



The Corporate International
<https://eurekajournals.com/corporate.html>
ISSN: 2581-6438

Beyond the Race of Leadership: A Comparative Analysis of Historical Legacies, Institutional Quality, Governance, Corruption, State Capacity and Development in Black-Led and Comparative Nations, with Special Reference to Jamaica

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Abstract

Considerable differences in economic development, institutional effectiveness, corruption, social welfare, political accountability and governmental responsiveness exist among nations, including countries predominantly governed by political leaders of African descent. Public and political discourse sometimes attributes the comparatively weak developmental performance of many African and Caribbean states to the racial identity of their political leadership. Yet such an explanation remains theoretically problematic cause race is intertwined with colonial history, slavery, institutional inheritance, global economic position and state formation. This study develops a comparative analytical framework to examine whether an apparent relationship between Black political leadership and adverse developmental outcomes persists after accounting for colonial institutional inheritance, state capacity, political accountability, economic structure, resource dependence, inequality, conflict and international economic integration. Jamaica is positioned as a critical Caribbean case and compared conceptually with Black-led states exhibiting different developmental trajectories and with appropriately selected non-Black-led comparator countries possessing relevant historical or socioeconomic similarities. Rather than presupposing racial causation, the study distinguishes leadership identity from leadership quality, institutional constraints, elite incentives and structural conditions, thereby transforming a potentially racialised proposition into a falsifiable institutional-development hypothesis. The study ultimately proposes an Institution-Leadership-Development Transformation Framework and a Mass-Oriented Policy Index through which Jamaica and other historically disadvantaged postcolonial states can evaluate institutional accountability, state capacity, citizen-centred policymaking, productive transformation and sustainable human development.

Keywords: Black leadership; Jamaica; governance; corruption; development; postcolonial states; institutions; state capacity; comparative development; political economy.

Introduction

The enormous variation in national prosperity, governance quality and human well-being remains one of the most consequential questions confronting development economics, political science, sociology and comparative public policy. Some states have transformed relatively limited natural resources and difficult historical circumstances into high standards of living, capable institutions and extensive social protection, whereas other countries possessing considerable human and natural resources continue to experience poverty, inequality, corruption and institutional fragility (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012; Acemoglu et al., 2005; Klak & Das, 1999; North, 1990; Nunn, 2007; Rodney, 1972; United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2024). These differences are particularly visible across parts of sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean, regions profoundly shaped by slavery, colonialism, externally oriented production systems and historically extractive political institutions (Acemoglu et al., 2001; Beckford, 1972; Nunn, 2008). Nevertheless, substantial developmental heterogeneity exists both between and within these regions, making propositions that treat African-descended populations or Black political leadership as inherently associated with underdevelopment conceptually and empirically questionable. The fundamental analytical challenge is therefore to determine which historical, institutional, political and economic mechanisms account for observed developmental differences rather than attributing complex national outcomes to racial identity itself. This study addresses that challenge through a comparative examination of leadership, institutions and development, with Jamaica occupying a central position within the analysis.

The motivating observation underlying this research is that numerous contemporary countries governed predominantly by leaders of African descent simultaneously experience comparatively low development, substantial corruption, weak public institutions and public policies that may appear insufficiently responsive to the socioeconomic needs of ordinary citizens. Such an observation warrants systematic investigation, but descriptive association alone cannot establish either causation or the mechanisms producing the apparent relationship; cause-and-effect between leadership identity and national outcomes may reflect numerous confounding processes. Countries presently governed predominantly by Black leaders disproportionately include former colonies whose economies, borders, bureaucracies, land systems and political institutions were profoundly shaped under slavery, colonial extraction or externally oriented economic arrangements (Acemoglu et al., 2001; Nunn, 2008). Consequently, leadership race may function statistically as a proxy for historical and structural characteristics rather than representing an independent causal determinant of contemporary national performance. Failure to separate these mechanisms risks committing an ecological and causal inference error whereby historically clustered institutional characteristics are incorrectly interpreted as racial effects. The present study therefore converts a provocative descriptive observation into a falsifiable comparative-development proposition rather than accepting the racial identity of political leaders as an a priori explanation for national success or failure.

The conceptual distinction is particularly important cause racial identity does not constitute a theory of governance, whereas institutional incentives, state capacity, leadership behaviour, political accountability and elite competition provide identifiable mechanisms through which governments influence developmental outcomes. Political leaders operate within constitutional,

bureaucratic, economic and international environments that simultaneously constrain and enable their choices, meaning that superficially similar leaders may produce radically different outcomes under different institutional arrangements (Evans, 1995; North, 1990). Conversely, leaders belonging to different racial groups may demonstrate remarkably similar behaviours when exposed to comparable political incentives, weak accountability mechanisms, opportunities for rent extraction or powerful institutional constraints. This suggests that the appropriate unit of explanation should move from the phenotype of officeholders towards the interaction between leadership behaviour and the institutional systems within which political power is exercised. Such an approach does not absolve contemporary leaders of responsibility cause institutions are themselves maintained, weakened, strengthened or transformed partly through political choices (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). It instead creates a more rigorous foundation for determining when leadership matters, how leadership matters and under which institutional conditions political authority produces inclusive or extractive outcomes.

Jamaica provides an especially valuable case through which these relationships can be investigated cause political independence coexists with durable institutions inherited from British colonial rule, competitive electoral democracy, considerable human capital and persistent developmental constraints. The Jamaican experience cannot be adequately classified either as complete institutional failure or as unqualified developmental success, making the country particularly valuable as an intermediate comparative case. Jamaica has maintained constitutional government and competitive political institutions while simultaneously confronting longstanding problems involving productivity, crime, inequality, fiscal constraints, institutional trust and corruption concerns. This coexistence raises important questions about why political independence, electoral competition and constitutional continuity do not automatically generate structural economic transformation or broadly shared prosperity. Comparing Jamaica with African nations, the Caribbean and carefully selected non-Black-led states can illuminate whether similar institutional mechanisms generate comparable developmental consequences irrespective of the racial identities of political leaders. Jamaica therefore functions not merely as an illustrative country but as a theoretically important case connecting Caribbean postcolonial development with wider debates concerning institutions, leadership and comparative national performance.

Development itself must also be conceptualised more broadly than economic growth cause increases in national output do not necessarily produce equivalent improvements in people's capabilities, security or quality of life. Sen (1999) conceptualised development as an expansion of substantive freedoms and human capabilities, thereby shifting analytical attention from income alone towards the opportunities individuals possess to lead lives they have reason to value. Contemporary human-development measurement similarly incorporates health, education and material living standards rather than equating national progress exclusively with gross domestic product (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2025). The governance-development relationship should consequently be evaluated across economic, institutional and human dimensions cause a government may generate macroeconomic stability without producing equitable improvements in household welfare. This distinction becomes especially important when investigating the proposition that some governments pursue policies contrary to the

interests of the masses, since such a claim requires measurable distributional outcomes rather than ideological characterisations. The present research consequently integrates conventional developmental indicators with a proposed Mass-Oriented Policy Index designed to assess whether improvements in national performance translate into broadly distributed socioeconomic benefits.

Statement of the Problem

The central problem addressed by this study concerns the persistent coexistence of political sovereignty and socioeconomic underdevelopment within numerous formerly colonised states several decades after formal independence. Political independence transferred constitutional authority to domestic elites, but in many cases, it did not completely reconstruct inherited economic structures, administrative systems, ownership patterns, social hierarchies or relationships between governing institutions and ordinary citizens (Beckford, 1972; Rodney, 1972). Governments may consequently reproduce aspects of extractive institutional arrangements even where the racial identity of those exercising contemporary political authority differs substantially from that of former colonial rulers. This raises the possibility that postcolonial underdevelopment reflects institutional reproduction, elite incentives and political-economic structures more strongly than the racial identity of contemporary leaders. Conversely, leadership agency cannot simply be eliminated from the analysis cause governments make consequential choices concerning corruption, public investment, institutional reform, taxation, industrial policy, education, social protection and resource distribution (Evans, 1995). A rigorous explanation therefore requires simultaneous examination of historical structures, contemporary institutions and political leadership rather than reducing developmental outcomes to any single dimension.

The analytical problem is complicated further by the tendency to compare contemporary high-income Western states directly with African or Caribbean countries without adequately considering differences in historical starting conditions and developmental trajectories. Contemporary high-income Western states accumulated capital, institutions, infrastructure, technological capabilities and productive capacity across lengthy historical periods that frequently included imperial expansion, industrialisation and unequal international economic relationships. Many contemporary African and Caribbean states entered political independence with economies organised around extraction, plantation agriculture, mineral exports, tourism or limited commodity specialisation rather than diversified domestic industrial systems (Beckford, 1972; Lewis, 1954; Rodney, 1972). Nevertheless, historical disadvantage cannot be a deterministic explanation that permanently absolves contemporary governments of responsibility for decisions made decades after political independence. The analytical challenge is consequently to distinguish inherited constraints from contemporary governance failures while identifying interactions through which present political leadership either reproduces or transforms inherited institutions. Such differentiation is indispensable if research is to generate actionable developmental recommendations rather than merely allocating historical responsibility.

A related problem concerns corruption and elite capture, both of which can transform nominally democratic political institutions into mechanisms through which public resources disproportionately benefit politically connected groups. Corruption can weaken public

institutions, distort resource allocation, undermine governmental legitimacy and reduce the effectiveness with which public expenditure translates into developmental outcomes (Mauro, 1995; Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016). Elite capture further suggests that political systems may remain electorally competitive while public decisions disproportionately reflect the preferences of powerful organised groups rather than the broader population. These problems are not racially specific cause corruption, patronage and elite domination have appeared historically across societies with widely different ethnic and racial compositions. The relevant comparative question therefore concerns the institutional circumstances under which political elites can appropriate public authority for private, partisan or sectional purposes. Understanding those circumstances provides a more theoretically defensible route towards explaining why governments serving demographically different societies may nevertheless produce similar patterns of exclusion, inequality and weak development.

Research Gap

Extensive scholarship independently examines institutions and economic development, colonialism and institutional persistence, corruption and economic performance, democracy and development, leadership and governance, natural-resource dependence, state capacity and the long-term consequences of slavery (Acemoglu et al., 2001; Evans, 1995; Mauro, 1995; Nunn, 2008). However, this literature frequently remains fragmented, with historical institutional research concentrating on colonial origins, governance research emphasising contemporary institutional quality and leadership research focusing primarily on political actors or leadership characteristics. Comparatively little scholarship directly tests the popular proposition that the racial identity of national political leadership explains developmental differences while simultaneously subjecting that proposition to historical, institutional, political-economic and state-capacity controls. An additional gap concerns systematic comparison among African-majority states, Caribbean postcolonial societies such as Jamaica, comparatively successful, Black-governed states and carefully matched non-Black-led countries rather than treating either Africa or the Caribbean as homogeneous developmental categories. Research also frequently measures government performance without explicitly conceptualising whether public policies distribute developmental benefits broadly throughout society or disproportionately towards economically and politically advantaged elites. The present study addresses these gaps by integrating historical inheritance, leadership characteristics, institutional quality, citizen orientation and developmental outcomes within a unified comparative framework.

A second gap concerns the analytical distinction between the **identity of political leaders** and the **institutional environment governing leadership behaviour**. Political leaders do not exercise authority within institutional vacuums; constitutions, courts, bureaucracies, party systems, electoral arrangements, media environments, civil society organisations and international economic constraints influence both the opportunities and incentives confronting governments (North, 1990). The same individual operating within different institutional environments could theoretically generate substantially different outcomes, while leaders longed to different racial groups but operating under similar institutional constraints may produce comparable governance patterns. Contemporary governance measures provide substantial information concerning voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness,

regulatory quality, rule of law and control of corruption, but these measures were not constructed specifically to identify racial leadership effects (World Bank, 2025a). The revised Worldwide Governance Indicators nevertheless provide annual composite measures across more than 200 economies and therefore offer an unusually valuable empirical foundation for testing competing explanations of national governance performance (World Bank, 2025a). A rigorous comparative design must consequently determine whether leadership identity contributes meaningful explanatory power after institutional characteristics and historical conditions have been incorporated into statistical models.

A third research gap involves insufficient attention to **within-group heterogeneity**, particularly differences among predominantly Black-governed states themselves. Treating all African or Black-led countries as analytically equivalent obscures substantial differences in institutional quality, economic structure, democratic accountability, conflict histories, natural-resource dependence, population size and developmental performance. Successful or comparatively successful, Black-led countries are especially important cause they constitute potential negative cases capable of challenging simplistic racial explanations. Methodologically, counterexamples should not be treated as inconvenient anomalies but as theoretically valuable observations that can reveal conditions under which historical disadvantages are overcome, or institutional deterioration is prevented. Similar reasoning requires identifying poorly performing non-Black-led countries cause their existence can demonstrate whether governance failure arises under institutional configurations that transcend racial categories. The study therefore places variation within leadership categories at the centre of its comparative strategy rather than constructing an analysis designed merely to confirm the motivating observation.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate whether observed developmental disadvantages among numerous states governed predominantly by Black political leaders are explained by leadership racial identity or by historical, institutional, political-economic and leadership-quality mechanisms correlated with that identity. The research seeks to compare selected African and Caribbean countries, including Jamaica, with comparatively successful, Black-governed cases and appropriately matched states governed predominantly by non-Black political elites. It assesses variation in human development, economic productivity, poverty, inequality, corruption, government effectiveness, rule of law, political accountability and the distributional orientation of public policy. The investigation further determines whether colonial institutional inheritance and contemporary state capacity mediate relationships between leadership characteristics and developmental performance (Acemoglu et al., 2001; North, 1990). Rather than treating Black-governed countries as a homogeneous category, the study explicitly investigates within-group variation to identify why some states achieve markedly stronger institutional and developmental outcomes than others. Its ultimate objective is to construct an empirically defensible framework for institutional and developmental transformation applicable to Jamaica and other historically disadvantaged postcolonial societies.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The investigation first asks whether countries governed predominantly by Black political leadership exhibit systematically different governance and developmental outcomes from comparable countries governed predominantly by non-Black political leadership. Secondly, it asks whether any observed differences remain statistically significant after controlling for colonial history, institutional quality, initial income, natural-resource dependence, conflict, inequality, geographical characteristics, population structure and state capacity. Thirdly, the research examines the extent to which leadership quality, government effectiveness and institutional accountability mediate or moderate any apparent relationship between leadership identity and development. Fourthly, it investigates why comparatively successful, Black-governed states diverge from poorly performing, Black-governed states despite sharing selected historical experiences or leadership characteristics. Fifthly, the research determines where Jamaica falls within the resulting global institutional-developmental typology and which factors most strongly account for its developmental trajectory. Finally, the investigation asks which institutional reforms and developmental strategies emerging from successful comparative cases may be transferable, with appropriate contextual adaptation, to Jamaica and other underperforming postcolonial states.

The principal null hypothesis proposes that, after historical, institutional, economic and political conditions are controlled, the racial classification of national political leadership has no statistically significant independent relationship with national developmental outcomes. The competing hypothesis proposes that leadership racial classification retains a statistically significant association with development after relevant structural and institutional characteristics have been statistically controlled. A second substantive hypothesis predicts that government effectiveness, rule of law and control of corruption explain substantially more cross-national variation in development than the racial classification of political leadership (Kaufmann et al., 2010; World Bank, 2025a). A third hypothesis predicts that extractive colonial institutional inheritance is negatively associated with contemporary governance quality and development both directly and indirectly through institutional persistence (Acemoglu et al., 2001). A fourth hypothesis predicts that stronger accountability institutions weaken relationships between elite self-interest and anti-majoritarian policymaking irrespective of the racial identity of governing elites. A fifth hypothesis predicts that Jamaica's developmental performance can be explained more substantially by its institutional configuration, economic structure, productivity, historical inheritance and policy effectiveness than by the racial identity of its political leadership.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this study integrates historical institutionalism, institutional economics, elite theory, developmental-state theory and political accountability theory. Historical institutionalism proposes that institutions created during critical historical periods may persist through path-dependent processes long after the original circumstances responsible for their formation have disappeared (Mahoney, 2000; Pierson, 2000). Institutional economics similarly emphasises that political and economic institutions structure incentives, property rights, investment behaviour and resource distribution, thereby influencing long-term prosperity

(Acemoglu et al., 2001; North, 1990). Elite theory contributes the proposition that political institutions can come to be dominated by organised minorities whose interests diverge from those of broader populations, regardless of the racial identities of those elites (Michels, 1915; Mills, 1956). Developmental-state theory provides an alternative institutional model in which capable bureaucracies, strategic coordination and long-term productive transformation permit governments to accelerate industrialisation and socioeconomic development (Evans, 1995; Johnson, 1982). Together, these perspectives provide a multidimensional explanation in which historical conditions affect institutions, institutions shape leadership incentives, and political choices influence developmental outcomes.

The historical component is particularly important cause slavery and colonialism transformed political institutions, social trust, property systems, productive structures and relationships between citizens and states across substantial portions of Africa and the Caribbean. Acemoglu et al. (2001) demonstrated that different forms of European colonisation produced different institutional arrangements and found substantial long-term relationships between institutional quality and contemporary income. Importantly for the present research, their results indicated that once institutional effects were controlled, countries located in Africa did not possess an independent income disadvantage, thereby directly challenging geographical or racial-essentialist interpretations of African underdevelopment (Acemoglu et al., 2001). Nunn (2008) similarly identified a robust negative relationship between historical African slave exports and subsequent economic performance, illustrating how contemporary differences may partly reflect processes extending across centuries. These findings suggest that apparently contemporary governance problems may reflect historically generated institutional equilibria rather than inherent characteristics of present populations or political leaders. Nevertheless, historical persistence does not imply determinism cause political actors can reform institutions, construct bureaucratic capabilities and alter incentives influencing economic and political behaviour (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012; Evans, 1995).

Conceptual Framework: The Institution-Leadership-Development Transformation Framework

This study proposes the **Institution-Leadership-Development Transformation Framework (ILDTF)** in which national development results from interactions among historical inheritance, institutional architecture, leadership behaviour, political accountability, economic structure and external constraints. Historical inheritance includes colonial institutional type, slavery exposure, independence trajectory, inherited legal structures, economic organisation at independence and patterns of property ownership. Institutional architecture encompasses government effectiveness, regulatory capacity, rule of law, corruption control, bureaucratic professionalism, judicial independence and mechanisms of democratic accountability (World Bank, 2025a). Leadership behaviour encompasses policy competence, strategic horizon, integrity, developmental orientation, elite capture and responsiveness to population needs rather than merely demographic characteristics of officeholders. Economic structure incorporates productive complexity, commodity dependence, fiscal capacity, public debt, investment, employment quality and integration into international production systems. Developmental outcomes encompass income,

human development, poverty, inequality, health, education, employment, security and the distribution of economic opportunity throughout the population (Sen, 1999; UNDP, 2025).

Within the ILDTF, leadership racial identity is positioned as an observable political characteristic rather than an assumed causal mechanism. The principal theoretical pathway is conceptualised as **Historical Extraction → Institutional Inheritance → Contemporary State Capacity and Elite Incentives → Leadership behaviour and Policy Choices → Distributional and Developmental Outcomes**. Political accountability, civil society, democratic competition, bureaucratic professionalism and international constraints operate as moderating conditions capable of strengthening or weakening individual pathways. Leadership quality may simultaneously function as an independent influence and as a mediator through which institutional environments affect governmental policy and developmental outcomes. Race may correlate strongly with historical location cause colonialism produced a contemporary international system in which many predominantly Black-led states are simultaneously former extractive colonies, making statistical separation of these characteristics indispensable (Acemoglu et al., 2001; Nunn, 2008). The ILDTF therefore tests racial leadership explanations against institutional, historical and behavioural alternatives instead of embedding racial causation within its theoretical assumptions.

Methodology

This study employs a **systematic qualitative comparative research design** to examine the relationships among historical legacies, political leadership, institutional quality, governance, corruption and developmental outcomes across selected Black-led and comparative nations. A qualitative comparative approach is appropriate cause the phenomenon under investigation involves historically embedded political and institutional processes that cannot be adequately explained through numerical associations alone. Rather than attempting to establish that the racial identity of political leaders independently causes national development or underdevelopment, the study examines the combinations of historical, institutional, political and economic conditions through which contrasting developmental trajectories have emerged. The analysis integrates systematic documentary review, comparative case analysis, thematic synthesis and process tracing to identify recurring patterns, causal mechanisms, similarities, differences and theoretically significant exceptions across countries. Comparative qualitative research is particularly valuable where researchers seek to understand how similar outcomes may emerge from different combinations of conditions or why countries sharing important characteristics nevertheless experience divergent outcomes (Mahoney, 2000; Ragin, 1987). The methodology therefore permits the original Black-leadership proposition to be investigated critically while ensuring that racial identity is treated as an empirical characteristic requiring explanation rather than as a predetermined causal mechanism.

The study employs **purposive theoretical case selection** rather than selecting countries solely according to racial leadership classification or geographic location. Cases will be chosen to maximise theoretically meaningful variation in historical experience, institutional quality, governance performance, corruption, political accountability, economic structure and developmental achievement. Jamaica constitutes the principal Caribbean case cause it combines

a predominantly Black population and political leadership with longstanding competitive democracy, colonial institutional inheritance, middle-income status and persistent developmental challenges. Additional Caribbean and African countries include both comparatively successful and comparatively underperforming states, thereby preventing the analysis from selecting only cases that appear to confirm an association between Black political leadership and underdevelopment. Selected non-Black-led countries provide comparative cases possessing relevant similarities in colonial history, initial developmental conditions, natural-resource dependence, political institutions or socioeconomic circumstances wherever meaningful comparisons are possible. This theoretically diverse case-selection strategy allows the research to investigate variation both **within and between leadership categories**, thereby substantially reducing the danger of confirmation bias and racial essentialism.

A combination of **Most-Similar Systems Design and Most-Different Systems Design** structures the cross-national comparisons. Most-Similar Systems Design compares countries sharing substantial historical, geographic, institutional or socioeconomic characteristics but displaying divergent governance or developmental outcomes, thereby helping identify conditions that may explain their differences. Most-Different Systems Design examine countries possessing substantially different historical, cultural or geographic characteristics but exhibiting similar developmental outcomes to identify common institutional or political mechanisms that may transcend racial or regional categories (Meckstroth, 1975). For example, comparisons among postcolonial Black-led states with substantially different corruption, governance and human-development outcomes can reveal why common experiences of colonialism or racial leadership do not necessarily produce equivalent results. Conversely, comparisons between Black-led and non-Black-led countries exhibiting similar institutional weaknesses or developmental constraints can determine whether governance problems are more plausibly associated with institutional configurations than with leadership racial identity. Combining both comparative strategies strengthens causal interpretation cause similarities, differences and theoretically important counterexamples come central components of the research design rather than peripheral observations.

The documentary evidence was collected systematically from peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, government reports, parliamentary documents, national development plans, policy statements, institutional reports and recognised international databases. Relevant international sources include publications and reports from the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme, International Monetary Fund, Transparency International, African Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank and other credible multilateral organisations where appropriate. Jamaican evidence additionally obtained from institutions including the Planning Institute of Jamaica, Statistical Institute of Jamaica, Bank of Jamaica, Auditor General's Department, Integrity Commission and relevant ministries and parliamentary sources. Searches of scholarly databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR and Google Scholar use predetermined combinations of terms relating to Black political leadership, postcolonial governance, corruption, institutional quality, state capacity, elite capture, colonial legacies, development, Caribbean political economy, African development and Jamaica. Inclusion criteria prioritise sources directly addressing the study's conceptual domains, providing

credible empirical or historical evidence and contributing substantively to understanding institutional or developmental trajectories. Exclusion criteria remove duplicate publications, unsupported opinion pieces, sources lacking sufficient methodological or evidentiary credibility and materials unrelated to the specified comparative research questions.

The systematic documentary review will be conducted through clearly defined stages of identification, screening, eligibility assessment and final inclusion to increase transparency and reproducibility. Titles and abstracts of retrieved scholarly publications will initially be screened against predetermined eligibility criteria, and potentially relevant sources will be examined in full. Documentary materials selected for inclusion will be recorded within a structured evidence matrix containing information on country, historical period, research design, leadership characteristics, institutional conditions, governance indicators, corruption, economic structure, policy orientation, developmental outcomes and principal conclusions. Particular attention should be devoted to studies presenting evidence that contradicts the original observation cause systematic qualitative inquiry should actively examine negative cases and competing explanations rather than selecting evidence that supports an initial proposition. The review and synthesis process follows principles of transparent qualitative evidence synthesis, including explicit searching, selection, appraisal and synthesis procedures consistent with established reporting guidance such as ENTREQ (Tong et al., 2012). Such systematic documentation provides an auditable analytical pathway connecting the original research questions, evidence selection, thematic interpretations and eventual conclusions.

The selected evidence subsequently undergoes **thematic synthesis** using a combination of deductive and inductive coding. Deductive codes initially derive from the Institution-Leadership-Development Transformation Framework and include colonial inheritance, slavery and historical extraction, institutional quality, state capacity, leadership behaviour, elite capture, corruption, political accountability, economic structure, mass-oriented policies and developmental outcomes. Inductive coding permits additional themes and mechanisms to emerge from the evidence rather than forcing all findings into categories established before the analysis begins. Following the thematic synthesis procedure described by Thomas and Harden (2008), relevant evidence is first coded systematically, related codes are subsequently organised into descriptive themes and higher-order analytical themes are finally developed to explain relationships among cases. This process is particularly appropriate cause thematic synthesis enables findings from heterogeneous qualitative and documentary sources to be combined while preserving sufficient attention to context and interpretation. The final themes therefore represent both theoretically anticipated mechanisms and previously unidentified patterns emerging systematically from the comparative evidence.

A structured **cross-case comparative matrix** will then be constructed to facilitate systematic comparison among the selected nations. Each case examined according to common analytical domains comprising historical extraction, colonial institutional inheritance, post-independence political development, leadership practices, state capacity, corruption, rule of law, political accountability, economic transformation, distributional policy orientation and human-development outcomes. Evidence within each domain is summarised qualitatively and supported where appropriate by descriptive indicators such as the Worldwide Governance Indicators,

Human Development Index, Corruption Perceptions Index, income measures, inequality statistics and other established measures. These numerical indicators serve as contextual and triangulating evidence rather than dependent variables in statistical regression models, thereby allowing the qualitative analysis to remain central while benefiting from internationally comparable descriptive data. Cross-case comparison identifies recurring similarities, consequential differences, deviant cases and configurations of conditions associated with comparatively successful or unsuccessful developmental trajectories. The comparative matrix therefore provides a systematic mechanism through which broad claims concerning Black leadership, governance and development can be evaluated against evidence from multiple national experiences rather than impressionistic country descriptions.

The research further employs **process tracing** within selected cases to investigate how historical conditions came to be connected to contemporary institutional and developmental outcomes. Process tracing is particularly useful for evaluating hypothesised causal mechanisms by reconstructing sequences of political decisions, institutional changes and historical events within individual cases rather than inferring mechanisms exclusively from cross-national correlations (Ricks & Liu, 2018). For each principal case, the analysis examines critical historical junctures such as colonial rule, independence, constitutional transformation, major political transitions, structural adjustment, institutional reforms, economic crises and significant changes in leadership or national development strategy. Documentary evidence is used to determine whether these events strengthened or weakened state capacity, accountability institutions, elite dominance, economic diversification and citizen-oriented policymaking. Jamaica receives especially detailed process tracing to determine how its plantation-colonial inheritance, Westminster political institutions, post-independence party competition, economic restructuring and successive policy choices contributed to its contemporary governance and developmental profile. The resulting within-case evidence complements cross-case comparison by explaining not merely **which countries differ but how and why those differences emerged over time**.

Counterfactual and **negative-case analysis** constitute an explicit component of the methodology to protect the study against confirmation bias. Countries governed predominantly by Black leaders but exhibiting comparatively strong governance, institutional stability or developmental achievement are investigated as critical cases capable of challenging a simple racial explanation. Similarly, non-Black-led nations experiencing severe corruption, weak institutions or developmental stagnation are examined to determine whether comparable failures occur independently of leadership racial classification. Cases that contradict expected relationships receive analytical attention cause negative cases can reveal omitted variables, alternative causal mechanisms or boundary conditions affecting theoretical propositions (Mahoney & Goertz, 2004). The analysis consequently assesses whether apparent patterns attributed initially to Black leadership remain plausible once successful, Black-led cases, unsuccessful non-Black-led cases and divergent historical pathways are incorporated. This falsification-oriented strategy strengthens the credibility of the research by ensuring that its conclusions emerge from comparative evidence rather than from predetermined racial assumptions.

Triangulation is used throughout the research to improve the credibility and dependability of the qualitative interpretations. Major historical, institutional and developmental claims were,

wherever possible, compared across scholarly publications, official national documents, independent governance assessments and international datasets rather than relying on any single evidentiary source. Contradictory findings are not automatically excluded but instead recorded and examined to determine whether disagreement results from differences in measurement, historical period, methodology, ideology or interpretation. An analytical audit trail documents search decisions, case-selection criteria, coding procedures, thematic development and changes to the conceptual framework during the research process. Reflexivity is also necessary cause the study originates from a potentially controversial observation concerning race and governance, requiring continual consideration of how researcher expectations could influence case selection or interpretation. These procedures strengthen confirmability and allow readers to evaluate how closely the resulting conclusions follow from the collected evidence.

The systematic qualitative analysis ultimately proceeds at three interconnected levels comprising **within-case analysis, cross-case comparison and explanatory synthesis**. Within-case analysis reconstructs each country's historical, political, institutional and developmental trajectory using the common analytical framework and process-tracing approach. Cross-case analysis subsequently compares those trajectories to identify convergent pathways, divergent institutional arrangements, recurring mechanisms and theoretically important exceptions. Explanatory synthesis then integrates these findings with historical institutionalism, institutional economics, elite theory and developmental-state theory to determine which explanation or combination of explanations most adequately accounts for observed developmental differences. The final interpretation specifically assesses whether leadership racial identity possesses independent explanatory value or whether the apparent relationship is more convincingly explained through colonial inheritance, institutional quality, state capacity, leadership behaviour, elite incentives and contemporary policy choices. This three-level analytical strategy transforms the study from a descriptive comparison of countries into a systematic investigation of the mechanisms producing divergent developmental outcomes.

The study does not therefore attempt to establish racial causation through regression coefficients, nor does it interpret numerical differences between Black-led and non-Black-led countries as evidence that racial identity determines governmental effectiveness. Quantitative indicators instead operate as **descriptive benchmarks and triangulation tools** that help identify patterns requiring deeper historical and qualitative explanation. The principal evidence derives from systematic comparison of institutional trajectories, leadership behaviour, policy choices, historical processes and the mechanisms connecting these conditions with developmental outcomes. This design is methodologically preferable for the present investigation cause political development is characterised by equifinality, path dependence and complex causation in which multiple combinations of conditions can generate similar national outcomes (Mahoney, 2000; Ragin, 1987). It additionally provides the analytical flexibility necessary to determine whether the original observation concerning Black political leadership survives careful examination or whether the apparent phenomenon dissolves when deeper institutional and historical mechanisms are considered. Accordingly, the proposed systematic qualitative comparative design provides a stronger foundation for developing an evidence-based framework for Jamaica and other

historically disadvantaged nations than a research strategy centred principally on estimating racial leadership effects.

9. Comparative Case-Selection Strategy

The systematic qualitative component employs a theoretically driven comparative case-selection strategy combining **Most-Similar Systems Design (MSSD)** and **Most-Different Systems Design (MDSD)** to investigate anomalous, convergent and contrasting developmental trajectories. Comparative case selection is particularly important cause countries constitute complex historical configurations in which colonial inheritance, political institutions, economic structures, geography, leadership practices and international relationships interact rather than operate independently (Mahoney, 2000; Ragin, 1987). MSSD permits comparison among countries sharing important historical or structural characteristics but displaying substantially different outcomes, thereby assisting identification of conditions potentially responsible for their divergence (Meckstroth, 1975). MDSD reverses this logic by comparing countries possessing markedly different background characteristics but exhibiting similar governance or developmental outcomes, thereby identifying mechanisms potentially operating across different contexts (Meckstroth, 1975). Combining these strategies is particularly appropriate for the present research cause neither Black-led nor non-Black-led countries constitute internally homogeneous categories, and substantial developmental variation exists within both groups. The case-selection strategy therefore seeks explanatory leverage through theoretically meaningful similarities, differences, negative cases and developmental outliers rather than attempting to construct a simple racial ranking of nations.

Jamaica constitutes the **principal or anchor case** because it combines predominantly Black political leadership, longstanding competitive democracy, British colonial institutional inheritance, middle-income status, small-island characteristics and persistent developmental constraints. Its selection is theoretically significant cause Jamaica cannot easily be classified as either a failed state or an unambiguous developmental success, making it particularly valuable as an intermediate case through which competing explanations can be examined. The country has maintained constitutional government and peaceful transfers of political authority while simultaneously confronting longstanding challenges involving productivity, crime, inequality, corruption concerns, institutional capability and structural economic transformation. Jamaica therefore permits examination of why democratic durability and political sovereignty do not necessarily produce equivalent achievements in economic transformation, institutional effectiveness or broadly distributed improvements in living standards. More importantly, the Jamaican case allows the research to distinguish the racial composition of political leadership from alternative explanations involving plantation-colonial inheritance, small-state vulnerability, institutional capacity, political incentives and contemporary policy choices. Jamaica consequently serves as the analytical reference point against which similarities and differences among selected Caribbean, African and non-Black-led comparator countries are systematically evaluated.

The Caribbean comparison deliberately incorporates countries displaying different combinations of historical inheritance, political institutions, population characteristics, economic structures and

developmental outcomes. **Barbados** represents a particularly important comparator case; like Jamaica, it is a predominantly Black Caribbean society shaped by British colonialism, plantation production, parliamentary government, tourism dependence and the vulnerabilities associated with small-island economies. However, Barbados has historically achieved relatively strong social outcomes and institutional performance while confronting many structural vulnerabilities common to Caribbean small states, making the Jamaica-Barbados comparison suitable for a Most-Similar Systems analysis. Contemporary evidence also illustrates that Barbados remains vulnerable to fiscal, climatic and external economic shocks despite its developmental achievements, reinforcing the importance of distinguishing structural vulnerability from institutional effectiveness (World Bank, 2025b). Comparing Jamaica and Barbados can therefore help determine whether differences in state capability, human-capital investment, institutional arrangements, social policy, political incentives or economic management contributed to their divergent developmental trajectories. Barbados consequently functions not as an idealised success case but as a theoretically valuable Caribbean comparator sharing important structural characteristics with Jamaica while demonstrating different institutional and socioeconomic outcomes.

Trinidad and Tobago provides another potentially valuable Caribbean comparator because it shares British colonial inheritance, competitive parliamentary politics and important aspects of Caribbean political history with Jamaica while possessing a markedly different resource endowment. Its hydrocarbon-based economy creates an opportunity to investigate whether natural-resource wealth fundamentally alters relationships among state capacity, political incentives, corruption risks, economic diversification and human development. Comparing Jamaica with Trinidad and Tobago consequently helps prevent the analysis from assuming that all Caribbean economic constraints arise principally from colonial history or small-state status. The comparison can instead examine how differences in natural-resource availability interact with institutional quality and political choices to generate divergent development pathways within a broadly related regional environment. Including Trinidad and Tobago also creates an opportunity to investigate whether greater national resource availability necessarily produces stronger developmental outcomes or whether institutional arrangements determine how effectively resources are converted into public value. The country therefore strengthens the Caribbean component by introducing resource endowment as an important alternative explanation of developmental divergence.

A further Caribbean comparison may incorporate **Guyana**, although its contemporary petroleum transformation requires especially careful temporal interpretation. Guyana shares important characteristics with Jamaica, including British colonial inheritance, plantation history, Caribbean political institutions and historical dependence on externally oriented primary production, while differing substantially in ethnic composition, territory, resource endowment and recent economic transformation. Its emergence as a major petroleum-producing economy provides an opportunity to observe how rapid changes in national resources interact with inherited institutions, political competition, distributional pressures and state capacity. Historically, comparisons between Guyana and Mauritius have already demonstrated the analytical value of examining how societies sharing selected colonial and demographic challenges can experience substantially

different institutional trajectories (World Bank, 2006). Guyana should therefore be treated as a dynamic rather than static case, with particular attention paid to developmental conditions before and after the expansion of petroleum production. Its inclusion would allow the study to examine whether sudden resource abundance transforms underlying institutional relationships or instead magnifies pre-existing strengths and weaknesses.

The African component deliberately incorporates both comparatively stronger and weaker developmental performers to prevent the research from selecting only countries that appear to confirm the motivating proposition concerning Black political leadership. **Botswana** represents a particularly important African case because it achieved several decades of economic growth and political stability following independence despite starting with limited infrastructure, a small domestic market and considerable geographical constraints. Its institutional trajectory is especially valuable cause Botswana maintained democratic traditions after independence while effectively managing substantial diamond revenues for much of its post-independence history, although contemporary assessments increasingly identify diversification and institutional challenges (World Bank, 2026a). Botswana therefore constitutes a critical negative case against any proposition that predominantly Black political leadership necessarily produces weak institutions or developmental failure. Comparing Botswana with less successful resource-dependent African countries can help identify whether institutional constraints, resource governance, elite incentives and long-term political choices explain divergent outcomes under Black political leadership. Its inclusion is consequently indispensable cause a credible study must deliberately incorporate cases capable of falsifying rather than merely supporting its motivating proposition.

Mauritius provides an equally important but structurally different African counterexample because it transformed from a low-income, sugar-dependent economy at independence into a diversified upper-middle-income economy with substantial achievements in human development and institutional stability. The country shares with Jamaica important characteristics including British colonial rule, plantation agriculture, small-island geography, exposure to external markets and independence during the broader twentieth-century decolonisation period. However, Mauritius subsequently diversified into manufacturing, tourism, financial services and information-related activities while developing relatively durable democratic institutions, making it particularly valuable for a Most-Similar Systems comparison with Caribbean small states (World Bank, 2026b). The World Bank characterises Mauritius as one of Africa's oldest democracies and notes that its economic transformation was supported by governance, education, infrastructure and structural reform (World Bank, 2026b). The Jamaica-Mauritius comparison can therefore investigate why two small postcolonial island economies sharing selected plantation and British institutional inheritances experienced substantially different patterns of productive diversification and income growth. Mauritius consequently represents one of the study's strongest comparative cases for testing whether institutional adaptation and strategic economic transformation can mediate historical disadvantages.

Ghana can provide a further African case cause its post-independence experience combines British colonial inheritance, early independence, periods of political instability, subsequent democratic consolidation and continuing developmental challenges. Ghana is theoretically useful

cause its trajectory demonstrates that national institutional arrangements can change substantially over time rather than remaining permanently determined by colonial inheritance. Comparing different periods within Ghana also supports the process-tracing component of the research by permitting examination of how political transitions, institutional reforms and changing leadership incentives affected governance and economic performance. Cross-national comparison between Ghana and Jamaica additionally offers useful similarities involving British colonial experience, English-speaking governmental institutions and postcolonial political development while retaining important differences in geography, population, economic structure and regional context. Ghana therefore provides an intermediate African case situated between the stronger developmental counterexamples and the more severely constrained cases included in the study. Its inclusion helps prevent the African analysis from falling into a dichotomy between exceptional success and extreme institutional failure.

Nigeria represents an important contrasting African case cause its substantial population, petroleum resources, federal political system and history of military and civilian government distinguish it sharply from small Caribbean societies while providing significant analytical leverage regarding resource governance and institutional capacity. Contemporary Nigeria continues to confront insecurity, regional political tensions and major developmental challenges despite possessing extensive human and natural resources (World Bank, 2026c). Nigeria therefore provides an opportunity to examine why resource abundance does not automatically translate into broad developmental prosperity and whether institutional arrangements mediate relationships between national wealth and population welfare. Its inclusion also permits analysis of how political scale, ethnic diversity, federalism, regional inequality and security challenges interact with corruption, leadership incentives and state capability. As a Black-led country possessing substantially different structural conditions from Jamaica, Nigeria contributes to the Most-Different Systems component by testing whether similar governance challenges can emerge through different historical and institutional pathways. The Nigerian case is therefore valuable not because it confirms a racial proposition but because it permits competing explanations involving resource dependence, institutional fragmentation, political scale and state capacity to be examined systematically.

Rwanda offers another analytically distinctive African case cause its contemporary developmental trajectory combines substantial improvements in state capability and economic performance with a political system that differs considerably from the competitive democratic model represented by Jamaica, Barbados, Botswana and Mauritius. Rwanda has maintained political stability since the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi and has articulated ambitious strategies to achieve middle-income status by 2035 and high-income status by 2050 (World Bank, 2026d). Its inclusion creates an important opportunity to examine whether strong administrative coordination and long-term developmental planning can generate significant socioeconomic improvements under political arrangements characterised by more concentrated executive authority. The Rwanda comparison is especially important cause it prevents the research from assuming that democratic competition and developmental state capacity necessarily develop together or that a single institutional model produces successful outcomes. At the same time, economic achievements must be evaluated alongside political accountability, civil

liberties and institutional constraints so that developmental performance is not reduced exclusively to economic indicators. Rwanda consequently constitutes a theoretically challenging case through which relationships among state capacity, political accountability, leadership concentration and development can be critically examined.

South Africa may additionally be included because it offers a distinctive case of transition from institutionalised racial minority rule to Black-majority democratic government within an industrialised but deeply unequal socioeconomic structure. Its post-apartheid trajectory provides an opportunity to examine whether the racial transformation of political representation necessarily produces corresponding changes in economic structure, institutional capacity, inequality and distributional outcomes. South Africa is particularly relevant to the central research question cause the racial composition of national political leadership changed dramatically while substantial elements of the country's productive economy, inequality and institutional architecture persisted across the political transition. Process tracing can therefore examine which developmental changes followed political democratisation, which structural inequalities persisted and how contemporary leadership choices interacted with inherited economic institutions. The South African case provides considerably stronger causal leverage regarding political representation than a simple comparison of countries whose leadership racial composition has remained relatively stable throughout the observation period. Its inclusion can consequently help distinguish the effects of representational transformation from the slower processes of institutional, economic and distributional transformation.

The study also deliberately incorporates **non-Black-led postcolonial comparator cases** so that the central proposition is not tested exclusively within African and Caribbean countries. Such cases should be selected because they share theoretically relevant historical or structural characteristics with the Black-led cases rather than merely cause their political leaders belong to different racial groups. Potential comparators may include selected Asian or other postcolonial states that experienced European colonial rule, entered independence with relatively low incomes and subsequently pursued markedly different strategies of institutional development, industrialisation and integration into the international economy. The purpose of these comparisons is to determine whether similar historical disadvantages generated different outcomes under alternative institutional configurations rather than to establish a simplistic Black-versus-Asian or Black-versus-White hierarchy. Institutional research demonstrates that political and economic outcomes depend substantially upon how power is distributed and how institutions structure incentives, participation and policy implementation (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012; World Bank, 2017). Non-Black-led comparators therefore function as theoretically selected controls for alternative institutional-development pathways rather than racial benchmarks against which Black societies are normatively judged.

Malaysia represents one potentially valuable Asian comparator because it combines British colonial inheritance, ethnic diversity, commodity dependence during earlier stages of development and subsequent economic diversification within an institutional environment substantially different from Jamaica. Its developmental trajectory provides an opportunity to investigate how industrial policy, foreign investment, export-oriented production, state capability and long-term economic restructuring contributed to movement away from primary-commodity

dependence. A Jamaica-Malaysia comparison would necessarily recognise substantial differences in population size, geography, regional markets and political institutions, meaning that it would operate primarily through a Most-Different Systems rather than a strict Most-Similar Systems logic. Nevertheless, the comparison can help identify whether productive diversification and state coordination constitute mechanisms capable of generating developmental transformation across substantially different cultural and racial contexts. Malaysia should therefore not be interpreted as demonstrating the superiority of one racial group but as providing evidence concerning alternative institutional and economic pathways available to postcolonial states. Such a comparison directly advances the study's objective of moving explanatory analysis away from racial essentialism and towards mechanisms of institutional and productive transformation.

Case selection also incorporates explicit **negative-case and deviant-case analysis** cause cases contradicting the anticipated relationship provide some of the strongest evidence for evaluating theoretical propositions. Negative cases are particularly important in comparative social research cause researchers should determine whether an outcome could reasonably have occurred within cases where it is absent rather than selecting every observationally negative case indiscriminately (Mahoney & Goertz, 2004). Comparatively successful Black-led states such as Botswana and Mauritius are therefore treated as theoretically significant challenges to any deterministic association between Black leadership and underdevelopment. Conversely, non-Black-led countries experiencing corruption, institutional weakness, political instability or developmental stagnation are examined where they satisfy the theoretical case-selection criteria. Deviant cases whose outcomes cannot be adequately explained by the initial Institution-Leadership-Development Transformation Framework receive additional within-case analysis rather than being removed from the study. This approach ensures that contradictory evidence contributes to theoretical refinement and strengthens the study's protection against confirmation bias.

The selected cases are organised within a **nested comparative architecture** rather than treated as members of a single undifferentiated global sample. The first analytical layer comprises intra-Caribbean comparisons centred on Jamaica, allowing examination of societies sharing regional, colonial and small-state characteristics while displaying different institutional and developmental outcomes. The second layer comprises intra-African comparisons among stronger, intermediate and weaker performers, allowing the research to identify variation among countries predominantly governed by Black political leadership. The third layer compares selected Caribbean and African cases to determine whether common institutional mechanisms operate across geographically different, Black-led postcolonial societies. The fourth layer introduces theoretically selected non-Black-led postcolonial comparators to determine whether similar mechanisms of institutional success or failure operate independently of leadership racial classification. This nested structure strengthens causal interpretation cause progressively broader comparisons can determine which explanations are country-specific, region-specific, historically specific or potentially generalisable across political and racial contexts.

Case selection guided by a predefined set of analytical dimensions to ensure that comparisons remain systematic rather than impressionistic. These dimensions include colonial experience, colonising power, independence trajectory, plantation or extractive economic inheritance, natural-resource endowment, population size, geographic characteristics, political regime,

leadership structure, state capacity, economic diversification, corruption, rule of law, inequality and human-development performance. Governance characteristics are triangulated using qualitative evidence and internationally comparable indicators such as the Worldwide Governance Indicators, which measure voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law and control of corruption across more than 200 economies (World Bank, 2025c). Quantitative indicators do not determine causal conclusions but assist in identifying meaningful similarities, differences and outlying cases requiring deeper qualitative examination. Historical and documentary evidence is then used to explain how the observed configurations developed and why apparently similar countries subsequently followed divergent trajectories. This procedure connects country selection directly to the systematic qualitative methodology and reduces the possibility that cases are selected retrospectively according to whether their outcomes support the researcher's expectations.

The final number of cases is determined by the principle of **analytical sufficiency rather than numerical representativeness**, cause the objective is explanatory depth rather than statistical generalisation to every country governed by leaders belonging to a particular racial category. Including too many countries would risk converting the study into superficial descriptive comparison, whereas too few cases could prevent meaningful evaluation of competing explanations and negative evidence. A core design comprising Jamaica and a strategically selected group of Caribbean, African and non-Black-led postcolonial comparators can provide sufficient variation while permitting detailed historical and institutional analysis. Additional countries may be incorporated where preliminary documentary analysis identifies a theoretically significant deviant case or where an existing comparison cannot adequately discriminate among competing explanations. Every included country consequently requires an explicit written justification connecting its selection to at least one research question, theoretical proposition or comparative function. The resulting case-selection strategy therefore prioritises theoretical relevance, falsifiability and comparative leverage over the construction of a large but analytically shallow international sample.

Ultimately, the comparative case-selection strategy is designed to answer a substantially more sophisticated question than whether Black-led countries perform better or worse than countries governed predominantly by non-Black political leaders. The central analytical objective is to determine why societies sharing historical disadvantages sometimes diverge dramatically and why societies possessing substantially different racial and cultural characteristics sometimes develop similar governance problems or developmental achievements. Cases such as Botswana and Mauritius provide critical evidence against deterministic racial interpretations, while Jamaica provides an intermediate democratic case in which important institutional achievements coexist with unresolved structural challenges. Caribbean comparisons allow historically related small states to be examined under relatively controlled conditions, African comparisons maximise variation within Black political leadership, and non-Black-led postcolonial cases provide tests of whether identified mechanisms transcend racial categories. Through this architecture, the racial identity of leadership comes as one observed characteristic embedded within a substantially broader configuration of history, institutions, political incentives, state capacity and economic structure rather than the presumed explanation of national performance. The comparative design

therefore directly operationalises the study's research gap by determining whether the apparent Black-leadership phenomenon survives systematic examination of the institutional and historical mechanisms capable of providing alternative explanations.

Measuring Policies Against the Masses: The Mass-Oriented Policy Index

A major methodological contribution of the study is the proposed **Mass-Oriented Policy Index (MOPI)** designed to operationalise the proposition that some governments pursue policies insufficiently aligned with the socioeconomic interests of the majority population. The construct avoids ideological assumptions by measuring observable distributional consequences rather than defining left-wing, centrist, market-oriented or state-oriented policies as inherently pro- or anti-population. Candidate dimensions include social-expenditure progressivity, effective healthcare and educational access, real labour-income growth, employment quality, tax incidence, social-protection coverage, housing affordability, poverty reduction, inequality change and accessibility of essential public services (Sen, 1999). Each component can be normalised and aggregated through theoretically established weights, principal-component analysis, exploratory factor analysis or confirmatory factor analysis depending on the dimensionality and psychometric behaviour of the resulting measures. Sensitivity analysis should determine whether national rankings change materially under alternative weighting schemes so that substantive conclusions do not come as artefacts of a particular index-construction procedure. MOPI consequently extends conventional governance measurement by investigating not merely whether governments function efficiently but **whose socioeconomic welfare measurably improves because of public policy**.

Jamaica in Comparative Perspective

Jamaica represents an analytically important case cause its post-independence experience demonstrates both the achievements and limitations of political sovereignty within a small, open economy historically shaped by plantation production, slavery and British colonialism. The plantation economy perspective provides an especially important Caribbean contribution by demonstrating how economic structures organised around external demand, concentrated ownership, imported inputs and dependent production can continue to shape postcolonial developmental possibilities long after the achievement of formal political independence (Beckford, 1972). Beckford's (1972) analysis is particularly relevant cause plantation economies were historically organised around production for external markets rather than the integrated development of domestic productive capabilities, thereby creating structural relationships that could persist beyond colonial rule. Lewis (1954) similarly identified structural characteristics of developing economies that constrained productive transformation and employment creation, although his dual-sector framework placed greater emphasis on the movement of surplus labour towards higher-productivity activities. Jamaica's historical incorporation into the international economy therefore preceded political independence and created economic structures whose transformation required considerably more than the transfer of governmental authority from colonial administrators to nationally elected leaders. Consequently, Jamaica's developmental trajectory must be situated within the historical political economy of the Caribbean rather than

interpreted exclusively through the racial identity, competence or behaviour of its post-independence political leadership.

Political independence in 1962 represented a fundamental transformation in Jamaica's constitutional status, but sovereignty did not automatically eliminate the institutional, economic and social structures inherited from colonialism. Post-independence governments inherited a society characterised by substantial socioeconomic inequalities, externally oriented productive structures and institutional arrangements developed under British colonial administration, while simultaneously assuming responsibility for expanding education, healthcare, infrastructure, employment and social mobility. From a historical-institutionalist perspective, this distinction is important cause political institutions and economic arrangements established during earlier historical periods may influence subsequent developmental pathways through processes of institutional persistence and path dependence (Mahoney, 2000; North, 1990). The Jamaican experience therefore illustrates the difference between **political decolonisation**, involving the constitutional transfer of sovereign authority, and **developmental transformation**, involving fundamental changes in productive capacity, institutional effectiveness and the distribution of socioeconomic opportunities. This distinction does not imply that contemporary developmental difficulties should be attributed indefinitely to colonialism because post-independence governments possess meaningful agency to strengthen, reproduce or reform inherited institutions (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). Rather, it requires the analysis to distinguish carefully between historically inherited constraints and the policy choices made by successive Jamaican governments within those constraints.

One of Jamaica's most important post-independence achievements has been the persistence of competitive electoral democracy and constitutional government despite periods of considerable political and socioeconomic tension. Jamaica's political system continues to be characterised by competitive elections and orderly rotations of governmental power, distinguishing it from postcolonial states that experienced repeated military coups, prolonged authoritarian government or extensive interruptions of constitutional rule (Freedom House, 2025). This democratic continuity represents an important institutional asset cause peaceful political competition creates mechanisms through which governments can be replaced without fundamental disruption of the constitutional order. Nevertheless, democratic persistence should not be equated automatically with high-quality governance cause competitive elections can coexist with corruption, clientelism, institutional weaknesses, crime and substantial inequalities in citizens' capacity to influence political outcomes (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012; Freedom House, 2025). Jamaica consequently demonstrates why procedural democracy, and developmental effectiveness should be treated as related but analytically distinct dimensions of political performance. Its experience allows the present study to investigate whether durable electoral institutions are sufficient for socioeconomic transformation or whether democracy must be accompanied by stronger state capacity, institutional accountability and productive transformation to generate sustained improvements in national welfare.

Jamaica's economic history further demonstrates why political stability does not necessarily translate automatically into sustained high economic growth or structural transformation. The country has experienced extended periods of relatively weak economic growth and productivity

performance, with structural constraints limiting the pace at which increases in national output translate into sustained improvements in living standards (World Bank, 2022). The World Bank's Systematic Country Diagnostic identified longstanding structural constraints to growth and noted that Jamaica's real GDP per capita in 2019 remained low compared to its historical 1972 peak, illustrating the depth and persistence of the country's growth challenge (World Bank, 2022). These circumstances are particularly important for the present study because they demonstrate that political sovereignty and democratic continuity can coexist with persistent limitations in productive transformation. Developmental-state scholarship suggests that successful structural transformation generally requires capable institutions, strategic coordination between public and private actors, productive investment and bureaucratic capacity extending beyond the maintenance of electoral institutions alone (Evans, 1995). Jamaica's experience should therefore be assessed partly according to whether successive governments have developed institutional arrangements capable of shifting economic activity towards increasingly productive, technologically sophisticated and internationally competitive sectors.

Fiscal constraints constitute another important component of Jamaica's post-independence developmental experience, as high public debt has historically reduced the fiscal space available for developmental expenditure and increased the importance of macroeconomic adjustment. Debt servicing can create difficult policy trade-offs where governments must simultaneously maintain fiscal credibility, provide essential public services, invest in infrastructure and respond to demands for improved living standards. Jamaica's experience with fiscal consolidation demonstrates that macroeconomic stabilisation can constitute an important developmental achievement while remaining analytically distinct from broader structural and social transformation. The World Bank has recognised Jamaica's significant progress in macroeconomic management and debt reduction while continuing to identify structural constraints affecting growth, resilience and poverty reduction (World Bank, 2022). This distinction is theoretically important cause fiscal stability creates conditions favourable to development but does not by itself guarantee productivity growth, equitable opportunity, institutional effectiveness or improved household welfare. Jamaica therefore provides a valuable case for investigating whether macroeconomic discipline translates into the institutional and productive capabilities necessary for sustained and broadly distributed development.

The distribution of developmental gains constitutes an equally important consideration cause improvements in macroeconomic indicators cannot alone establish whether ordinary citizens experience corresponding improvements in material well-being. Jamaica has achieved important periods of poverty reduction, yet these gains have proven vulnerable to economic shocks, with the national poverty rate increasing from 11.0 per cent in 2019 to 16.7 per cent in 2021 following the COVID-19 crisis (World Bank, 2024). Inequality also remained substantial, with the World Bank reporting a Gini index of approximately 40.2 for 2021, demonstrating continuing disparities in the distribution of economic resources and opportunities (World Bank, 2024). These patterns reinforce Sen's (1999) argument that development should be evaluated through improvements in substantive capabilities and human welfare rather than exclusively through increases in aggregate national income. They are also directly relevant to the proposed Mass-Oriented Policy Index cause national economic performance should be evaluated partly

according to the extent to which improvements reach lower- and middle-income households rather than remaining concentrated among economically advantaged groups. Jamaica therefore offers an important setting for distinguishing **economic recovery, macroeconomic stability and aggregate growth from inclusive developmental transformation**.

Crime and violence represent additional constraints on Jamaica's developmental capacity cause their consequences extend beyond immediate threats to personal security and influence investment, human capital, institutional trust, household welfare and the allocation of public resources. Jamaica has experienced persistently high levels of violent crime, and international assessments continue to identify violence as an important challenge alongside concerns about corruption and links between political and criminal actors (Freedom House, 2025). High levels of violence can impose direct economic costs on businesses and households while requiring governments to allocate substantial fiscal and administrative resources towards policing, security, justice and correctional institutions. Crime can additionally weaken social capital and confidence in public institutions when citizens perceive that governments are unable to provide security consistently across communities. These relationships demonstrate that national development cannot be evaluated solely through conventional economic indicators cause security constitutes both an intrinsic component of human welfare and an enabling condition for productive economic activity (Sen, 1999). Jamaica's crime challenge must consequently be incorporated into comparative analysis as part of the broader interaction among state capacity, institutional legitimacy, social inequality and developmental performance.

Governance and corruption similarly require nuanced treatment cause Jamaica combines relatively durable democratic institutions with persistent concerns regarding public accountability and institutional integrity. Contemporary assessments recognise Jamaica as an electoral democracy while simultaneously identifying corruption as a continuing governance challenge, illustrating that democratic competition does not automatically eliminate opportunities for misuse of public authority (Freedom House, 2025). The relevant analytical question is therefore not whether corruption exists exclusively within Black-led political systems, but which institutional arrangements create incentives and opportunities for corruption, and which mechanisms successfully constrain them. Research on institutions suggests that effective accountability requires more than formal laws; enforcement capacity, judicial independence, bureaucratic professionalism, transparency and credible sanctions determine whether institutional rules meaningfully constrain political behaviour (North, 1990; Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016). Jamaica should accordingly be compared with countries possessing different racial and demographic compositions but similar accountability problems to determine whether common institutional mechanisms produce comparable outcomes. Such comparison moves the study away from racial attribution and towards an empirically testable analysis of the institutional conditions under which political authority comes accountable.

State capacity constitutes another critical explanatory dimension cause governments cannot implement developmental objectives effectively without competent administrative institutions capable of converting political decisions into sustained programmes and measurable outcomes. Evans (1995) demonstrated that developmental transformation requires states possessing sufficient bureaucratic capability to formulate strategies, coordinate economic actors and

implement policies while remaining connected to productive sectors of society. Jamaica possesses substantial administrative and professional capabilities, including established governmental institutions and a national planning architecture, but institutional capability can vary considerably across agencies, policy domains and historical periods. The Planning Institute of Jamaica occupies an important position within this architecture through its responsibility for initiating and coordinating policies, plans and programmes directed towards sustainable national development (Planning Institute of Jamaica [PIOJ], n.d.). The central issue is therefore not whether a Jamaican state exists in a formal institutional sense but whether state organisations consistently possess the technical capability, autonomy, resources and accountability required to deliver intended developmental outcomes. Comparative analysis should consequently examine variations in implementation capacity rather than evaluating governmental performance solely through policy announcements or legislative enactments.

Vision 2030 Jamaica provides a particularly important institutional expression of the country's attempt to move from fragmented policymaking towards integrated long-term national development planning. The national development plan conceptualises Jamaica's desired future through four national goals and 15 national outcomes and explicitly incorporates principles concerning sustainability, equity, inclusion, justice and good governance (Planning Institute of Jamaica [PIOJ], n.d.). Its framework recognises that economic growth alone cannot guarantee broadly shared development and therefore incorporates social, environmental, institutional and human dimensions into national planning. Vision 2030 also employs a National Outcome Indicator Framework through which progress towards developmental objectives can be monitored against baselines and medium- and long-term targets (PIOJ, n.d.). This results-oriented architecture is directly relevant to the Institution-Leadership-Development Transformation Framework proposed in the present study because it demonstrates an existing Jamaican attempt to connect public policy, measurable outcomes and long-term development beyond individual electoral cycles. The comparative research should therefore examine not only the quality of Jamaica's developmental plans but also the institutional conditions affecting implementation, continuity, evaluation and translation of national strategies into measurable improvements in citizens' lives.

Jamaica's status as a small island developing state adds another layer of complexity cause domestic institutional performance occurs within structural conditions that differ substantially from those confronting large continental economies. Small island developing states frequently face narrow production structures, limited domestic markets, substantial dependence on international trade and tourism, high transportation costs, climate-related vulnerabilities and pronounced exposure to external economic shocks (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development [UNCTAD], 2021). Such vulnerabilities can constrain developmental options even where domestic governments demonstrate reasonable institutional competence cause external events can rapidly affect fiscal revenues, employment, foreign exchange earnings and household welfare. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated these vulnerabilities particularly clearly for tourism-dependent Caribbean economies, while climate change and extreme weather events create additional long-term risks for infrastructure, agriculture, public finance and coastal communities (UNCTAD, 2021). Jamaica's performance should therefore not be compared

uncritically with substantially larger and more diversified economies without accounting for structural characteristics associated with size, geography and international economic exposure. Incorporating small-state vulnerability into the comparative framework prevents institutional or leadership explanations from being credited with developmental differences that may partly reflect fundamentally different structural constraints.

These vulnerabilities simultaneously strengthen rather than diminish the importance of institutional quality cause countries facing substantial external risks require capable governments to build resilience, diversify economic activity and manage shocks effectively. Institutional capacity influences whether external disturbances come as temporary setbacks or generate prolonged developmental reversals through the quality of fiscal management, social protection, disaster preparedness, infrastructure investment and economic diversification. UNCTAD (2021) emphasised that the structural vulnerabilities of small island developing states are compounded by external shocks, commodity-price fluctuations, climate change and unequal participation in global production networks. The relevant Jamaican question is consequently not whether external vulnerability can be eliminated but whether public institutions progressively increase the country's capacity to absorb, adapt to and recover from such disturbances. This perspective also provides a more balanced evaluation of political leadership cause governments should be assessed partly according to their management of constraints that cannot reasonably be attributed to domestic policymaking. Jamaica's comparative performance should therefore be evaluated through a framework that simultaneously recognises **structural vulnerability and political agency**, rather than treating either as a complete explanation.

Jamaica's inclusion in the study also provides an opportunity to reconsider the relationship between descriptive political representation and substantive socioeconomic transformation within predominantly Black societies. Political control by members of the demographic majority represents an important achievement of national sovereignty and postcolonial self-government while remaining analytically distinct from the state's capacity to generate productive transformation and broadly distributed improvements in living standards. The critical question is therefore not simply whether political leaders resemble the majority population racially but whether governing institutions create incentives, capabilities and accountability mechanisms that encourage leaders to deliver measurable public value. This distinction permits critical evaluation of Jamaica's post-independence governments without implying that governance weaknesses arise because those governments have predominantly been led by Black Jamaicans. It redirects analytical attention towards institutional accountability, policy continuity, bureaucratic competence, economic diversification, political incentives, elite relationships and the distribution of national resources (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012; Evans, 1995). Jamaica thereby comes as an important test of the proposition that descriptive representation and national sovereignty are politically significant achievements but are not sufficient conditions for inclusive socioeconomic transformation.

The Jamaican case is particularly useful for testing the study's Black-leadership proposition cause several features that might otherwise be conflated are simultaneously observable within one national experience. Jamaica is predominantly Black, has been governed overwhelmingly by Black political leaders since independence, possesses a history of slavery and plantation

colonialism, maintains competitive democratic institutions and operates as a small economy highly exposed to international markets. Any attempt to attribute its contemporary developmental constraints simply to the racial identity of its political leadership would therefore encounter a severe identification problem, as leadership race overlaps with numerous historical, institutional and structural characteristics. Comparative historical analysis provides a means of partially disentangling these relationships by examining Jamaica alongside Black-led countries exhibiting stronger and weaker developmental performance and non-Black-led countries experiencing comparable institutional or structural challenges. Negative cases are especially important cause successful, Black-led societies would contradict deterministic racial explanations, while poorly performing non-Black-led societies would demonstrate that institutional failure is not confined to any racial leadership category (Mahoney & Goertz, 2004). Jamaica should therefore function as an analytical case through which competing racial, institutional, historical and structural explanations are tested rather than as evidence selected in advance to substantiate any one interpretation.

A particularly valuable comparative strategy would position Jamaica alongside other Caribbean and small postcolonial states that share selected historical characteristics while displaying different developmental outcomes. Such comparisons can help determine whether differences in institutional effectiveness, economic diversification, educational investment, administrative capacity, political accountability or long-term development planning explain divergent trajectories among societies exposed to related colonial and international structures. Comparisons with selected African states can subsequently determine whether similar institutional mechanisms operate across geographically different Black-led societies, while comparisons with non-Black-led postcolonial states can test whether those mechanisms transcend racial categories. Most-Similar Systems Design is especially valuable for the first type of comparison cause cases sharing important historical characteristics but exhibiting different outcomes can reveal explanatory factors associated with their divergence (Meckstroth, 1975). Most-Different Systems Design complements this approach by determining whether similar governance or developmental outcomes arise across societies possessing markedly different racial, geographic and cultural characteristics (Meckstroth, 1975). Jamaica consequently comes part of a nested comparative strategy designed to identify mechanisms rather than merely classify countries according to the racial identities of their political leaders.

The ultimate significance of Jamaica lies in the tension between **political achievement and incomplete developmental transformation**, rather than in a simple narrative of national success or failure. The country has maintained competitive democracy, constitutional continuity, significant administrative institutions and an established long-term national development framework while simultaneously confronting structural economic constraints, inequality, crime, corruption concerns and vulnerability to external shocks (Freedom House, 2025; PIOJ, n.d.; World Bank, 2022). These apparently contradictory characteristics make Jamaica theoretically valuable cause they demonstrate that institutional development is multidimensional and that progress within one domain does not necessarily generate equivalent progress across all others. The Jamaican experience therefore supports a broader conception of development in which democratic governance, state capability, productive transformation, social inclusion, security,

resilience and institutional accountability must interact if political sovereignty is to generate sustained improvements in human welfare. Within the Institution-Leadership-Development Transformation Framework, Jamaica can consequently be interpreted as an intermediate case in which significant institutional achievements coexist with unresolved structural and developmental constraints. Its comparative importance ultimately lies in helping determine which institutional reforms and productive transformations could convert the achievements of political sovereignty into deeper forms of developmental autonomy and broadly shared national prosperity.

Reconsidering the Black-Leadership Hypothesis

The strongest scientifically testable interpretation of the original observation is not that Black people are intrinsically less capable of governing but that countries presently governed by Black political elites may be disproportionately located within historically disadvantaged institutional and economic structures. This distinction transforms race from an asserted causal essence into an observed characteristic whose apparent explanatory significance can be statistically and historically decomposed. If the estimated association between Black political leadership and weak development disappears after institutional and historical controls are introduced, the evidence would contradict an independent racial explanation and support institutional or structural mechanisms. If an association persists, further analysis would still be necessary to identify omitted mechanisms generating that relationship rather than automatically attributing causality to race. Comparatively successful Black-led states constitute particularly powerful falsification tests cause their existence demonstrates that neither Black political authority nor predominantly African-descended populations mechanically generate institutional failure. Scientific credibility therefore requires the research to search as aggressively for evidence contradicting its motivating observation as for evidence supporting it.

The corresponding comparison with predominantly Caucasian-led states must be treated with equivalent analytical caution cause wealthy Western countries cannot be considered a homogeneous control group whose contemporary prosperity arose independently of history. Many Western states experienced industrialisation substantially earlier than contemporary developing countries and accumulated institutional, technological and infrastructural advantages over lengthy periods, sometimes within imperial and colonial economic systems. Directly comparing contemporary outcomes without incorporating those historical differences would therefore risk attributing accumulated developmental advantages to the racial characteristics of present leaders. Conversely, not all predominantly non-Black-led states are prosperous, institutionally effective or minimally corrupt, making systematic inclusion of weaker-performing comparator states essential for testing the racial hypothesis. A scientifically useful design must therefore compare variation **within** as well as **between** leadership categories while explicitly modelling relevant historical and institutional characteristics. The objective is ultimately to determine whether race explains developmental performance after competing explanations have been given a meaningful empirical opportunity to account for the observed variation.

Institutional Transformation and Development Framework

The developmental implications emerging from the ILDTF centre on transforming relationships among political authority, institutions and productive capacity rather than changing the racial identity of political leaders. The first pillar is **institutional constraint**, requiring transparent procurement, credible anti-corruption enforcement, independent oversight, judicial autonomy, public financial accountability and effective management of conflicts of interest (Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016). The second pillar is **state capability**, requiring meritocratic public administration, technically competent ministries, reliable administrative data, long-term policy planning and systematic programme evaluation (Evans, 1995). The third pillar is **productive transformation**, requiring movement away from excessive dependence on commodities, tourism, low-productivity services or externally vulnerable sectors towards higher-value production, technological capability, entrepreneurship and internationally competitive activities. The fourth pillar is **mass-centred development**, requiring economic growth to translate demonstrably into employment quality, household security, education, health, housing, public safety and intergenerational mobility (Sen, 1999). The fifth pillar is **democratic accountability**, strengthening citizens' capacity to monitor governments, access public information, sanction poor performance and participate meaningfully in decisions affecting national development.

For Jamaica specifically, developmental transformation should consequently be evaluated through measurable institutional, productive and human outcomes rather than electoral promises or aggregate economic growth alone. Governments should be assessed according to whether public institutions become more effective, opportunities for corruption decline, productivity increases, employment becomes more secure, and household living conditions improve across socioeconomic groups. Long-term national planning should be protected as far as practicable from destructive electoral discontinuities while remaining subject to democratic oversight, transparency and periodic evidence-based revision. Public policy should explicitly distinguish economic growth that expands aggregate national output from development that expands capabilities, economic security and meaningful opportunities available to ordinary citizens (Sen, 1999). Jamaica could consequently provide an empirical laboratory for developing a postcolonial developmental-state framework appropriate to democratic small-island societies rather than mechanically importing institutional arrangements developed under radically different historical conditions. Such an approach shifts national discussion from who governs towards the more consequential questions of how institutions govern, whose interests policies serve and what measurable transformations governments produce.

Expected Contribution to Knowledge

The current study makes a theoretical contribution by separating racial leadership identity from institutional, historical and behavioural explanations of national development within a unified comparative framework. Its empirical contribution lies in testing whether the frequently asserted relationship between Black political governance and underdevelopment survives systematic adjustment for characteristics geographically and historically correlated with racial leadership. Its methodological contribution involves integrating longitudinal cross-national analysis, matched comparisons, within-category counterexamples and intensive comparative case studies rather

than relying on simple cross-sectional racial comparisons. Its measurement contribution is the proposed Mass-Oriented Policy Index, which attempts to quantify whether governmental policies generate broadly distributed socioeconomic benefits rather than evaluating governance exclusively through aggregate macroeconomic performance. Its Caribbean contribution lies in positioning Jamaica within global comparative-development scholarship while simultaneously incorporating intellectual traditions emerging from Caribbean political economy rather than treating Jamaica as an isolated national case. Finally, its policy contribution is the Institution-Leadership-Development Transformation Framework, which identifies institutional capability, accountability, productive transformation and mass-centred development as potentially actionable mechanisms through which historically disadvantaged states may alter their developmental trajectories.

Limitations

Several limitations must be recognised cause the proposed analysis addresses concepts that are both theoretically complex and empirically difficult to measure. First, racial classification of political leaders is socially constructed and may become particularly ambiguous in multiracial societies, meaning that classification procedures must be transparent, replicable and subjected to alternative specifications. Second, governance indicators frequently incorporate perception-based measures and therefore contain measurement uncertainty, an issue explicitly recognised within the construction of the Worldwide Governance Indicators (World Bank, 2025a). Third, cross-national observational research cannot eliminate omitted-variable bias, reverse causality or unobserved heterogeneity even when sophisticated panel and matching techniques are employed. Fourth, the proposed Mass-Oriented Policy Index require extensive validation before it can be interpreted as a reliable cross-national measure of distributionally inclusive governmental policy. Fifth, countries possess unique historical trajectories that cannot be fully captured by quantitative indicators, thereby necessitating qualitative historical analysis alongside statistical modelling. These limitations do not invalidate the proposed research but require careful interpretation, robustness analysis and explicit avoidance of deterministic causal claims.

Conclusion

The developmental difficulties experienced by numerous African and Caribbean societies constitute legitimate subjects for rigorous comparative inquiry, but explanations based principally on the racial identity of political leaders are theoretically insufficient and require empirical testing rather than presumption. Race overlaps historically with colonialism, slavery, global economic hierarchy, geography, state formation and institutional inheritance, meaning that crude comparisons can easily attribute to race effects generated through substantially different mechanisms (Acemoglu et al., 2001; Nunn, 2008). At the same time, colonial history cannot provide contemporary political elites with permanent exemption from accountability cause governments retain meaningful agency over institutions, corruption, public investment, education, administration and productive transformation (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012; Evans, 1995). The appropriate scientific question therefore concerns how inherited structures interact with contemporary leadership choices, institutional constraints and political incentives to produce divergent national trajectories. Jamaica's experience, situated alongside successful and

unsuccessful African, Caribbean and global comparator countries, provides a valuable setting for disentangling these relationships and developing an institutional transformation model relevant to postcolonial states. Sustainable development ultimately requires moving beyond racial determinism towards identifying the institutional arrangements through which political authority of any racial identity can be constrained, rendered competent, held accountable and directed towards expanding the capabilities and welfare of the population.

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