Reappraising the Legacy of Colonialism: A Response to Feyrer and Sacerdote

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Abstract A recent paper by Feyrer & Sacerdote (2006) argues that the legacy of colonialism in a sample of 80 small islands is positive rather than negative, in the sense that a long period as a colony in the 18th and 19th centuries correlates positively with present-day incomes and low infant mortality rates. Remaining a colony to the end of the 20th century is also positive for income. Colonial rule in the 17th and 20th centuries has no impact. This review essay relates Feyrer & Sacerdote's work to other recent, cross-country research on the linkages between colonialism and development, and offers some criticisms of their data and conclusions. An interesting ongoing debate, as well as plenty of opportunities for further research along these lines, are anticipated. Keywords: islands, colonialism, economic development, institutions, legacy, wind Copyright © 2007 Institute of Island Studies, University of Prince Edward Island, Canada.

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