitation and his support.

[4] Important territories lay outside the authority of the Colonial Office. Notably the Dominions (e.g. South Africa, Australia, Canada), India (including today's Burma and Pakistan) and Sudan were major colonies with separate identities, which maintained their own colonial service corps in the 20th century. The biographical records of former officers from the Indian Civil Service and the Sudanese Service can be found in the dataset if they joined the colonial service after the independence of India and Sudan (in 1947 and in 1956 respectively). Table A 1 in the appendix gives a list of the colonies.

necessary knowledge about administrative processes in the British Empire of the 20th century. The second part of the article presents first findings from within the data which fall into my research interests.

The initial interest in creating the dataset is connected to my research agenda in institutional copying, by which I understand the effort to emulate institutional arrangements from another society or another country. This effort can be deliberate when actors are conscious that they are adopting a foreign institution or less deliberate when actors simply replicate norms or institutions with which they are already familiar into a foreign context. Institutions are generally understood as the humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic, and social interaction. They consist of both informal constraints (customs, traditions, and codes of conduct) and formal rules such as contracts or the written law (North 1990). A large body of literature debates the connection between institutional reform and economic performance.[5] In developing economies, efforts of catching-up often involve institutional copying from the industrialized world. Such reforms are likely to fail when the imported institutional solutions lack contextualization – i.e., they are incompatible with the local legal and social environment. (Boettke et al. 2008; Berkowitz et al. 2003; North 1994, 366). The result is the illusion of a reform with few of the intended benefits.[6] The new institutional regime may even present a major irritation to existing laws and practices (Pistor and Berkowitz 2003). While this institutional incompatibility is gradually being recognized as a major stumbling block for economic development in the literature, we still lack models and hypotheses of how the problem can be overcome (Seidler 2014; Rodrik 2008). The biographical dataset was compiled in response to this question. The records cover the career paths of officers during the period of decolonization when colonial administrations focused on state building and thus intensively imported British institutions. In African colonies for example, state building began in the 1950s and significantly accelerated in the last five years prior to independence (Lee 1967, 205). At its peak over 20,000 colonial officers orchestrated these reforms in 45 colonies. The analysis of over 14,000 of the career paths of the most senior officers among them permits the investigation of the role of human agency in the process of institutional copying.

The focus on individual actors is a new methodological approach to investigate institutional copying. The aim is to move a rather abstract debate on the conditions of institutional reforms in which sufficient knowledge and motiva-

[5] Grindle (2011) gives a good overview on the literature covering institutions and economic development.

[6] Krause (2013) and Pritchett et al. (2013) have argued that institutional mismatching may even be an accepted outcome in the developing world when governments are content with mimicking the outside appearance of institutional reforms in exchange for continued financial aid.

tion of agents is silently assumed to very concrete questions: Who was involved in institutional copying? To which extent did officers influence the quality of institutions in former colonies?

While the empirical analysis of the granular details in over 14,000 biographies has great potential (see also the second part of the article), the question of what exactly officers did when they imported institutions can be only be answered by the individuals themselves. A series of interviews with retired colonial officers began in 2016 with this question in mind. Because former colonial officers are a rapidly declining group of people, efforts have focused on the collection of interviews and little analytical work has been done. In its final stage both collections, the digitized entries and recorded interviews will permit methodological triangulation to strengthen the validity of information drawn from the data.[7]

This research agenda relates to two related bodies in the literature. Studies investigating the diffusion or the transfer of policies and innovations (Rogers 2010; Stone 2004; DiMaggio and Powell 1983) and the comparatively smaller field of institutional copying (Couyoumdjian 2012 gives an overview). The role of agency is addressed in either field, as individuals are needed to administer the transfer (e.g. literately write down bodies of law) and to potentially adapt imported institutions to local conditions. Without such *ex-ante* adaptation, the new institutions are likely to entail high enforcement costs (Chang and Evans 2005, 103; Hodgson 2006, 7). In the literature on policy transfers the terms 'translation' (Campbell 2006, 510), 'bricolage' (De Jong 2013) and 'assemblage' (Lendvai and Stubbs 2009) are used, partly to explain why a transferred policy from one country may look substantially different in another country (Stone 2017, 10). In the institutional literature, 'tailoring' has recently been coined to describe efforts of creating a better fit in the receiving country (Seidler 2016). The two bodies in the literature differ on how human agency is modeled. Both approaches share that human intermediaries are involved in the transfers and that their knowledge and interests will influence the outcome. Zweynert (2009, 353), for example, suggests that the person in charge of localization needs to be perfectly familiar with the society in question. The reforms during Japan's Meiji period supports Zweynert's case. Highly trained Japanese bureaucrats were sent abroad to study European institutions and to create well adapted copies in Japan. Westney (1987) gives a well-balanced account of how these bureaucrats used both the technical knowledge they gained abroad and their familiarity with the conditions in Japan to create hybridized institutions. Even though individuals with this mix of expertise are arguably rare, a suffi-

[7] Interviews with retired colonial officers were ongoing at the time of submission. 90 interviews had been conducted by October 2017. More information about the interview series can be found at http://homepage.univie.ac.at/valentin.seidler/project-voices/ (accessed 1 October, 2017).

ciently high level of human capital is often assumed in the literature on diffusion or policy transfers. Conversely, 'institutional tailoring' has been coined in relation with developing countries, where the lack of expertise is a huge bottleneck and the availability of technical expertise combined with local knowledge may be critical for the success or the failure of the transfer.

The biographical entries of British colonial officers will help determine the extent to which institutional tailoring took place in the colonies. The British had no central policy of deliberate adaptation of imported institutions to local conditions. Instead, there was a general interest in maintaining high – i.e., British – standards in practically everything from the qualification of local personnel to the standards in housing construction (Tanganyika 1954, 17; Burr 1985, 130). Yet, there are reports that institutional adaptation occurred in places, at times unnoticed by superior officers in the colonial capital (Seidler 2016). With this research agenda in mind, the article begins with the background knowledge necessary to interpret with the data. The third section returns in more detail to some aspects of the research agenda.[8]

2. Fundamentals

Working with the biographical entries of colonial officers will require a minimum understanding of the ins and outs of service in the British Empire. This section informs about the dataset itself and about the information that can be derived from its entries. It also provides enough background information on the British empire in the 20th century to permit meaningful analysis for a wide range of academic disciplines.

The present dataset contains 14,280 biographical entries. These are all colonial officers in senior ranks who served between 1939 and 1966. With few exceptions, the entries were annually published in the Colonial Office Lists between 1939 and 1966.[9] With strong recruiting after 1945, this makes the collection essentially a post-war collection of biographical records.

2.1 Senior Officers

Before 1953, senior (or "higher") posts were loosely defined as those with responsibility and decision power in the administrative, executive, professional and technical grades (Adu 1965, 18). After 1953, seniority became more closely defined as posts with the rank of a Deputy Head of Department (or field

[8] Data cleansing was ongoing when this article was submitted (October 2017). The findings and analyses presented in the article may therefore be subject to revisions.

[9] There were no publications during World War II among others. Appendix I gives more detail on data collection and data quality.

equivalent) and above. At the beginning of the data in 1939, the bulk of the senior officers are British (English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish) or nationals from the Dominions (e.g. Australians or South Africans). From 1945 onwards, we see local staff taking senior posts – initially still labeled as "Africans in European posts" in some territories (Adu 1965, 18). After 1954, local and expatriate staff in senior positions were both called 'overseas officers' and formally recognized under the new name of Her Majesty's overseas civil service, or HMOCS (Colonial Office 1954).[10]

2.2 Ten Years of Service

From 1948 onwards, the British stopped maintaining biographical entries for staff of less than ten years of service, partly in response to a shortage in paper after World War II (Kirk-Greene 1991, xiv). The distribution of officers with less than ten years of service was fairly even across the colonies and I found no non-random factor influencing it. This makes the dataset a good (albeit incomplete) representation of colonial officers serving between 1939 and 1966.

2.3 Recruitment and Terms of Employment

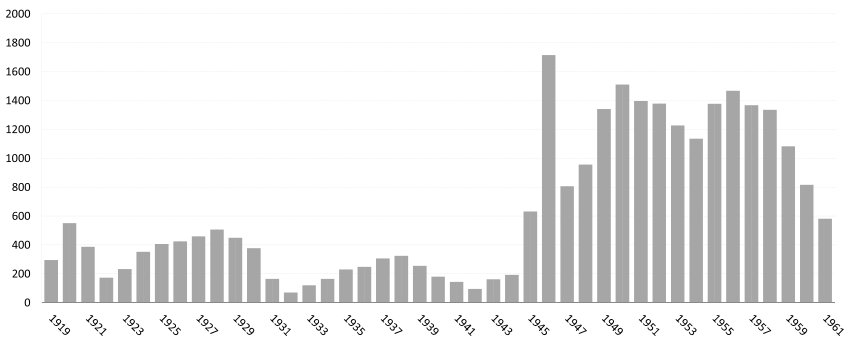
The recruitment of all senior officers was the responsibility of the Colonial Office in London. The selection process allowed little room for negotiations as to where a recruit would be posted or which functions he would fulfill.[11] The Colonial Office did not publish vacancies (Kirk-Greene 2000, 131). Interested individuals submitted blind applications in the sense that they applied for service in the colonies. Accepted candidates received a telegram in which a specific line of work in a colony was offered to him. After that it was a take-it-or-leave-it decision. By default, all senior posts offered lifelong employment – a practice the British continued until shortly before independence (Lee 1967, 36). Employment contracts were established between the colony (represented by the governor) and the new recruits upon arrival in the colony. Territorial employment contracts meant that the majority of officers spent their whole career in a single colony. Transfers between colonies were more frequent among colonies which cooperated inter-regionally or were sometimes offered after independence.

Territorial employment contracts also meant that the salaries were paid out of the territorial budgets of the colonies. Until 1961, Britain made no direct financial contribution to the personnel serving in the colonies (ODI 1964a,

[10] Colonial documents published after 1953 use 'senior officers' and 'overseas officers' synonymously. The article follows this practice.

[11] During the interview process applicants were invited to express their preferences for a colony.

23).[12] Consequently, richer colonies could afford more staff. This changed after the World War II, when substantial funds were made available under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, which indirectly financed employment in poorer colonies (Hermans 1974, 106; Jeffries 1972, 37; Lee 1967, 129; ODI 1964b, 58; Younger 1960, Annex V). Figure 1 shows that new funds were put to use after 1945. Strong post-war recruitment gradually equalized differences in the number of staff between colonies.



Sources: ODI (1964a, 25) and Colonial Office (1962, 24).

Figure 1: Recruitment Numbers per Year of Colonial Officers 1919 – 1961

Preparing for independence paradoxically entailed that more officers were employed to wind up the empire. The high levels of employment prevailed until the late 1950s when the independence of the first colonies relieved the pressure on manpower. Between June 1945 and end of December 1953 a total of 11,357 new overseas officers came into service (Colonial Office 1953). This batch of young officers is strongly represented in the dataset.

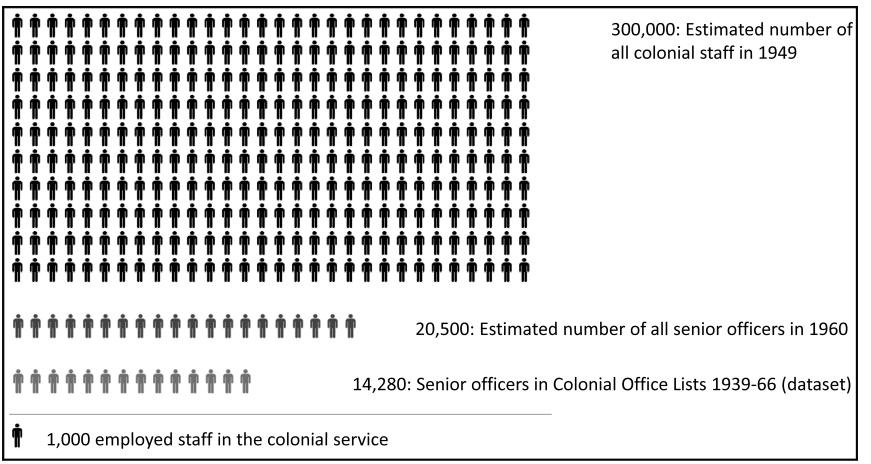
2.4 The Numbers

The total number of permanently employed overseas officers peaked with about 20,500 in 1960 (Kirk-Greene 1999, 74). The vast number of colonial personnel, however, was local staff in lower grades such as clerks, non-commissioned policemen, teachers or foremen, etc. It is safe to say that no one ever kept a central record of these employees. In 1948, Charles Jeffries, then Deputy Under-Secretary of the State for the Colonies, estimated the total size of the colonial service at about 300,000 of which about 4% were thought to be ex-

12 As the exception, Nigeria received budgetary support for salaries in 1957.

patriate officers (Jeffries 1949, 28 and 96). Until today, this is our best estimate of the full size of the colonial staff.

Figure 2 brings some of these numbers into perspective. The British Empire was run by a thin line of senior officers. In the figure below, the first two groups are cross-sections of staff numbers from the years of 1949 and of 1960 respectively. The last group represents the officers on which we have biographical records. This is the cumulative number of all officers in the Colonial Office Lists between 1939 and 1966.



Sources: Kirk-Greene (1999, 74); Jeffries (1949, 28); own analysis of the dataset (N=14,280).

Figure 2: Comparison of Staff Numbers (Rounded)

2.5 Career Tracks and Unified Services

Employment in the colonies offered various career tracks which were called 'services.' From the 1930s onwards, conditions of employment were gradually unified across colonies. The hierarchy levels within the Medical Service in Hong Kong, for example, became more comparable with those in African colonies. Salaries also became more homogenous across colonies (Kirk-Greene 1999, 35), although net wages in unified services continued to vary slightly between regions and rose with seniority and rank. A customs officer in Malaya, for example, could expect to start with around 580 British pounds per year in 1950 (Colonial Office 1950, 25).[13] The ultimate goal of being able to exchange

[13] The purchasing power of £580 from 1950 was £18,724 in 2017 using an average inflation rate of 5,32% p.a. Additional payments ('expatriation pay') and taxation schemes varied across the colonies.

officers from the same service across colonies was never fully implemented.[14] The Colonial Office in London served as recruitment center for the senior personnel employed in the unified services. Governors in territories regularly sent lists with their demand for staff to London who recruited on their behalf. The practice continued unchanged until 1966, even when more and more locals from the colonies were selected into unified service careers. The dataset contains local colonial officers as well, provided the officer rose into senior ranks and remained in service for at least ten years. Table 1 gives a selection of services (with the year in which they were unified) and other non-unified careers ('appointments') in the colonial service.

Table 1

Career Tracks: Appointments and Services in 1950

Career Tracks: Appointments and Services in 1950	Status
Administrative Service	unified in 1932
Agricultural Service	unified in 1935
Audit Service	unified in 1910
Biological Appointments	
Broadcasting Appointments	
Chemical Service	unified in 1938
Civil Aviation Service	unified in 1948
Customs Service	unified in 1938
Economical, Commercial and Statistical Appointments	
Education Service including master and mistresses	unified in 1937
Engineering incl. Architects, Draughtsmen and Town Planning Appointments	unified in 1945
Fisheries appointments	
Forest Service	unified in 1935
Geological Survey Service	unified in 1938
Income Tax Appointments and Income Revenue Officers	
Labour Appointments	
Legal Service	unified in 1933
Medical Service	unified in 1938
Meteorological Appointments	
Mines Service	unified in 1938

Continued next page

[14] Exceptions existed for the Audit Service and in colonies with close regional cooperation. Railway engineers in the East African High Commission territories (Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda) were regularly posted in any of the three territories, for example.

Table 1 continued

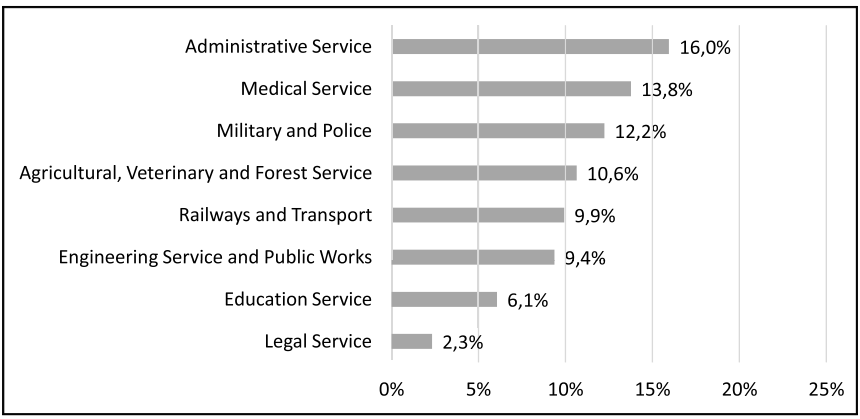
Career Tracks: Appointments and Services in 1950	Status
Police Service	unified in 1937
Postal Service	unified in 1938
Prisons Service	unified in 1936
Research Service	unified in 1949
Public Relations Appointments	
Social Welfare Appointments	
Survey Service	unified in 1938
Veterinary Service	unified in 1935
Queen Elizabeth's Colonial Nursing Service	unified in 1940

Source: Colonial Office (1950).

Conditions of work differed across services. Surveyors, mining experts, and foresters, for example, found themselves out in the field, while accountants or legal positions were often based in larger towns. In many services, junior grades would work in the field and rise to top positions in the colonial secretariat in the capital. An education officer, for example, typically started as a teacher or headmaster in a school and could be promoted to an inspector of schools. Successful education officers eventually took up positions in the education department in the colonial capital. Different from the other services and appointments, members of the Administrative Service represented the governor in their colony and held (depending on the post and location) policy-setting, executive and quasi-judiciary powers. They also enjoyed authority over all other services (Colonial Office 1950, 14 – 17). Administrative Service officers were generalists chosen from a specific social class in Britain, whose strength rested in their esprit de corps and in their high degree of flexibility. They could stand in as local judge for some time if necessary, or double up as social Welfare Officer where needed. Speaking local languages was mandatory and years of service in remote rural posts ('the tours') were normal for young Administrative Cadets and District Officers before positions in the colonial secretariat, essentially the government headed by the governor in the colonial capital, were considered (Kirk-Greene 2006, 61).

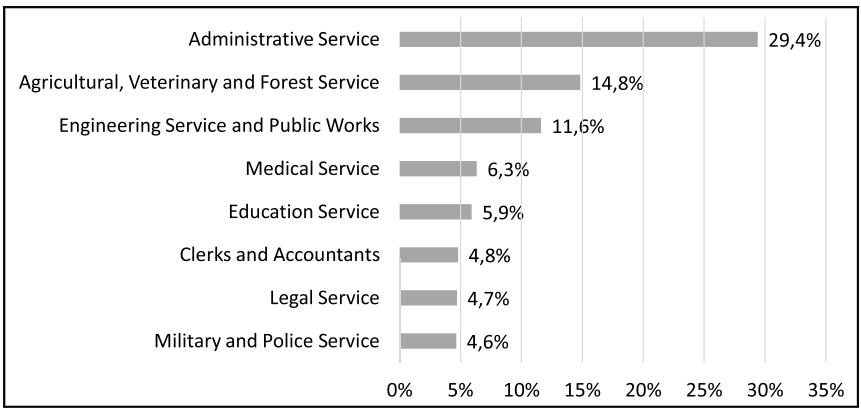
In the data, the composition of the functions and appointments of senior officers in a given colony reflect the conditions in the colony. Timber exporting colonies for example have a higher share of foresters. This trend intensifies considerably after 1945. Before the war, colonial administrations had a narrower focus on keeping stability and collecting taxes. Figure 3 gives the eight most common appointments in African colonies in 1938. The figures are taken from the Hailey Report (1938) and are probably the most accurate cross-sectional data on a single continent. In 1938, colonial administrations in Africa

were dominated by members of the Administrative Service, the Police and the Medical Service which among them accounted for 42% of all posts (Figure 3). In comparison, Figure 4 shows the most common appointments of young recruits who were sent to African colonies between 1946 and 1956. Almost 30% of this batch are again Administrative Service Officers who were strongly sought in the very first years after the war when governors needed flexibility, considering a lack of detailed human resource planning. They were followed by technical experts needed for economic development, mainly engineers and agronomists in the early 1950s. In the final years before independence the emphasis would shift again – towards education and legal services. Arguably, the need for experts in bringing about economic growth and development began with these last colonial officers who were recruited to wind up the empire. Experts or technical advisors, from engineers to accountants have been a central element in international development efforts ever since and their role has been debated in the literature (Easterly 2014). Very recent initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations again incorporate both the export of international standards into developing countries and the use of foreign experts to advise local bureaucrats on how to work within the new regimes (UN 2017).



Source: Hailey (1938, 226).

Figure 3. Eight Most Common Appointments of Officers in African Colonies in 1938



Source: Dataset (N=1,834).

Figure 4: Eight Most Common Appointments of New Recruits in African Colonies between 1946 – 1956

2.6 Information in the Biographical Entries

The digitized biographical records provide detailed information about an officer's career and education. Figure 5 is scan of one of the entries.

SMITH, J. H., O.B.E.—b. 1928; ed. Cardinal Vaughan Sch., London, Univ. Coll., London and Univ. Coll., Oxford; mil. serv., 1948–50, 2nd lieut.; admin. cadet, N. Nig., 1951; admin. offr., cl. II, 1960; dep. sec. to the Premier, 1963; dir., staff devel. centre, 1964. (Nig. Govt. service.)

Source: Colonial Office (1966).

Figure 5: OCR Scan of the Biographical Entry of Smith, J. H.

Mr. Smith's biographical entry can be regarded as typical for a successful career in the Administrative Service. The entry in Figure 6 shows the four pieces of information given in all biographical entries (without *) and seven details (marked by *) which were dropped, if the information did not apply.

SMITH, J. H.,	surname, initials
O.B.E.*	decoration *('Order of the British Empire')*
- b. 1928;	year of birth
ed. Cardinal Vaughan Sch., London,	secondary school, location
Univ. Coll., London and Univ. Coll., Oxford*	university education, location(s)
mil. serv. 1948-50*; 2nd lieut.*	period of military service, highest rank
admin. cadet, N. Nig., 1951;	entry level and colonial service, colony, year of entry
admin. offr., cl. II, 1960;*	advancement and rank, year of advancement
dep. sec. to the Premier, 1963;*	advancement and rank, year of advancement
dir., staff devel. centre, 1964.*	advancement and rank, year of advancement
(Nig. Govt. service.)*	continued service in the independent country
n.a.*	important special work (e.g. work in commissions)
n.a.*	publications of scientific or public interest

Source: Own Compilation.

Figure 6: Information Contained in the Entry of Smith, J. H.

Besides the year of birth and potential decorations, valuable information can be drawn from secondary school. In the UK, secondary school education typically takes place between 11 and 16 years of age. The school name also informs about the location of childhood (here: London) and about the social status of the officer's family. Cardinal Vaughan School is listed as a public school, which in Britain are fee-paying independent secondary schools not everyone can afford. Military service was mandatory in the 1940s and 1950s and is therefore very common in the entries. We also learn about the officer's academic training (if any). In this case, the officer's school and university degree in Oxford are signals for a career in the Administrative Service, which the officer joins in Northern Nigeria aged 23. Each of the services had specific ranks of hierarchy connected with a salary range. In many services, the rank and the title also indicates whether this was a field-based or town-based position. Reconstructing this allows us to identify the level of authority and the income of the officer at given moments in his career. The rank of an Administrative Cadet was the entry level into the Administrative Service. It was also the lowest rank to constitute seniority (see above 2.1). The colony (here: Northern Nigeria) is usually not repeated with each advancement unless the officer changes territory. Changes in service, which were rare, can be reconstructed from breaks in the procession of ranks and titles. This entry is rather typical for a successful career in the Administrative Service. J. H. Smith served nine years in field positions until he was called into the office of the first Premier (probably as an advisor), when Nigeria gained independence in 1960. Not everyone continued employment in the civil service of the independent country.[15] J. H. Smith remained in the Nigerian civil service until at least

[15] Across the empire, British personnel were offered to remain in the country after independence. After 1961, an elaborate scheme compensated overseas officers for the

1964 when he was appointed director of the staff development center. We know nothing of the officer's career after that or after 1966 when the collection of the biographical entries was discontinued.

3. Human Agency and Institutional Copying

The final section suggests how the dataset can be used to advance our understanding of the role of human agency in institutional copying. The underlying assumption is that the mid-20th century was a period of intensified institutional copying and that senior British officers were in positions to influence this process and the outcomes.

An important question is to which extent an officer's skills and functions were likely to mediate the process of institutional copying at independence. A first analysis takes a look at the distributions of services and appointments across the empire. The assumption is that services are likely to act as the channel through which both an officer's expertise and his tacit knowledge was transferred into a colony. A modern-day measure of government effectiveness serves as the outcome variable. If institutional copying was successful, this should be reflected in a higher quality of governance a few decades later. Figure 7 is taken from work in progress together with Claudia Williamson.[16] In the analysis, we 'froze' the colonial administrations one year before the independence of a given country and analyzed the composition of services and appointments held by the officers at that moment in time. There is considerable variation in this measure which will be addressed in more detail in a separate paper. At this point, the distribution of services reveals a first finding: Lawyers matter. The scatterplot indicates a strong correlation between the share of Legal Service officers in an outgoing colonial administration (horizontal axis) and the 2012 measure for Voice and Accountability taken from the World Bank Governance Indicators (vertical axis).[17] This is work at an early stage, but the value of legal skills seems plausible. Most institutional copying is legal work as ministries need to be established and laws need to passed which are likely to emulate the British example.

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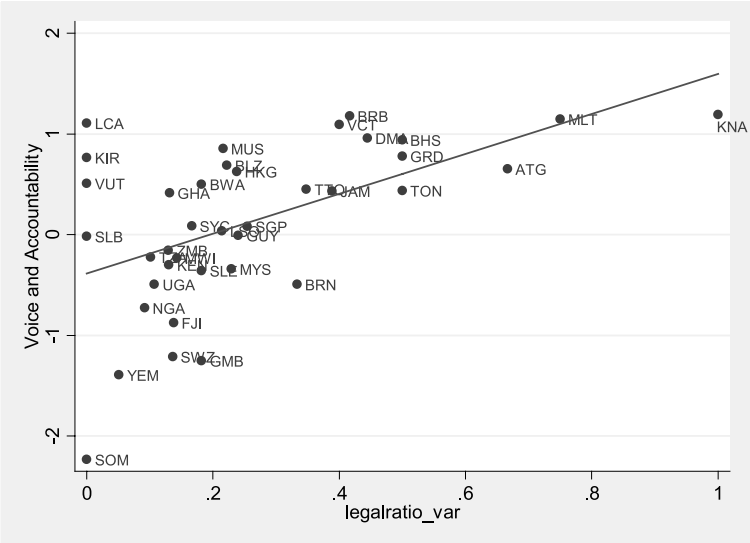
loss of their life-long career and provided incentives for those who decided to remain in service for a few more years.

16 This is a preliminary analysis at an early stage. To avoid identification issues, Figure 7 is based on a subset of the data. Claudia Williamson is Associate Professor at the Mississippi State University. I am grateful for her permission to present this preliminary part of our work. See Table A 1 for a list of former colonies and their three letter codes.

17 Worldwide Governance Indicators constructed by Kaufmann et al. (2012) rank countries from – 2,5 (worst score) to + 2,5 (best score). The abbreviations of the territories can be found in Annex I.

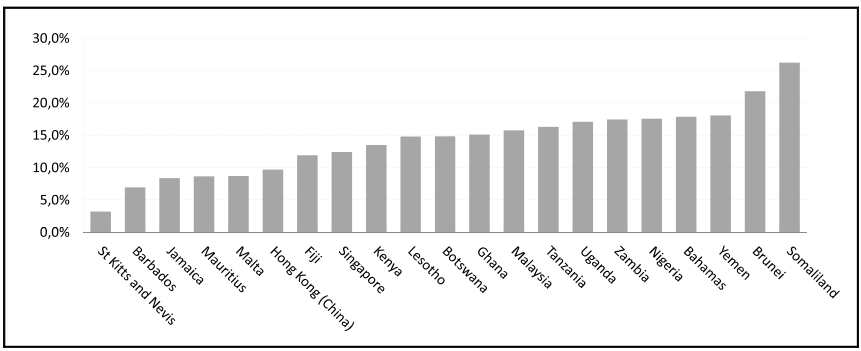


Sources: World Bank Government Indicators 2012 (Kaufman et al. 2009) and Dataset (N=10,647).

Figure 7: The Share of Legally Trained Officers in Outgoing Colonial Administrations vs. Voice and Accountability from the World Bank Governance Indicators

The rising importance of technical skills in this late period of the empire carries along a second dimension. Young engineers, agronomists or economists came equipped with technical expertise which was in high demand in the colonies *and* would still be needed after independence (Hodge 2010). Many officers with a more general education (for example in the humanities or in arts) may have struggled to continue their career after independence (Lee 1967, 199; Burr 1985, 132). Officers who as pupils had attended one of the UK's elite public schools had often continued with a more general education in Oxford or Cambridge. In the 20th century, the provenance from leading schools in the line of Eton and Winchester broadly correlated with a specific social class (Kirk-Greene 2000, 136). As administrators or judges these men had administered the empire as 'thin white line' for decades (Kirk-Greene 1980). They were also in high demand as generalists during the first years of strong recruitment after 1945. A separate study will need to investigate how influential they were in steering the colonies from administration to development and ultimately to independence. At this point, there is much we can learn from the biographical records which provide detailed information on school attendance. First descriptive findings underline the influence of this group of officers. Only 1,848 officers in the dataset (about 7.6% of all entries) received their education from 27

leading schools in the UK.[18] Yet they take an impressive 30% of all top jobs in the administration.[19] As expected, former pupils of leading UK schools served in the Administrative Service (about 28% of all Administrative Service Officers) followed by the Legal Service (about 13%). Figure 8 shows how unevenly these officers were posted across the colonies. St Kitts and Nevis and other colonies in the West Indies come out with lower shares, while 27% of all senior posts in British Somaliland were staffed with officers from leading schools in the UK.



Source: Dataset (N=1,848).

Figure 8: Share of Officers from Leading UK Schools
Relative to the Full Administration of Selected Colonies 1939 – 1966

A consequential question is what officers exactly did when they were in charge of institutional reforms in the colonies. Did they merely mediate in an ongoing process (e.g. by being present and contributing technical and tacit knowledge) or did some consciously adapt the foreign import to the local context? This question is a central part in a series of interviews with retired officers. The aim is to systematically map the profiles of the 'tailors' among the senior officers, i.e., those individuals who adapted British institutions to create a better fit for the outgoing colony (even against implicit or explicit orders from their superiors). Two cases from the interviews may serve as examples: A British administrator in Nyasaland (today Malawi) realized that the British institution of lay magistracy could not possibly be imported without adaptations, because there were no legally trained Clerks of the Court, who in the UK advise

18 The analysis in this paper relies on a compilation of the 27 schools by Kirk-Greene (2000, 137) which supplied most of Administrative Officers between 1926 and 1956.

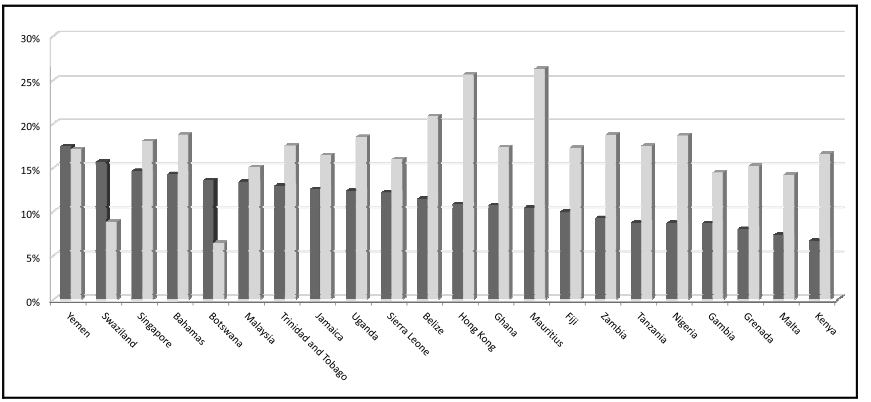
19 Top jobs encompass here the ranks of governor, acting governor or chief (colonial) secretary.

lay magistrates, in the colony. He devised simplified versions of various British laws to be used by the lay magistrates on the bench – unseen by the public (Baker, written communication in June 2016). In another case, an English police officer stationed in Northern Nigeria privately taught courses on general education at his home. He was concerned that the fast-track training, which young Nigerian police cadets received entirely neglected transferring knowledge about the world outside their home districts. The courses were copied by officers in other districts and eventually became an established institution (Anonymous, Interview in April 2017). Ideally, triangulation with data derived from the biographical entries will permit the identification of specific conditions (e.g. posting away from the colonial capital, the period of time spent in a single colony or the officer's nationality) influencing the probability of an expatriate bureaucrat experimenting with imported institutions.

The biographical records of colonial officers are likely to contribute to important debates in the literature on colonial past and institutions. An influential argument made by Acemoglu et al. (2001) will serve as a starting point. In their seminal work, Acemoglu and co-authors argue that initial conditions and endowments differed between colonies and that in response, European settlers first created distinct economic institutions which persisted over centuries. The mortality rates of early settlers are used as an instrument for the nature of established regimes, which can be either inclusive when the colony was found suitable for European settlement or extractive when institutions were geared towards extracting resources. The argument has sparked an important debate about the origins of institutions that support long-term economic growth (Austin 2008). A research agenda based on the role of the individual in institutional copying can contribute to this debate. The fact that governors requested senior officers according to the perceived demands in the colonies works in our favor. The type of manpower and professions requested should reflect the nature of the economic and political regime of a colony. For a first analysis, I extracted the services from within the data on country level and grouped them into two categories – services and appointments supporting either an extractive or an inclusive regime. Police officers and prison guards, for example, would be a sign of an extractive regime, while land surveyors and educators would be needed to establish property rights and skills needed for an inclusive regime. Table A 2 and Table A 3 in appendix II inform about the categorization and aggregate numbers used in Figure 9.

In Figure 9, the dark gray bars indicate the share of officers with extractive functions relative to the full colonial administration of a given colony. The chart is sorted by the descending shares of 'extractive officers.' Yemen leads the group with 17,4% of her officers holding extractive positions. The light gray bars indicate the share of 'inclusive officers.' Mauritius and Hong Kong stand out from the crowd with shares above 25%. The chart indicates that only few colonies permit a clean categorization into either inclusive or extractive

regimes: Hong Kong, Mauritius, Kenya and Nigeria have the biggest difference between the share of 'inclusive' officers and those fulfilling extractive functions. A surprising group of African countries seems to qualify for inclusive regimes: Tanzania, Nigeria and Gambia among others, run counter the argument of Acemoglu and co-authors. In comparison Botswana, which is often regarded the best governed African country, looks like an extractive regime. That said, deeper empirical analysis using the dataset will be necessary to contribute to the debate.



Sources: Dataset (N=14,280). See also Table A 2 and Table A 3 in Appendix II.

Figure 9: Shares of Officers with Extractive Functions (Dark Gray) and Inclusive Functions (Light Gray) in the Colonial Administrations of Selected Colonies between 1939 and 1966

4. Conclusions

This article discussed a new research program investigating the role of individual colonial bureaucrats in the institutional reforms that took place in British colonies before their independence. It is based on a newly established digital dataset containing over 14,000 biographical entries of senior colonial officers who served in British territories between 1939 and 1966. The article informed about fundamental background information necessary to work with the data and gave an impression of the potential findings originating from a new methodological approach centered on the role of individual actors in institutional copying. The preliminary analyses presented in this article show potential in explaining the quality of institutions in former colonies. In a wider sense, the approach may also extend our understanding of how individuals may influence institutional reforms in developing economies.

While the digital dataset of senior officers is likely to generate a series of important studies, the interviews with the retired colonial officers themselves may take the research program to a radical individual level. If we want to understand why institutional reforms failed or succeeded, we need to understand who the main actors were and what they did. The biographical record of John H. Smith (Figure 5 above) was presented as an example in the article. Mr. Smith was interviewed in July 2017. At the independence of Nigeria, he was among those officers who chose to remain in the country and who joined the Nigerian civil service, which makes his account more interesting. Mr. Smith, who was posted as assistant secretary in the Premier's office just months before independence remembered how he had been only the third choice for this responsible position, because an officer educated in Winchester (the school the governor had attended and the governor's first choice) could not be found in Nigeria and an officer from Eton (the governor's second preference) had given up after a few months. The interview with J. H. Smith also reveals what happened after 1966, when the data series stops. Mr. Smith continued to serve until 1978 and eventually became governor of Gilbert and Ellice Islands, a pacific territory which gained independence in 1976.

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Appendix I: Data Collection and Data Quality Criteria

The dataset contains 14,280 biographical entries. These are all senior colonial officers who are listed in the Colonial Office Lists from 1939 to 1966. The entries were annually published in the Colonial Office Lists between 1939 and 1966 other than during the war years 1941 – 1945 as well as 1947 and 1952. In the Colonial Office Lists, an officer's entry was updated, if the officer had made a career step. Going backwards in time from 1966 we collected the most complete information on each officer. This means that a major part of the entries (about 3,000) emanate from the 1966 Colonial Office List. In this manual manner, individual entries were first assembled by Kirk-Greene (1991). Two decades later, modern technology allowed the systematic digitization of all entries printed in the Colonial Office Lists between 1939 and 1966 by the author.

From 1948 on, the annual collection of the biographical entries followed uniform guidelines, which specified 11 pieces of information of which at least four were displayed in all entries. 1948 is also the year in which the ten-year rule was introduced serving as a consistent guideline for inclusion until 1966. Notably, the present dataset contains entries from three Colonial Office Lists before 1948 (i.e., the Lists of 1946, 1940 and of 1939) which contained entries of officers with less than ten years of service. Depending on the research interest, entries from these three Lists may need to be excluded from the sample.

From 1939 on, all major services were unified, which means that officers carried the same (or very similar) official titles for analogous levels in the hierarchies across all colonies. For this reason, 1939 has been chosen as the starting year for the entries in the dataset.

Biographical entries have been published in the Colonial Office Lists starting from 1862. At least four significant concerns about data quality and data consistency advised against the inclusion of entries from before 1939 into a dataset with entries up to 1966:

1. By 1939 all major services had been unified (see Table 1). Before 1939, many professions and appointments cannot be accurately identified. A "warden" for example could indicate a prison guard, a game warden, a local administrator in the West Indies or an officer in charge of inspecting mines.

Furthermore, technical professions were established as career paths (later called "services") only in the first half of the 20th century. In 1900, only three professions (Administrators, Legal Service and Medical Service) made up 75% of all posts.

2. The selection process of young recruits for senior posts underwent important reforms between 1929 and 1931. Before 1931, the selection of recruits had been based on a century-old system of patronage (Furse 1962; 17). The reforms introduced a public process of application and interviews under the control of the Civil Service Commission which remained in place until 1966 (Kirk-Greene 2000; 148).
3. Entries published in pre-war Lists vary in the amount of information they hold. The minimum information seems to have been the officer's name and his first appointment (year and colony). Crucially, some but not all entries lack information about the year of birth and an officer's education.
4. Entries published in the Colonial Office Lists before 1948 contained junior ranks (i.e., officers with less than ten years of service) with no uniform set of criteria for who qualified for inclusion. Pre-war Lists give no indication that junior officers have been included or omitted. Kirk-Greene (1991; ix) estimates that many but not all junior grades were included. Because, ranks and titles differed across colonies before 1939 (when most services were unified) and because years of birth were often omitted (see above) identifying junior grades is matter of guessing.

Data cleansing was ongoing when this article was submitted (October 2017). The findings and analyses presented in the article may therefore be subject to revisions.

Appendix II: Information Used in the Article

Table A 1

List of Colonies (in 1947) and of Successor Territories Using UN 3 Letter Country Codes

Region	Colonial Territory in 1947	Independence from the UK	Successor State	Country Code
East and Central Africa	Basutoland	1966	Lesotho	LSO
	Bechuanaland	1966	Botswana	BWA
	British Somaliland	1960	Somaliland	SOM
	Kenya	1963	Kenya	KEN
	Northern Rhodesia	1964	Zambia	ZMB
	Nyasaland	1964	Malawi	MWI
	Swaziland	1968	Swaziland	SWZ
	Tanganyika	1961	Tanzania	TZA
	Uganda	1962	Uganda	UGA
	Zanzibar	1963	Tanzania	TZA
West Africa	Gold Coast	1957	Ghana	GHA
	Nigeria	1960	Nigeria	NGA
	Sierra Leone	1961	Sierra Leone	SLE
	The Gambia	1965	Gambia	GMB
Eastern Dependencies	Brunei	1983	Brunei	BRN
	Ceylon	1948	Sri Lanka	LKA
	Federation of Malaya	1957	Malaysia	MYS
	Hong Kong	1997	Hong Kong (China)	HKG
	North Borneo	1963	Malaysia	MYS
	Sarawak	1963	Malaysia	MYS
	Singapore	1965*	Singapore	SGP
Mediterranean & Middle East	Aden	1967	Yemen	YEM
	Cyprus	1960	Cyprus	CYP
	Gibraltar	–	Gibraltar	GIB
	Malta	1964	Malta	MLT
	Palestine	1948	Israel, Palestine	ISR, PSE
West Indies	Anguilla	–	Anguilla	AIA
	Antigua	1981	Antigua and Barbuda	ATG
	Bahamas	1973	Bahamas	BHS
	Barbados	1966	Barbados	BRB
	Bermuda	–	Bermuda	BMU
	British Guiana	1966	Guyana	GUY
	British Honduras	1981	Belize	BLZ
	British Virgin Islands	–	British Virgin Islands	VGB
	Cayman Islands	–	Cayman Islands	CYM
	Dominica	1978	Dominica	DMA
	Grenada	1974	Grenada	GRD
	Jamaica	1962	Jamaica	JAM
	Montserrat	–	Montserrat	MSR
	St Christopher and Nevis	1983	St Kitts and Nevis	KNA

	St Lucia	1979	St Lucia	LCA
	St Vincent and the Grenadines	1979	St Vincent and the Grenadines	VCT
	Trinidad and Tobago	1962	Trinidad and Tobago	TTO
	Turks and Caicos Islands	–	Turks and Caicos Islands	TCA
Western Dependencies	British Solomon Islands	1978	Solomon Islands	SLB
	Fiji	1969	Fiji	FJI
	Gilbert and Ellice Islands	1978	Tuvalu	TUV
	Gilbert and *Ellice* Islands	1979	Kiribati	KIR
	New Hebrides	1980	Vanuatu	VUT
	Tonga	1969	Tonga	TON
Atlantic and Indian Oceans	Falkland Islands	–	Falkland Islands	FLK
	Maldives	1965	Maldives	MDV
	Mauritius	1968	Mauritius	MUS
	Seychelles	1976	Seychelles	SYC
	St Helena and Ascension	–	St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha	SHN

* Singapore joined the (independent) Malaysia in 1963 and gained independence from Malaysia in 1965.

Source: Kirk-Greene (1999, 4 – 5 and 14). Own Compilation.

Table A 2

Services and Appointments with Extractive and Inclusive Functions

Services and Appointments with Extractive Functions	Services and Appointments with Inclusive Functions
Armed Forces	Audit Service
Geological Survey Officers	Civil Aviation Service
Intelligence Officers, Special Agents	Development Officers
Mines Service	Education Service
Police Service	Firemen
Prisons Service	Health Inspectors
	Postal Service
	Registrars and Administrators Generals
	Registrars of Co-ops
	Social Welfare Appointments
	Survey Service (land rights)

Source: Own compilation.

Table A 3

Aggregate Data on Services and Appointments with Exclusive and Inclusive Functions. Selected Colonies

Territories administered by the Colonial Office	Share of officers with extractive functions in the colonial adminis tration	Share of officers with inclusive func-tions in the colonial administration	Difference
Yemen	17,4%	17,1%	–0,3%
St Lucia	17,0%	13,3%	–3,7%
Swaziland	15,6%	8,8%	–6,8%
British Somaliland	15,0%	12,6%	–2,4%
Lesotho	14,8%	14,8%	0,0%
Singapore	14,6%	18,0%	3,3%
St Vincent and the Grenadines	14,4%	18,6%	4,2%
Bahamas	14,3%	18,8%	4,5%
Guyana	13,8%	17,3%	3,5%
Malawi	13,6%	14,3%	0,7%
Botswana	13,5%	6,5%	–7,1%
Malaysia	13,4%	15,1%	1,7%
Antigua and Barbuda	13,0%	15,7%	2,7%
Trinidad and Tobago	13,0%	17,5%	4,5%
Jamaica	12,6%	16,4%	3,8%
Uganda	12,4%	18,5%	6,1%
Sierra Leone	12,2%	15,9%	3,7%
Barbados	11,7%	18,1%	6,4%
Belize	11,5%	20,8%	9,4%
Hong Kong	10,8%	25,6%	14,8%
Ghana	10,7%	17,3%	6,6%
Mauritius	10,4%	26,3%	15,9%
Fiji	10,0%	17,2%	7,3%
Zambia	9,3%	18,7%	9,5%
Solomon Islands	9,0%	13,9%	4,9%
Tanzania	8,8%	17,4%	8,7%
Nigeria	8,7%	18,7%	9,9%
Gambia	8,7%	14,5%	5,8%
Dominica	8,1%	21,3%	13,2%
Grenada	8,0%	15,2%	7,2%
Malta	7,3%	14,2%	6,9%
Kenya	6,7%	16,6%	9,9%

Source: Dataset (N= 14,280).

Table A 4

Share of Officers Educated in 27 Leading UK Schools Relative to the Total Workforce in Former British Colonies

Former British Colony	Share of officers in the colony educated in a leading UK school
St Vincent and the Grenadines	2,5%
St Kitts and Nevis	3,2%
Dominica	6,6%
Barbados	6,9%
Guyana	7,8%
Jamaica	8,4%
Mauritius	8,7%
Malta	8,7%
St Lucia	8,9%
Belize	9,4%
Trinidad and Tobago	9,4%
Hong Kong (China)	9,7%
Antigua and Barbuda	10,8%
Grenada	11,0%
Fiji	11,9%
Vanuatu	12,2%
Singapore	12,4%
Swaziland	12,9%
Sierra Leone	13,5%
Kenya	13,5%
Seychelles	14,3%
Lesotho	14,8%
Botswana	14,8%
Ghana	15,1%
Kiribati	15,5%
Malaysia	15,7%
Solomon Islands	16,0%
Tanzania	16,3%
Uganda	17,1%
Cyprus	17,3%
Zambia	17,4%
Nigeria	17,6%
Malawi	17,7%
Bahamas	17,9%
Yemen	18,1%
Gambia	18,2%
Tonga	20,0%
Brunei	21,8%
Somaliland	26,2%

Sources: Kirk-Greene (2000, 137). Dataset (N=1,848).