Savagely Factious

Commercial Integration and Social Conflict in Colonial Massachusetts

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I. Introduction

The stated aims of the first political leaders of the Massachusetts Bay Colony played a limited role in the development of the colony in the first generation of settlement. The Bay Colony government wished to project their theocratic worldview onto the colonial society and environment, but they failed to constrain intercolonial factionalism almost from the moment of settlement. Ideals proved malleable under the dual conditions of resource constraints and competing interests. As a result, the ability of a Puritan elite could only maintain authority by reshaping spiritual language to fit the changing conditions of colonial society. Market relations and competition caused much of this social disruption to which authorities responded through the whole of the colonial period albeit on a progressively larger scale. Puritan theocratic authorities had to respond to commercial incentives to maintain their political legitimacy. Commerce had a social mandate which meant that, despite traditionalist rhetoric, the colony effectively developed from aggregated individual incentives that most often eschewed economic controls of the theological elite. The exception to this rule occurred when some faction of colonists saw an instrumental purpose in such controls that might benefit their interests relative to rivals.

Elite colonial families like the Winthrops and Mathers adapted effectively to commercialization and economic development for decades to maintain wealth and political authority. They managed this by repurposing theocratic language to every new conflict in which New England Puritans collected in opposition to some external *other* against whom they competed for control over resources. Through the seventeenth century, these external groups included indigenous neighbors and competing European colonists like the Dutch and later French. From the perspective of the Puritan theocratic elite, promoting unified colonial identities

in reference to external cultures refocused animosities outward and, therefore, promoting internal cohesion and reducing threats to established authority.

Because colonial cohesion, and political legitimacy, depended on external conflicts, the Massachusetts elite faced two persistent threats to their influence. First, intermittent periods of peace caused political shocks when cohesion that depended on external threats reverted to localism and atomism. Second, Massachusetts elites, who themselves relied on global commercial connections, nonetheless depended on hard limits to economic globalization. The arrival of newcomers with connections to more extensive Atlantic market networks disrupted the distribution of economic influence. Newcomers also introduced competing cosmopolitan cultural norms that eroded the moral authority of Puritan orthodoxy. In the last two decades of the seventeenth century, both threats to the Bay Colony elite occurred simultaneously. Colonial New England achieved a brief regional hegemony after King Philip's War and the English usurpation of Dutch commercial networks in New York and southern New England. Simultaneously, English financial commercialism made inroads in coastal Massachusetts along with the intrusion of more extensive imperial oversight. It is under these conditions that the dominant Puritan elite, like the minister Cotton Mather, created a narrative of decline that recast the early years of settlement as a socially cohesive time when a spiritual generation sacrificed individualist impulses for the good of a stable Puritan orthodoxy. The previous decades, however, did not actually reflect this characterization. The political and ecclesiastical order had no consistent unified tradition and instead proved wholly adaptive to the socioeconomic substructure of a developing colony. However, the retrospective narratives of Mather and others proved influential into the eighteenth century as colonial elites used it to promote a sense of identity against competing influence in Britain and rival colonial powers like the French.

The turn of the eighteenth century saw a partial resolution of dialectical tensions between colonial culture and a competing metropolitan culture increasingly influential in Atlantic markets. Eighteenth-century Massachusetts saw a synthesis between colonial interests and imperial interests producing a new culture which balanced town corporatism, ecclesiastical independence, and the increased commercial connectedness of British Atlantic markets. The contradictory forces of colonial provincialism and transatlantic economic imperialism continued to compete through the eighteenth century. However, just as in the seventeenth century, antagonistic forces remained united against common enemies like the French, Spanish, Wabanaki, Abenaki, and others. Meanwhile, however, financialization eroded local communities who increasingly participated in economic networks of far greater geographic scale. Consequently, just as in the seventeenth century, this commercial integration caused tensions between entrenched elites and a more cosmopolitan culture attached to imperial politics. Just as periods of intermittent peace caused political shocks in the seventeenth century, the same occurred in the revolutionary era that began after British subjects achieved hegemony in North America following the defeat of the French around 1763. Without the common enemy, provincial interests turned against imperial interests in a culmination of the longstanding social tensions emerging from eighteenth-century financial globalization.

Just as Cotton Mather did eighty years earlier, new colonial ideologues like James Otis and John Adams, created a narrative of a longstanding, cohesive, tradition and culture that gave a retroactive pedigree to the rights and rules they viewed as an inherent part of New England society. Just like Mather's assessment, this new ideology mapped a cohesive tradition and unity onto a past where disconnected and competing factions prevailed. This time, however, the provincial interest had far more economic power for self-determination against competing

British imperialism because of the colony's domestic commercial and financial development. Influential revolutionary commercial agents, like the Boston cooper and trader Joshua Pico, held far more extensive economic influence in Massachusetts relative to merchants with connections more directly attached to England. The revolutionary triumph of provincial politics in the American Revolution depended on this commercial substructure in which local interests proved so dominant by the by the 1760s.

In American collective memory, colonial New England, as a concept, contains the imagined cultural continuities and social unity that figures like Cotton Mather, John Adams, James Otis, and many others projected onto a chaotic, factional, past. To various degrees, and in different ways, this retroactively constructed concept of New England survives in modern historiography. Specifically, the continuity of the idea of a homogenous and stable New England with social controls over markets has produced four distortions in conventional interpretations of colonial New England. First, historians often emphasize the ability of a spiritual elite to successfully exercise theocratic control over individualist competition. Relatedly, the second distortion represents a specific transition to a market culture at some point in the colonial period or early republic in which colonists moved from a pre-capitalist to capitalist economic culture and a new mode of production. However, such an emphasis on transition distorts how competition over resources, pricing, and access to financial networks existed in colonial society from the beginning along with insipient, yet resilient, export markets for fish existent before any permanent settlement. While the economy of the late eighteenth century appeared more materially productive than that of the mid-seventeenth, this was a difference of economic scale not economic type. Thirdly, many historical interpretations emphasize piety as normative, and consequently, a stabilizing force promoting cultural homogeneity. Many Massachusetts colonists

saw themselves as pious Puritans, and created a language to express this sentiment accordingly, but difference and conflict lay underneath this language. Piety often served as an instrument that one could use to vie for authority among competing factions. Compared with England and British colonies, New England Puritanism did not preclude individualism, nor did New Englanders interact in any fundamentally different way. This leads to the fourth historiographic distortion which is giving regionalism determinative power over individual action. New England differed from England and other regions in certain geographic factors like climate, resources, proximity to competing societies, natural harbors, and much else. However, the people themselves operated much like anyone else in their most basic material motivations, and spiritual dictates did not override this. Consequently, it also follows that a distinctive regional tradition could not shape subsequent politics that did not emerge organically from the immediate concerns of the generation alive at the time. New Englanders could reinterpret old ideas for new purposes, but ideas did not create these purposes. New England elites vying for influence had to respond to conditions at the current state of social development even if they called on the cultural memory of earlier cultures to bolster their legitimacy. Reading this cultural memory as reflective of regular life produces leads to an overemphasis on membership within a political body. The relations that mattered to Massachusetts colonists were peer-to-peer conflicts and mutual reliance. To try to fit colonists too rigidly into regional groups ultimately mischaracterizes the historical importance of individuals and internal factions.

II. Puritan Rhetoric and the Material Realities of Settlement in the 1630s

In 1630, while crossing the Atlantic onboard the *Arbella* just prior to the settlement of Boston, the Puritan lawyer, and later governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, John Winthrop Sr. wrote a sermon titled "A Modell of Christian Charity" in which he commented on the

material and spiritual condition of the Puritan migrants to New England. Winthrop began the sermon with the line "God almighty in his most holy and wise providence, hath so disposed of the condition of mankind, as in all times some must be rich, some poor, some high and eminent in power and dignity; others mean and in submission." To Winthrop, a Puritan social hierarchy entered the Massachusetts Bay Colony as a natural, perpetual, and pre-ordained truth. As he entered the new colony with the intention of creating a town and a social code centred on traditional Puritan norms, Winthrop sought to determine the means through which the earliest colonists would fit into this hierarchical paradigm. From that time on, all subsequent settlers entered, at least initially, the socio-economic world of Winthrop's vision, and the hierarchy of the first group of Bay Colonists. If newcomers took issue with the existing social state, they either needed to form and opposition group or isolate themselves to a degree that they might operate with some degree of autonomy. In the earliest years of Bay Colony settlement, the latter would prove an effective possibility for those seeking separation from Boston's coastal political dominance.[1]

In his sermon on the *Arbella*, Winthrop claimed that the settlers existed in a state of mutual need. To Winthrop, the social goal of settlement in the Bay Colony was to create a community in which everyone was "knit more nearly together in the bonds of brotherly affection."[2] According to Winthrop, in Massachusetts, none would be made wealthier or more honourable than any other person out of singular respect to their own self-interest. In this sermon, Winthrop described wealth as a tool for spiritual attainment. Winthrop evoked the image of the Christian Apostle who gave away all earthly possession as part of their religious role. In

[1] John Winthrop, "A Modell of Christian Charity (1630)." Hanover Historical Texts Collection. Online. Accessed June 1, 2018.
[2] Ibid.

Winthrop's sermon, he portrayed the settling of New England as necessitating the same charitable tendencies of early Christianity. To this point Winthrop stated that "If the time and occasion be ordinary [a person] is to give out of his abundance."[3] In extraordinary times, he claimed that one should give up to the point at which the means at which it was probable to maintain a comfortable subsistence.

Winthrop's vision did not exclude those people he perceived as poorer and submissive, as his emphasis on Christian generosity indicated. However, to Winthrop this was foremost a function of collective dependency in which the fortunate philanthropist was the primary actor and their debtor was the passive recipient of their charity. Winthrop's stated aim was minimal material comfort and the capacity of the few and powerful to actualize it.

A specific point which Winthrop expressed in his sermon was the social threat which the usurer posed to Puritan society. According to Winthrop, writing in 1630, one should lend regardless of the debtor's ability to repay. Winthrop separated potential borrowers into two groups. The first were those who needed the loan by necessity. The second were those with the ability to repay, of whom Winthrop stated, "thou art to look at him not as an art of mercy, but by way of commerce, wherein thou art to walk by the rule of justice."[4] Winthrop, however, included another rule in his sermon that superseded other moral considerations. This was adherence to legal agreement. Winthrop conveyed that the pledge, made through formal legal institutions, provided surety of the transaction. Winthrop reserved competition for the wealthy who could strive for material success, and who could use formal agreements to force compliance on each other. The formal process of the law was, from his perspective, a tool of the elite, and

[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.

the common colonist who could not compete enough to throw off the constraints of their need remained dependent on those who could. Winthrop's desired end was the sanctity of his Puritan community which he understood to stand apart from the threats of the outside world. To Winthrop, dependence yielded cohesion, and cohesion allowed for a unified front against the ungodly forces which existed outside the community.

The government of the Bay Colony enacted measures to internalize allegiance both to the political and religious symbols of the colony as well as to the exclusive material wellbeing of its Puritan residents. For example, the government prohibited trading certain goods with Native Americans by law, including gold, silver, or any weapons or munitions. Additionally, the colonial law dictated, in very general, and somewhat vague, terms that betraying the country or any principal fort for the good of a foreign state such as the Spanish, French, or Dutch, would receive a punishment of death. The early Boston minister, John Cotton, described such action as "contrary to the allegiance we owe and profess to our dread sovereign, lord King Charles, his heirs and successors, whilst he is pleased to protect us as his legal subjects."[5] Similarly, in 1631, just one year after his arrival in the Bay Colony, Winthrop compiled a list of reasons for emigrating to New England which he circulated to recruit the religiously and politically sympathetic to undergo the Atlantic voyage to the then sparsely settled, and almost entirely coastal, colony. His foremost justification, at least as stated in the text, appears religious in nature. For example, he claimed that it would be a service to the church to bring the Gospel to a new part of the world.[6] According to his list of reasons, Winthrop believed that this was

[5] John Cotton, "An Abstract of the Laws of New England: As They Are Now Established (Printed in London 1641)." Center for Reformed Theology and Apologetics.
[6] John Winthrop, "Reasons for Emigrating to New England (1631)." Swarthmore College.

necessary to combat the influence of the Anti-Christ which the Jesuits were working to introduce to the Americas.

Winthrop depicted New England as a refuge from the religious chaos of England as well. He wrote that "the Church hath no place left to fly into but the wilderness."[7] To Winthrop, the reasons for emigration were external to the colony itself. If one is to take Winthrop's arguments as representative of the reasons which most Puritan settlers held for moving to the colony, it is evident that the migration occurred not because of the perceived good of the colony itself but because of a Puritan anxiety of what threats existed outside of it. The one notable exception to this pattern, as evidenced in Winthrop's list of reasons, was his assertion that it was a waste to "suffer a whole continent as fruitful and convenient for the use of man to lie waste without improvement."[8] Economic development mattered to Winthrop, but only insofar as it strengthened cohesion and orthodoxy. To him, worldly justifications mattered only after Puritans removed threats to their worldview by retreating into a theoretically pious New England society. The observation of outsiders reveals the failures of this cohesive ideal shorty after the Bay Colony's settlement.

In 1638, eight years after Winthrop's passage on the Arbella, a traveller named John Josselyn sailed for New England. In his account of the journey he first described the nature of the passage itself. He described the vessel as "a ship of good force, of 300 tons…man'd with 48 sailors, the master Robert Taylor, the merchant or undertaker Edward Tynge with 164 passengers men, women, and children."[9] Josselyn's writing, in comparison to Winthrop, had little providentialist language and had as its primary goal the communication of material experience to

[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] John Josselyn, *An Account of Two Voyages to New-England*. (Reprint, Boston, MA: W. Veazie, 1865), 5.

potential migrants in England. He wrote on prices and required tools necessary to establish oneself within the economy and society of the new colony. Arriving in Boston, Josselyn first made note of the natural geography. He described Boston as the metropolis of the colony, situated upon a peninsula, surrounded on all sides by water, and connected to the mainland by a narrow isthmus. He described Boston's hilly appearance, with special reference to the three large hills in the centre of the city, the largest of which was topped with a beacon which would later be its namesake. He additionally described Boston's harbour which he claimed was already full of ships for the most part of the year.[10]

Josselyn's first descriptions of society along the Massachusetts coast consisted largely of commentary on their legal system and means of governance. He stated, for example, that Massachusetts towns organized court meetings into groups of four within one term and that within this same period a General Assembly met to pass laws. He described the means of law enforcement in Boston, whereby a town-elected constable made rounds around the town at nine o'clock at night to observe any potential crime.[11] According to John Cotton, writing in 1634, the magistrates of the General Court were chosen from and by the free burgesses of the colony. Furthermore, Cotton claimed the task of these magistrates, along with the governor, was to direct matters appealed from inferior courts in towns outside Boston and to preserve religion. To Cotton, who arrived in Boston just a few years after its founding, the government which Josselyn would later describe was an extension of religious life and the Puritan moral code, yet in Josselyn's account Cotton's description appeared to conflict with the functional reality of life in Massachusetts's most significant port town.[12]

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[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Cotton, "An Abstract of the Laws of New England."

A characteristic of Boston which Josselyn found surprising was the materialism of the wealthy residents. He wrote that the "great masters, as also some of their merchants are damnable rich; generally all of judgement, inexplicably covetous and proud, they receive your gifts but as homage or tribute due to their transcendence, which is a fault of their clergy are also guilty of, whose living is upon the bounty of their hearers."[13] Furthermore, Josselyn claimed that the locals would not trade with a stranger within their town and lacked generosity. He wrote that the locals were recusant and slow in their payment of debts. Josselyn would leave Boston only to return briefly five years later. In the accounts of his travels to New England, he left potential migrants with tools to navigate the frontier landscape and a description of the powerful members of the colony's society. To Josselyn, they were a people "savagely factious amongst themselves."[14]

III. Settlement, Hierarchy, and Interpreting the Flexibility of Puritan Identity

Those who held political authority in colonial Massachusetts created a narrative of social and religious union which lasted until a general acknowledgement of multicultural social evolution during commercial globalization in the eighteenth century. Unison between New England Puritans did exist periodically at certain locations, but material incentives preceded association along cultural or religious lines. However, Massachusetts's clergy, judges, and governors utilized a narrative centered around covenant theology and the moral ascendency of the Puritan migrants to America which allowed them to create a unified identity by the end of the seventeenth century. They based this identity on a mythical ideal of a historical Puritan society that adhered to a moral economy constraining the individualist, contentious, impulses of rival

[13] Josselyn, *An Account of Two Voyages to New-England.*
[14] Ibid.

political factions and social classes in favor of a common pursuit of transcendent spiritual norms that set the Puritan apart from the emerging commercial and secular modernization of the rest of the Anglophone world. However, this ideal of New England Society emerged from retellings of seventeenth-century events that contained strong conflicting material incentives that later generations reconceptualized around a religious homogeneity, as in the historical account of the third generation Massachusetts minster, Cotton Mather, in his ecclesiastical history *Magnalia Christi Americana*.[15] This later historical ideal of New England society survived in various forms from the end of the seventeenth century to the current day.

A refocus on private commercial sources, demographic data, and correspondence not intended for public audiences, along with critical readings of sermons, legislation, and early histories that look for incentives and faction rather than spiritual narrative and common Puritan religious beliefs that colonists contrasted with other societies like the Dutch, French, Wampanoag, and other English subjects with conflicting religious doctrines.

The eighteenth-century Massachusetts colonist experienced a period of globalization that produced increases in the sizes of interpersonal networks that reformulated colonists' self-perceptions given increase commercial and political information. Such change produced a reformulation of allegiance and ideology, along with increased transatlantic migrations of outsiders, which made the closed Puritan identity of the seventeenth century untenable for later generations of Massachusetts colonists. Commercialism and cosmopolitanism drove social change when financial instruments and legal institutions allowed for global competition to infringe on traditional Bay Colony power structures.

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[15] Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*. eds. Kenneth B. Murdock and Elizabeth W. Miller. (1702; Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1977).

Colonists arrived in North America with a self-identity formed in opposition to English social, economic, and religious orthodoxy. This identity disintegrated across the Atlantic as new frontier concerns to settlers' material wellbeing, along with the absence of a common Anglican enemy, caused Massachusetts Puritans to make enemies of each other in the first decades of colonial settlement. After an initial period of social splintering and town formation, a new cohesive New England identity formed in response to a series of common, external, North American enemies with distinct cultural differences to all New England Puritans. These groups included the Pequot, the Dutch, the Wampanoag, and finally the Catholic French in the eighteenth century. Intermittent periods between these external conflicts saw inter-Puritan conflict among culturally similar settlers competing for resources and generating new ideologies in the process meant to give credit to competing claims. Communal networks split along lines of mutual incentive. This process of identity formation led to a shift at the end of the seventeenth century as these networks combined to create factions of much larger scale. This increase in network scale could exist as the result of the integration of Atlantic markets and imperialist commercialization through the turn of the eighteenth century.

An increasingly uniform transatlantic commercial language centred on financial instruments and contracts devised by merchants and courts allowed a new generation of commercial agents and mariners to challenge the Puritan elite with whom they had evolved in tandem with since the initial English explorations of New England at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Later New England generations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries would continue to draw on the older Puritan narratives to create a mythical self-constructed identity to substantiate claims against the French and then the British during the imperial crisis of the eighteenth century. A Puritan mythos, and distinct New England identity, mapped itself onto

a developing commercial interest group in Massachusetts that vied for authority after political separation from the British Empire.

The social factions of early New England emerged from local group dependence. Family and town units served as the foundational networks upon which subsequent conflict and cooperation occurred. Most relationships, especially in the seventeenth century proved profoundly local. Like experiences in these localities created ideological cohesion, but most disputes also occurred between those who knew each other personally. Consequently, the ideologies that proved universal to the town did not provoke much notice precisely because of their universality. There was no opposing referent. Many leaders in colonial Massachusetts sought to unify their control and create coherent political bodies by indicating outside threats like Catholicism and indigenous American cultures. However, only where these external enemies threatened competition for resources along Puritan frontiers did they take precedence over local disputes that took the most pressing challenge of everyday life for the common colonist.

The commercial and social networks of colonial Massachusetts formed into weak core-periphery patterns in which households and towns had more dispersed connections with colonists whom with they interacted less. These peripheral acquaintances proved no less significant than close kin, as they functioned as intermediaries through which information flowed between otherwise closed groups. The increasing number of such peripheral, yet interregional, connections from 1675 to 1775 allowed for centralization of group identity and a vying for the determination of this identity between towns and then between the colony and the British imperial metropole. Commercial finance proved the vanguard of this integration by peripheral acquaintances. It allowed for the development of legal institutions, a unified state, and new cultural norms.

Commercial modernization in Colonial Massachusetts occurred after a general adoption of standardized methods for the transfer of information through legal and customary symbols. This included business instruments, contracts, and courts to enforce and assess the validity of both. Displays of wealth also came to factor into this type of information exchange, because it served as a symbol of belonging to strangers within an emerging cosmopolitan elite. Contrary to interpretations that emphasize an eroding of traditional cultures in favour of commercial, secular, societies, the economic culture of Puritan Massachusetts saw no change regarding a cultural acceptance of commerce, nor a marked shift in individual material incentives. The economic transitions that occurred in Massachusetts through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had little to do with the eroding of communitarian norms but instead emerged from the universal drive to project the influence of individual sub-communities on a transatlantic scale and to defend against the encroachment of others.

Historians have emphasized the role that commerce and markets had on social change in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British America. Ian Steele indicates access to foreign commercial credit in foreign cities as restructuring traditional social connections in the English Atlantic. He notes that advantages of colonial elites arose from access to extended loans and investments from foreign firms and merchant-factors. Similarly, Jack P. Greene argues for a shift in the social structure of eighteenth-century New England in which growing complexity of the economy enforced what he calls "a more typically British social structure."[16] Greene describes the loosening of family ties in business in favour of credit connections to foreign agencies. These emerging eighteenth-century commercial and financial markets, according to Greene and David

[16] Ian K. Steele, *The English Atlantic, 1675-1740: An Exploration of Communication and Community* (New York, NY: Oxford University, 1986), 223. Jack P. Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1988), 69.

Hancock, allowed some colonists to establish reputations in growing Atlantic mercantile communities. Hancock writes that, in the eighteenth century, British merchants established themselves in colonial markets in which traditional connections, like kin networks, came to matter less. London merchants thus achieved global connection, not just through familial bonds, nor connections to other ports like Glasgow, but what Hancock calls a "commercial network that extended across national boundaries."[17] To these historians, the eighteenth-century colonial economy integrated itself such that more traditional forms of social organization of earlier generations yielded to more mechanical means of economic interconnection structured on transatlantic standards of commercial information and reputation.

Market integration, and the social change it precipitated, required institutions for enforcing uniformity. Legal practices that enforced social patterns through courts and military discipline utilized violence, or the threat of violence, to disincentivize actions outside of a society's norms. Socioeconomic hierarchies arose within these legal systems and lent them their reputations and funds in support of existing means for mediating disputes over scarce resources and limited capital. Law and class, consequently, reinforced each other. However, these hierarchical orders came to loggerheads as market globalization forced them into competition once transportation and network integration eliminated the Atlantic Ocean as buffer space.

New legal languages enforceable by courts brought increasing numbers of English subjects into a uniform commercial system with access to commodity chains in which secondary processing of extractive resources allowed for more sophisticated finished goods and regional specialization. Such changes came at the cost of the erosion of traditional legal structures which

[17] David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785* (New York, NY: Cambridge University, 1995), 139.

disproportionately grated against the sentiments of those at the top of more traditional hierarchies like the Puritan ministers between 1670 and 1710 who authored jeremiads, histories, and diary entries lamenting the dissolution of a largely mythologized, pious, founding generation.

Disputes between new and old social hierarchies depended on who could create narratives and symbolic legal rituals that most supported their own material motivations. Prolonged battles over whose law counted as the "formal" decree occurred as competing parties contended for the authority to direct veiled threats of violence to support normative ideals. Formal law, in this context, consisted of a series of symbolic rituals such as legislative deliberation, recording of law, and trials. Formal law did not pervade the English Atlantic uniformly. Control over regional economies allowed for the ability to determine social controls that regulated behaviour. This lasted so long as the costs which these controls imposed on colonial populations did not outweigh the perceived costs of engaging in a conflict that would disrupt the existing political hierarchy. Of course, such a calculation did not include an actual tallying of quantitatively measured monetary costs, but instead should be thought of as a heuristic sense of material wellbeing by individual colonists with information provided by their social networks.

In *Social Control in the Colonial Economy*, J.R.T. Hughes identified four elements of economic life over which colonial societies exercised control. These include: (1) the number of market participants, (2) the conditions of eligibility for entering a market, (3) the prices that participants charged for goods and services, and (4) the quality of services and products.[18] Dominant political factions utilized these controls in an attempt to make a material reality out of

[18] Jonathan R.T. Hughes, *Social Control in the Colonial Economy*. (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia, 1976), 4.

an idealistic communal image, but unintended outcomes stymied these intentions in practice. Often, especially in the less developed, smaller, colonial economy of seventeenth-century Massachusetts, controls served as tools in intracolonial rivalries over resources. Only after such conflict did such controls take on the image of communal norms supposed to have enforced a premodern moral economy.

Jack P. Greene emphasizes New England's social restraints protecting distinctive social and religious norms and argues for a fundamental difference between its culture and the "normative" English economic cultures of southern colonies and the West Indies. To Greene, these normative colonies exhibited a more commercial and individualistic culture in the seventeenth century in contrast to New England which converged on these norms only in the eighteenth century. In Greene's interpretation, cultural and geographic factors allowed for a more traditional economic culture in New England. For example, theological, communitarian norms, paired with a climate unconducive to extractive monoculture, led to relative isolation from the globalizing economy of the seventeenth-century English Atlantic.[19]

Many historians note that the absence of an exportable commodity, or monocultural staple, did not prove a necessary hindrance to the development of a commercial culture. Stephen Innes places the origins of the Massachusetts Bay Colony's economic success in its ability to free itself from the anachronistic restraints of a mercantilism that dominated trade in the early modern European Atlantic. Furthermore, many historians point to the co-development of plantation and shipping communities in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Comparative advantages of places like New England, with little agricultural potential but with opportune

[19] Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness*, 55.

placement along the Atlantic rim, allowed for almost immediate integration into the market economies that English subjects developed in the Atlantic world. Bay Colonists, specifically, situated themselves purposefully to send and receive economic information by ocean transport.

Virginia DeJohn Anderson writes: "The pursuit of individual advantage… never overwhelmed the religious impulse that had inspired the emigration from England," and that despite some initial turmoil and disagreement, "New England stood apart as a region of unusual stability."[20] Anderson, along with other historians including Greene, perceives demographic stability and unifying religious motivations as promoting Puritan traditionalist cohesion in seventeenth-century New England, especially among the first generation of Puritan migrants from England. Certain elements of New Englanders' worldviews surely did remain consistent through the colonial period, but they ultimately emerged only in response to more basic, instinctual, motivations that changed remarkably following the first migration from England and which continued to transform in response to intra- and inter- group conflict thereafter.

Greene, Anderson, and generations of other historian derive a supposed New England regional stability from lasting characterizations initially espoused by especially vocal colonial historians and social critics who viewed commercial integration into the modern Atlantic as a disruption rather than a continuation of the same patterns of development that had continued piecemeal for centuries. Additionally, an emphasis on normative stability in New England depends on a limited definition of conflict and social change that includes movement and violence rather than institutional mediation that always threatened, but rarely enacted, violence. Conflict of the latter variety promoted social change within the New England town system for

[20] Virginia DeJohn Anderson, *New England's Generation: The Great Migration and the Formation of Society and Culture in the Seventeenth Century*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University, 1991), 1, 10.

much of its history. Social elites successfully relied on such quiet violence to subdue cultural dissension to suppress narratives that challenged the idea of a cohesive "City upon the Hill," a colonial haven for a subset of especially ascetic English Protestantism. Under the surface of this narrative, however, the material origins of cohesion and conflict reveal a community born into a state of near continuous dispute, competition, and mass demographic dislocation.

Anthony Pagden writes that providentialism existed in the language of European imperialism for centuries prior to Puritan migrations to, and settlement of, North America. However, he argues, providential interpretations in England reached their height in the Cromwellian government of the mid-seventeenth century. According to the thought underlying the Cromwellian state, property rights came from God's grace and not, as earlier jurists and theologians argued, from God's law.[21] New England settlers that acted according to a similar Reformist worldview believed that their property rights extended only to Christians acting according to divine precepts concealed from humanity and shaped a narrative searching for revelations that their place in America, and displacement of indigenous residents, was in line with the grace of God.

While Pagden's description of providentialism is accurate, it leaves two significant questions unaddressed. First, did anything resembling this providentialist theory exist in a formal, uniform, sense in the decades prior to the English Civil War when Puritan migrants landed in large numbers in Massachusetts? Second, did providentialist ideals of colonization change the way English settlers acted, or did it simply provide a language to validate perennial material conflicts that existed before Reformist movements and would continue long afterward?

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[21] Anthony Pagden, "The Struggle for Legitimacy and the Image of Empire in the Atlantic to c.1700" in Nicholas P. Canny ed. *The Origins of Empire*. Vol. 1 of *The Oxford History of the British Empire* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University, 1998), 35.

The answers lie not in broad discussions of ideology but at the level of individual choice in the context of communities where the sensory experiences of daily life occurred. Ultimately, one finds through such observations that the majority of colonists concerned themselves with local decisions well into the eighteenth century. In the first fifty years of settlement, only a small Puritan elite, who maintained global connections, could grasp a persistent, but limited, authority until more extensive globalization and commercial integration occurred in the eighteenth century.

On colonial Connecticut, Bruce H. Mann writes: "most fall prey to the… fallacy of regarding community as a unitary concept that can admit only one meaning and one manifestation, the town."[22] As Mann indicates, the orthodox conception of New England's colonial political, economic, and religious structures revolved around these town units where colonists of an abnormally spiritual bent regulated each others' behaviour into stable, and largely homogenous, Puritan communities. From this historiographic baseline, historians of the first half of the twentieth century developed a theory of declension that has survived in many historical interpretations since. In the declension interpretation, communitarian Puritan towns transformed into more open and materialistic societies as traditional influences of Puritan government and clergy declined in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. This interpretation maps cleanly onto the contemporary interpretation of Puritan elites themselves whose famous laments of a society in decline produced the jeremiad sermons, histories, and diaries that have formed a predominant source in the historiographic source base of colonial New England.

[22] Bruce H. Mann, *Neighbors & Strangers: Law and Community in Early Connecticut* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1987), 4.

The problem with the declension narrative lies in it taking the traditional, communalist, Puritan town structure as a given, and in its assumption that material incentives formed from religious ideology rather than the other way around. Furthermore, in accordance with Mann's observation, the declension narrative survives intact only so long as historians do not reframe the geographic focus of New England society away from the town towards those significant interregional and global connections that persisted through early explorations, settlement, and the tumult of the Great Migration, in New England, and for long afterward.

An alternative approach to declension emphasizes socio-economic continuities rather than a perceived rupture between a Puritan culture and another that followed it. Modernization did not occur in a capitalistic shift in the seventeenth nor eighteenth century. Neither was there a distinct transition from early modern, or medieval, traditionalism toward modern materialism. Puritan economic culture looked much like that of a later British Atlantic, albeit at a smaller, less integrated, scale. Furthermore, people like the Winthrops and Mathers did not exercise political power fundamentally differently than the cosmopolitan merchants, statesmen, and imperial agents that dominated the British Atlantic after their deaths. In contrast, Bernard Bailyn argues for a distinctly modern economy that manifested itself at the end of the seventeenth century in New England spurred by a new generation of individualistic and epicurean merchants. To Bailyn, this new merchant capitalism fit into the declension model of social change.[23]

Bailyn's interpretation fits into a long-influential theory of economic, political, and cultural modernization that Max Weber introduced in the first decade of the twentieth century. This theory stressed the introduction of state institutions and a secular, disenchanted, worldview

[23] Bernard Bailyn, *The New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1955), 16.

that took hold after the sixteenth century. To Weber, this social transformation had roots in Protestantism and the disruptions of longstanding traditional norms that the Reformation caused in Europe. Several historical observations appear to support such a social transition in New England culture, especially among a transatlantic commercial elite. Such observations do not contradict a declension model by themselves, but, I argue, they do not prove it sufficiently either. For example, Phyllis Whitman Hunter writes on the displays of wealth and cosmopolitan tastes among newer groups of commercial elites in Massachusetts, whom Cotton Mather and other ministers targeted as drivers of spiritual decline. Hunter describes wealth as producing new forms of association and exclusion. She gives the example of "polite dinners" and ownership of relatively extravagant clothes and silver items. Such objects denoted a new social prestige, in Hunter's analysis, which united a new generation of influential New England merchants like Peter Faneuil, Timothy Orne, and Nicholas Boylston. Undoubtedly, this new mercantile elite appeared different than their Puritan merchant forbearers like the Winthrops, John Hull, or Samuel Seward who tended to couch their business endeavours in the language of divine will.[24] However, the transition between these two groups of merchants did not cause commercial modernization, but rather developed from one of many shifts in power that emerged from steady Atlantic market integration through the whole history of transatlantic Puritan migration and even beforehand in the towns and country of sixteenth-century England.

Sumner Chilton Powell writes on the Puritan majority who migrated from the market towns and open field communities of England, most of whom concerned themselves with more immediate threats to their welfare such that they spent little time recording their experiences in

[24] Phyllis Whitman Hunter, *Purchasing Identity in the Atlantic World: Massachusetts Merchants, 1670-1780* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 2001), 75.

written form.[25] Powell indicates that nonconformist migrants came from very different backgrounds in England and, though they found themselves united against Laudian Anglicanism and the social structure it attempted to impose, the differences between Puritans once they arrived in New England appeared immediately evident. Competition for land further exacerbated such disagreements.[26]

Among the new intra-Puritan factions, a market town elite had particular advantage given that they supported influential ministers financially while also integrating themselves into an emerging transatlantic Puritan commercial network. Ownership to whatever limited capital entered the colony, along with access to commercial information that hinterland agrarians lacked, gave this group a distinct economic and, therefore, spiritual influence. In England, in the decades prior to the mass migrations to North America from 1630 to 1642, market town merchants played a significant role in funding the nonconformist preachers who fell outside Anglican orthodoxy. Support from this business class gave the regional form of regional market town Puritanism a distinctively mercantile tilt that survived the Atlantic passage to coastal Massachusetts intact.[27] However, this class influence proved limited by capital scarcity in New England, and in practice, the coastal legislation and pronouncements of elites like the Winthrops in Boston did not extend uniformly through the colony.

The Puritan elite relied on transatlantic connections for small transfers of capital, but this ultimately proved insufficient for strong exertions of state power, industry, or any form of extensive industrial production until increased uniformity of commercial instruments a century

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[25] Sumner Chilton Powell, *Puritan Village: The Formation of a New England Town* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1963), xix.
[26] Ibid, 6-7.
[27] Christopher Hill, *Society & Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (New York, NY: Schoken Books, 1964), 60-2.

later. These limitations proved most pronounced in the failure of these elites to attract sufficient capital for ironworks and urbanization. Wealthy Puritans of early seventeenth-century New England, therefore, held stable but limited influence on New England's towns until commercial globalization introduced new competition which supplanted them in the eighteenth century. Michael Zuckerman argues for a contrasting historical trend in New England society. He writes: "The Puritans, on the other hand, had organized themselves from the outset as an exclusive society, and the migration to America had only heightened their sense of separateness. In the new world the uniformity that had been visionary in England – the right of every church to keep out the unworthy, which was precisely the point of the Congregationalists' difference with the Established Church – seemed suddenly within their reach."[28] Furthermore, Zuckerman indicates that Puritan society transitioned from an autocracy in the seventeenth century to a more democratic, communal, town system in the eighteenth century.[29] The weakness of this argument arises from Zuckerman's overreliance on legislative sources that claimed authority over colonial constituents but did not prove de facto power that extended from any state body, like the General Court in Boston, over peripheral towns in the colony with unique, self-organized, social systems. The relative underdevelopment of financial and capital markets, despite the pronounced commercial culture of many New England Puritans, did not allow for the growth of state capacity and coercive social controls, including violence, which could create a strong core-periphery structure that would develop only later in the eighteenth century. By the time of this later state development, the old theocratic influence had declined substantially.

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[28] Michael Zuckerman, *Peaceable Kingdoms: New England Towns in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 1970), 5.
[29] Ibid, 7.

Seventeenth-century Massachusetts had a small but influential arsenal of enforcement measures for social control which included various forms of ostracization and, less commonly, public displays of violence. These measures allowed ministers and magistrates to make the most of an otherwise limited state capacity. Colonial government relied on fines, physical punishment, or public humiliation to control for deviation from its authority. Also, as Michael Meranze indicates, the threat of the death penalty allowed for social discipline even when rarely utilized. This public threat continued as a means of social control through the colonial period, especially along the Atlantic coast. There, colonial magistrates and military officials exercised authority over transient mariners otherwise immune to local communal regulation given their mobility and, therefore, ability to evade immediate accountability.[30] Strong, centralized, state discipline prevailed only in localities like the more urbanized coast whereas a quitter, communal, but equally powerful form of social discipline with no court oversight predominated elsewhere in colonial Massachusetts. Puritan ideology, and provincial government's attempts to enforce uniformity, faced limitations because of the level of commercial and legal development in the seventeenth century. The best wishes of the coastal elite could not uproot the long evolution of an organic social structure dependent on local economies and traditions with roots extending back to the medieval village.

Richard L. Bushman writes, of eighteenth-century New England, that, as in Old England, formal legal institutions exercised little force and relied on a limited number of constables and the medieval tradition of hue and cry by which a local population spontaneously served as its

[30] Michael Meranze, "Penalty and the Colonial Project: Crime, Punishment, and the Regulation of Morals in Early America" in Michael Grossberg and Christopher Tomlins eds. *The Cambridge History of Law in America: Early America (1580–1815)* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University, 2008), 179, 181, 185.

own coercive force against a transgression that one of its members called out publicly.[31] Consequently, most legal coercion depended on local cohesion rather overarching government decree until a later date when metropolitan government could tap commercial linkages for the labour and capital to fuel coercive state machinery. In the non-uniform, patchwork, patterns of seventeenth-century public finance, such economic state power could not exist.

A possible misinterpretation of the structure of historical communities can arise from seeing the origins of localized town constitutions in Puritan covenant theology rather than the other way around. The spiritual language of covenants fit well into the Puritan town because the inhabitants existed in social structures conducive to common, decentralized, authority and constitutional agreement. Later material development would make such structures untenable as local communities integrated into a unified fiscal state. The covenant emerged from the politics of towns' geographic patterns in which settlers congregated into political units centered around a meetinghouse. The political center of the town formed around a group of selectmen such that religious and political authority had distinct but mutually reinforcing centres in what the Puritan residents of a town otherwise considered a prohibitive wilderness occupied only by culturally distinct Indian societies. With perceived threats so immediate, the incentives of English settlers pushed them inward to maintain cultural norms and access to resources. This process produced the distinctive social structure of the colonial New England town.

David T. Konig writes that a more secular concept of stewardship arose from Puritan spirituality. This stewardship depended on regulating the entrance of members. Practically, this meant that the community limited the number of land sales. Community, in this context, emerged

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[31] Richard L. Bushman, *King and People in Provincial Massachusetts* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 60.

from an exercise of local power against competing peoples and the difficulties of extracting adequate resources to support newcomers in only recently settled towns with undeveloped markets, little capital, and limited specialization. This stage in the economic development of the New England town allowed for a period of relative egalitarianism arising not from communal regulation, or a distinctively Christian culture, but from scarcity of resources to allocate among townsfolk. Furthermore, while Bay Colonists experienced relative equality in their landholdings, measured by acreage, due to land's abundance per capita, not all property held the same value once owned. Within a decade of settlement, regional differences produced differing access to capital and commercial information that gave coastal and urban property holders a distinct advantage once state institutions like courts and customs offices integrated disparate communities into a hierarchical fiscal system with the ability to institute social controls and penal discipline from the center.

Economic disparities developed in the first decades of Massachusetts's colonial settlement due to what economists refer to as first mover advantage and information asymmetry. Earlier immigrants, especially those with commercial experience, and who occupied coastal lands and natural harbours, and therefore developed the initial connections with metropolitan exporters that would develop into dominant commercial networks in later years. This allowed for monopolistic market conditions that grew over time as the domestic colonial consumers relied increasingly on coastal intermediaries for transactions dealing with capital and labour from England.

When English migrants first settled in New England in the first half of the seventeenth century, Puritan merchants and ministers could draw on global connections among their elite nonconformist peers to place themselves in the uppermost strata of a colonial hierarchy.

Merchants created alliances that could protect them from popular resentment through their close relationships with notable ministers and their families, just as they had done in English market towns before migration. For example, Boston merchants frequently agreed to marriages between their daughters and ministers, as occurred in the prominent mercantile Tyng family. David D. Hall writes that such relationships brought wealth to high-status ministers such that the estates of seventeenth-century ministers put them among the wealthiest 15 percent of all colonists.[32]

Daniel Vickers writes on the general aim of New Englanders to achieve what he calls a "competency" or a sufficiency but not abundance of goods and property. Vickers asserts that a largely premodern, precapitalist, normative conception survived among this population by which they intended material production to support their communities and religious consciences rather than accumulation for its own sake.[33] As these colonials' consistent focus on the development of commerce and iron production indicate, however, seventeenth-century Puritans had no intention of avoiding capital accumulation. Instead, when a historian observes limited commodification and communal forms of labor organization, these observations indicate economic and environmental constraints rather than an earlier mode of economic thought of the colonists. Primitive financial instruments, money scarcity, and limited means of communicating inter-regionally all proved substantial hindrances to the market integration and allocation of capital necessary for a rural New England colonist to accumulate resources much beyond subsistence.

New England towns also faced significant economic and social costs from the siphoning of resources toward communal protection. This made the development of markets and capital

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[32] David D. Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd: A History of the New England Ministry in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), 183.
[33] Daniel Vickers, "Competency and Competition: Economic Culture in Early America," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (January 1, 1990), 3-5.

accumulation difficult given the perception of colonists that they should have to contribute otherwise private resources towards public goods like militia companies and courts that limited different types of conflicts with both Puritan and non-Puritan neighbours. Conflict with outside cultures like the Wampanoag and Dutch came with costs as did resolving disputes between towns and rival factions within towns. This type of conflict proved most contentious, and potentially violent, in disputes over land claims.

Public costs and allocative inefficiencies indicate that the difference between competency and profit-driven commercialism was capability, not a fundamentally different form of precapitalistic ideology that eroded in later generations. As global commerce, financial instruments, and hierarchical state jurisdictions allowed for an increase in the scale of North American market activity, Massachusetts colonists displayed a willingness to reinterpret religious doctrine and abandon communal labour that limited their economic influence in the globalizing eighteenth-century British Atlantic. They welcomed the shift from the limitations of what they thought of as a frontier environment. As Samuel Eliot Morison writes: "the mere labor of getting a living in a virgin country is so great as to exhaust and stultify the human spirit unless it have some great emotional drive."[34] While missing the extent to which supposedly "virgin" land had developed under years of indigenous agrarian life and occupation, Morrison does indicate how a mindset of a new colonist revolved critically around securing something close to an ideal lifestyle in a setting fundamentally distinct from their English origins. In the early years of colonial settlement through the Great Migration, colonists derived Morison's "emotional drives" in their common dislocation from the Anglican state orthodoxy in England and from then

[34] Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Intellectual Life of Colonial New England* (New York, NY: New York University, 1956), 16.

primarily from the immediate threats to survival and welfare within their town communities. However, as cosmopolitan credit, paper money, and commercial information allowed for competition and the pursuit of profit, the older communal and spiritual motivations lost their salience.

In his article "Errors Excepted," Daniel Vickers uses financial record-keeping in New England during the early American Republic to determine whether there occurred some fundamental transition in economic culture among rural New Englanders. He writes: "Any plausible consensus around market revolution during the early republic requires a rough agreement on what preceded it."[35] Vickers outlines two predominant schools of thought among historians. First, the substantivists, who emphasize the existence of a precapitalist and premodern economic culture that operated by rules fundamentally different than the models and economic incentives developed in modern, and especially classical, economic theory. In contrast, formalists argue that universals exist across the history of economic interaction with precedents predating the arrival of global capitalism. To formalists, economic transitions occurred as the result of structural and institutional change evolving in the global economy rather than fundamental shifts in the preferences and incentives of individuals.

Vickers's analysis of rural New England in the decades following the colonial period indicates a continuation of informal economic practices into the nineteenth century by which townsfolk largely outside of the reach of large financial institutions kept records meant to supplant but not override more communal means of assessing obligations among neighbours. Vickers indicates a middle ground between an earlier form of economic interaction and the more

[35] Daniel Vickers, "Errors Expected: The Culture of Credit in Rural New England, 1750-1800." *The Economic History Review* 63 (2010), 1034.

mechanical, institutional, fiscal interactions recognizable within the modern global economy. A question remains as to whether this system of social accounting emerged by choice or by necessity along a rural fringe left unintegrated through the colonial period of New England town development.

In *Farmers & Fishermen*, Vickers indicates a long tradition of social conflict rising from increasingly dominant credit controls over labour in the first two centuries of Essex County, Massachusetts. Practices whereby merchants exercised control over the labour of maritime workers by offering store credit in payment indicate that centralization of financial oversight along more urban, commercially connected, coast developed over this period.[36] I argue, this centralization extended inland as market integration brought more Americans under the fiscal purview of commercial elites and their state allies through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In line with the formalist interpretation, the communalism of rural New England towns emerged not from a premodern attitude, or medieval cultural disposition, but rather from the constraints of existing within space peripheral to financial and commercial linkages that created common markets allowing for specialization, industrialization, and a hierarchical state with a uniform fiscal system. In contrast to my interpretation, Gary B. Nash argues that a critical component of urban labour prior to the American Revolution was its premodern patterns of social organization in which routinized means of economic interaction remained largely unknown.[37] This interpretation follows a longstanding tradition in historical and sociological literature of identifying distinct transitions in economic culture pivoting around a distinct

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[36] Daniel Vickers, *Farmers and Fishermen: Two Centuries of Work in Essex County, Massachusetts, 1630-1850* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 16.
[37] Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: The Northern Seaports and the Origins of the American Revolution* (1979. Reprint, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1986), 4-5.

socioeconomic shift initiating a period of modernity. Explanations for such transitions focus on changes in social structure, popular mentalities, or both.

Max Weber stated that structures of legal institutions and bureaucratic administration allowed for the emergence of capitalist economies. He explained that capitalistic enterprise required a set of formal rules to operate in a characteristically calculable way. Additionally, he argued, the emergence of these formal rules, and institutions to enforce them, produced a class of jurists trained to administer this law in a public forum. Weber identified this new capitalistic and legalistic culture as dependent on a globalizing system.[38] This provides explanation for the emergence of a Puritan international that emerged in the commercial world of the seventeenth-century English Atlantic.

Calvinist nonconformists with market experience formed commercial kin groups that connected far-flung port towns and their hinterlands into exclusive capital markets. Supporting this exclusivity interpretation, Weber wrote that such foreign trade emerged from legal monopoly privileges.[39] One can think of the socio-economic implications of this in terms of the exclusivity of market information in a developing colonial economy. Interregional Puritan networks served as mediums through which merchants and statesmen developed edges in competition for resources and capital. Importantly, this also meant that new, competing, information networks of cosmopolitan, maritime, cultures had the capacity to uproot such Puritan socioeconomic structures. This phenomenon, I argue, occurred at the last decade of the seventeenth century and continued thereafter into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The influence of mariners and newer generations of liberal, anti-protectionist, merchants, attest to the

[38] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. trans. Talcott Parsons. (New York, NY. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), 25.
[39] Ibid, 65.

erosion of the previously dominant Puritan commercial conservativism. This transition produced social conflicts that erupted into periodic violent episodes, like the Salem witch crisis from 1691 to 1692, when new globalizing influences grated against the juristic dominance of entrenched Puritan leaders and their supporters. Such social conflict, albeit generally less violent, was a guiding force behind cultural change in Massachusetts between 1680 and 1720. The cultural changes emerging from this period survived thereafter in the political structures and constitution of Massachusetts. As British imperialist cosmopolitanism continued to encroach on the remnants of Puritan orthodoxy surviving in the congregationalist town structure of the colony, conflict would shift outward toward the threat of metropolitan oversight from England, producing a new era of social turbulence arising from competing commercial networks. The culmination of this eighteenth-century Atlantic integration would occur during the American Revolution.

IV. Worldview, Conflict, and Emerging Interests in the Seventeenth Century

The stark contrast between Winthrop's 1630 idealistic sermon onboard the *Arbella* and Josselyn's narratives from 1638 and 1643 reveal a contradiction between the state of New England society intended by its founders and the coastal communities which potential immigrants perceived thereafter. If Winthrop's goal was a peaceful, religious, community united against external threats, it was not evident to Josselyn arriving eight years later that Massachusetts society developed according to that aim. Instead, Josselyn observed internal division. The Puritan mindset had a fear of invasive influences in common, but the question of how to live apart from those perceived threats led to conflict. John Winthrop's correspondence during his life in Boston consisted of a mixture of economic planning, commentary on the town's religious and social tendencies, and an expression of anxiety concerning threats to the public welfare of the colony. When crossing the Atlantic on the *Arbella* in 1630, his descriptions of the

town to be did not match the material reality, at least not without social coercion and wrestling with the question of how the upkeep of a colony on the fringe of European population would be possible.

On February 19, 1644, fourteen years after Winthrop's arrival in Boston, he received a concerned letter from the Puritan merchant William Pynchon via a fishing fleet passing through Boston. Pynchon claimed that the colony faced the possibility of a potential violent conflict with the Narragansetts. Pynchon continued, writing that "I hope the English will never put it to the tryall, till they be more then a little provoked to it."[40] Pynchon and Winthrop thought they existed at a nexus between the world of Old England and a frontier land where conflict with other groups, like Native Americans, proved a threat that they which made them feel uneasy. They had a sense that they would face a disproportionate burden should imperial policy promote aggression. At this early point, they already feared the provocation of the English across the ocean and felt that the imperial government could make decisions not attuned to their best interest. Winthrop and the first Bostonians saw themselves as being pinched between foreign threats, and the result was that if they were to maintain political power, autonomy, and safety, they would have to develop a means to keep the society within New England cohesive and adapt their religious narrative around the actions which made that possible.

On 1 December 1643, John Mason informed John Winthrop that the Dutch, then settled in New Amsterdam along the southern frontier of New England settlement, had killed an English military officer by the name of Captain Pattrick.[41] The New England settlers, in the first half of the seventeenth century put physical distance between themselves and the Stuart government and

[40] William Pynchon to John Winthrop, 19 February 1644. *Papers of the Winthrop Family.* Vol. 4 Massachusetts Historical Society. Online. Accessed May 31, 2018.
[41] John Mason to John Winthrop, 1 Dec 1643. *Papers of the Winthrop Family.* Vol. 4.

Anglican church. However, the foreign affairs of the king and Parliament remained pertinent across the Atlantic given the English self-identification of colonial settlers. The colonists saw the Dutch interest in North America as fundamentally opposed to their own as an extension of their national allegiance. The fear of Dutch violence and intrusion proved to be a common motivator throughout the colony so far as the symbol of the nation pervaded New England society. Furthermore, to the degree that the symbol was pervasive, the power of those who controlled the military, and who punished the treasonous, garnered increased influence. Being as the mercantilist commercial world was an extension of national competition, those who wielded these state powers in the colony, such as Winthrop and other elders, gained increased economic influence in correlation with fear over the incursion of foreign nations.

One of the earliest endeavours which the coastal New Englanders undertook to free themselves from the restraints of their economic limitations was the promotion of manufacturing, specifically through mineral mining and iron production. On 2 December 1643, John Winthrop's son, John Winthrop Jr., sent a petition to the Massachusetts General Court requesting license to begin the creation of an ironworks which they subsequently granted. In the request, Winthrop Jr. wrote "Your peticioner therefore being desirous to promote the publique good in this and to incourage all men that are willing to spend their time and hazard, their stocks and labours in these mineral affairs." Winthrop Jr. further described this proposed endeavour as "the speediest ways as he supposeth to advance staple commodities."[42] In the same period in which the Puritan settlers sought to remove themselves from the influences of Europe, some of them were

[42] John Winthrop Jr. Petition to the General Court. *Papers of the Winthrop Family*. Vol. 4

simultaneously integrating themselves with old influences through the exchange of goods. Also, they were using local law to control this integration.

Winthrop Jr.'s attempt at the establishment of the ironworks, and his subsequent commercial correspondence, held no pretensions of economic isolation or premodern communalist localism. One can observe evidence for this in his correspondence with foreign specialists and in his attempt to enlist experienced ironworkers with more regard to their material expertise than their religious or political sympathies. For example, in 1643, Winthrop Jr. established a connection with an agent, and London ironmonger, named Joshua Foote. In May of that year, Foote informed him that he had found four workers and supplied them with an allowance for lodging and food upon their arrival in New England. According to Foote, upon agreement, Winthrop Jr. was to pay three of them twelve pence a day, and the last, a child, six pence.[43]

The contractual nature of Winthrop Jr.'s search for labourers was the norm of the period for labour outside of family units and was not unique to the establishment of large projects like the ironworks. For example, in 1643, the same year that the Winthrops invested in the expansion of mining and mineral refining, they also hired Mary Gore, the daughter of the grocer Samuel Gore of London, as a servant. Mary Gore was required to sign an apprenticeship contract which included a clause that she should not marry or commit fornication during the term of her agreement to work for the Winthrop family.[44] Accumulation of property and influence in formative commercial networks allowed for the power to institute social controls over labour that allowed for the persistence of Puritan cultural orthodoxy in places where the coastal elites maintained commercial connections.

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[43] Joshua Foote to John Winthrop Jr. 20 May 1643. *Papers of the Winthrop Family.* Vol. 4.
[44] Mary Gore and John Winthrop. Articles of Employment. 1643. *Papers of the Winthrop Family.* Vol. 4.

The enlistment of workers by coastal New Englanders such as the Winthrops corresponded to business relationships with Atlantic merchants and mariners. This was critical both because it meant that those who were initially likely to hire and transport labourers gained the network connections to continue to do it. They also gained the connection to the importers and exporters who brought goods across the ocean in addition to labourers. On 5 May 1643, for example, the merchant Nehemiah Bourne charged John Winthrop Sr. fifty pounds for the transportation of both men and goods into New England. Additionally, the governor of Bermuda, Roger Wood, would write to Winthrop that he was reliant on Winthrop for making shipments of goods to Massachusetts as he believed that when goods were sent under the protection of Winthrop, the seamen would take better care of the cargo.[45]

On 20 September 1643, Winthrop Jr. received a letter from Joshua Foote who was then in London. Foote wrote to Winthrop Jr. concerning the hiring of a bloomery worker. This worker was responsible for repeatedly heating and hammering the pieces of metal globules intermingled with slag, a process necessary to make wrought iron because the furnaces of the period could not reach the melting temperature of iron.[46] As was evident in Foote's writing, the staffing of the ironworks in New England was contingent on international affairs and the strength of foreign economies. Foote wrote:

> "I was with Sir John Clattworthie about bloomry men. I went in your name and he tells me that times are so in Ireland that he thinks they are…dead, for he can hear of none, and I have inquired much after some and can hear of none…You must join all your workman's heads together and see to breed up bloomeries a smith after a little teaching will make a bloomer man."[47]

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[45] Roger Wood to John Winthrop. 6 June 6 1643. *Papers of the Winthrop Family.* Vol. 4.
[46] "Bloomery Process." Encyclopedia Britannica. Online. Accessed August 17, 2018.
[47] Joshua Foote to John Winthrop, Jr. 20 Sep 1643. *Papers of the Winthrop Family.* Vol. 4.

John Winthrop Jr.'s commercial connection with the global English commercial world extended beyond the recruitment of labour and included the exchange of goods and information concerning industrial organization and invested capital. In the summer of 1643, John Winthrop Jr. travelled to England and, after a safe arrival back in New England, received a letter from an agent in London named Robert Child. Winthrop had informed Child by a letter he wrote on the Isle of Wight that he was in transit back to Boston, and Child sent a letter immediately to Boston to meet Winthrop Jr. soon after his arrival. Child informed Winthrop Jr. that he had sold fifteen tons of stone in London and requested that Winthrop Jr. inform him of any word concerning mineral deposits in New England. Child expressed interest in the lead mines which the colonists had then just recently set up in Massachusetts. He requested that Winthrop send him samples of the lead deposit to show a potential purchaser in London named John Treslinden. Child ends his letter with a comment on the recruitment of labourers mentioned by Foote a few months earlier stating that he will try to find a bloomer for the ironworks while in London. Furthermore, Child stated "I shall strive…to get those knaves that ran away punished."[48]

The problem of labourers in New England escaping their contracted terms of employment occurred regularly in the Bay Colony. Often, as in the case of Winthrop Jr.'s communication with Robert Child, employers would circulate word among themselves through writing so that the person might be found and punished for leaving without the permission of the employer. An example of this was the letter sent by William Coddington to John Winthrop on 10 June 1643 in which Coddington thanked Winthrop for agreeing to return his escaped servant should Winthrop and his constituents have found him near Boston.[49]

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[48] Robert Child to John Winthrop, Jr. 27 June 1643. *Papers of the Winthrop Family.* Vol. 4.
[49] William Coddington to John Winthrop. 10 June 1643. *Papers of the Winthrop Family.* Vol. 4.

The difficulty of Winthrop Jr.'s attempt at establishing a commodity trade out of Massachusetts had nothing to do with his ability to connect with English experts or to find sufficient information, but rather physical constraints caused by the inflexibility of local labour. Winthrop could not rely on an inexperienced population whose focus was primarily agricultural subsistence, nor could he rely on the importation of foreign laborers such as those from Ireland, as the supply was insufficient. However, none of these barriers, nor any sense of Puritan communal asceticism, stopped Winthrop Jr. from trying to achieve global economic influence even if he failed in his initial plans to establish lucrative sites for mineral extraction and processing.

The connection of the Winthrops to the economies outside of Massachusetts occurred not only with the accumulation of capital and labour for their projects within the Bay Colony, but also as part of a consumer market for foreign goods. For example, in June of 1643, the Bermudian merchant-statesman Roger Wood shipped John Winthrop Sr. 200 lemons, a number only limited, according to Wood, by the limited storage capacity on the vessel he shipped them on.[50] Already Bostonians were integrating themselves into the Atlantic economy through trade and extension of political influence into other colonies and England. As was evident in the case of the Winthrops, the same Puritans who most strongly advocated for Puritan social ideals, and whose religious and political rhetoric appeared the most intense in its promotion of a Christian impartiality, also often pursued the most extensive commercial power through the developing Atlantic economy.

[50] Roger Wood to John Winthrop. 6 June 1643. *Papers of the Winthrop Family.* Vol. 4.

The 13,000 Puritans who arrived in New England between 1630 and 1640 did not move with the intention of creating a cohesive ideological union but were instead escaping from a place where their power to pursue their individual ideology faced the threat of a competing, royalist, Anglican state. One can best understand the early Puritan immigrants as political outsiders attempting to exercise material power to live as they wanted where they could. In no places was this chaotic process as evident as in port towns like Boston and Salem which developed multiple internal, and often conflicting, group interests in addition to cultural differences with other New England towns. In his 1698 ecclesiastical history *Magnalia Christi Americana*, Cotton Mather wrote that "The great Mr. *Hildersham* had advised our first Planters to agree fully upon their Form of *Church Government*, before their coming to *New-England*, but they had indeed agreed little further than in this general Principle *That the Reformation of the Church was to be endeavored according to the written Word of God.*"[51] Mather goes on to compare the Bay Colony in its earliest years to a hive of bees, in which chaotic contention led to the splintering of groups such as the New Haven colony.[52]

In Mather's description, the colony initially structured itself on uncertain terms, though still under divine direction as a uniquely spiritually ascendent society, the early contestations proved unavoidable in Mather's interpretation. The cultural uncertainty that resulted necessitated a ministerial assuaging of threats to religious doctrine in the minds of those Puritans. In the elite Puritan mind, from John Winthrop to Cotton Mather, there could be no uncertainty to Puritan unity, as every aspect of settlement was determined according to a divine plan. Consequently,

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[51] Cotton Mather. *Magnalia Christi Americana*. Eds. Kenneth B. Murdock and Elizabeth W. Miller. 1702. (Reprint, Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1977), 153.
[52] Ibid, 165.

admitting the existence of a relativity of perspective between colonial factions became heresy even though the settlers acted out such disunity in their conflicts and competitions.

Mather's depiction of the first generation of New Englanders was of a conflict between proper notions of the community and the self-interests of the colonists. Mather stressed the necessity of religion and ascetic living as the means through which the first settlers resolved this contradiction. According to Mather, the earliest New Englanders validated power on a metaphysical level. He saw the symbol of religious power as rooted in piety and beyond the questioning of individuals.[53] This interpretation, however, was that of a minister separated by two generations from the first settlement of New England. In the immediacy of the conflict which his grandfathers faced in the 1630s, the emphasis on a religious communal imperative was not always as expedient a tool as the material power of government and the threat of ostracization.

Mather's descriptions contain contradictions. For example, he stressed the liberality and strong bonds of poverty, while also describing how private disputes over matters of property, such as conflict over the ownership of swine brought before the General Court, plagued Boston in the 1630s.[54] Furthermore, in *Magnalia Christi Americana*, he only briefly touches upon the most severe theological conflicts of the first decade of settlement, including the Antinomian Crisis of 1634, which he mentioned only briefly in passing as "familistical errors" without naming the major proponents of the movement such as Anne Hutchinson, the governor Henry Vane, or his own maternal grandfather, and namesake, John Cotton.[55] It is apparent in Mather's

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[53] Ibid, 199.
[54] Ibid, 225.
[55] Ibid, 232. Annie Haven Thwing, *Inhabitants and Estates of the Town of Boston, 1630-1800* [electronic resource], *and The Crooked and Narrow Streets of Boston, 1630-1822*. (Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society; Massachusetts Historical Society, 2001), 117.

writing from the late seventeenth century that his description of the first generation pushed their supposed coherence beyond his capacity to support it with anecdotes.

In *Magnalia Christi Americana*, Cotton Mather wrote of an early history of New England which predated the religious origins of the foundation of the colonies as political units. Mather begins his colonial origin story not with clergy or governors but with Bristol merchants and cod fishermen. He claimed that the first reports, which stimulated the production of joint ventures like the Massachusetts Bay Company, came through these transient groups of maritime workers and explorers.[56] The first information to reach England on this region did not emerge from religious pilgrimage but came as the communication of a global commercial venture. The narrative of the Puritan community in the wilderness would follow this initial material connection with New England. The first known explorers to report the material nature of the New England environment were Bartholomew Gosnold, John Breton and their companies, who in 1602 arrived at a headland, later named Cape Cod, which they deemed to have a natural proclivity for the establishment of fisheries.[57]

Much of the political conflict that arose in colonial Massachusetts extended from the initial terms or its corporate charter. Originally, the structure of the colony's government was commercial, more like a business partnership than a traditional polity, although alteration in the terms of colonial governance caused a restructuring of the colony's administration before the first Bay Colonists made landfall. The governor and General Court of the company became the executive and legislative arms of the colony, and as more colonists arrived throughout the 1630s, local towns began creating relatively autonomous terms of government branded as religious

[56] Mather, *Magnalia*, 120, 126.
[57] Thwing, *Crooked and Narrow Streets*, 2.

covenants unique to each group. Each town elected a committee of selectmen who colonists tasked with financial management and the resolution of disputes. By 1650, New England had almost 23,000 colonists dispersed across forty towns. Some of these colonists participated in an incipient maritime industry, but the great majority practiced agriculture as their primary means of subsistence.[58]

Public policy in seventeenth-century Massachusetts granted free land to new settlers. The outcome was that, initially, few colonists lived in strict dependence on a propertied aristocracy as in Old England.[59] Scarcity of capital and industrial capacity created a relatively homogenous economic culture in which little stratification of wealth occurred between settlers relative to elsewhere in the English Atlantic. Despite the free land available to settlers, there remained a market competition for land already settled. In the first decades of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, for example, settlers bought and sold certain plots based on their proximity to other towns and their productive capacity. This type of land transaction often occurred between generations and within families and therefore reinforced existing social norms and power regimes through the selection of residents through sale. On 22 September 1643, John Winthrop sold a parcel of land upon the Concord River near Boston to his son John Winthrop Jr. for 150 pounds sterling. In the deed granting the land to his son, Winthrop Sr. wrote: "have…sold unto the said John my son all that my farm of parcell of land lying upon the Concorde River about the miles beneath Boston containing twelve hundred acres which was granted me by the General Court in…1638 and also one parcell of meadow adjoining containing about sixty acres."[60]

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[58] Virginia DeJohn Anderson, "New England in the Seventeenth Century" in Nicholas P. Canny ed. *The Origins of Empire*. Vol. 1 of *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, 198-200, 209.
[59] Ibid, 210.
[60] Deed of John Winthrop to John Winthrop Jr. 22 Sep 1643. *Papers of the Winthrop Family.* Vol. 4.

In 1635, just five years after its founding, Boston's town council agreed that they would allot no more land to newcomers except those received as new members of the local congregation.[61] This contributed to the concentration of power through land acquisition by those Bostonians who were already admitted members and could accumulate investable wealth at optimal locations while limiting entry of potential competition. For example, in 1650, the merchant Thomas Broughton began buying land throughout the town. By 1660, Broughton sold most of the land to his creditors, including a famous shipbuilder named Joshua Gee who became very wealthy and influential within the town towards the end of the seventeenth century.[62] The coastal property accumulated in the hands of an entrenched merchant class in the first decades of coastal settlement.

Despite the growth of New England's population and economy in the mid-seventeenth century, the development of infrastructure and property had yet to occur to the same degree as the much larger port towns of the English mainland. For example, in 1664, royal commissioners would report a description of Boston as a town where residents generally constructed houses of wood with streets that lacked uniformity and "decency."[63] Contrasted with the more economically developed, and internationally networked, ports of England, Boston did not have the same prestige based on observations of urban development. However, this was an early stage in the development of the town and not a conscious decision of its residents as their attempts to bring industry and commerce into their colony indicated.

Worldliness and materialism did not hinder the traditional structure of Puritan society and instead underpinned its tenants since its emergence in England in the sixteenth century. New

[61] Thwing, *Crooked and Narrow Streets,* 10.
[62] Ibid, 29.
[63] Ibid, 5.

England Puritans very often came from commercial backgrounds in England, and when possible, continued in trade and accumulated goods without viewing it as a contradiction to their spiritual belief. Puritan merchants, especially those in Boston, did not see themselves as struggling against secular temptations through their enterprise alone but only insofar as it provoked their association with foreign influences who they perceived as less holy in their lifestyle. Austerity and asceticism did not emerge as a uniform standard across Puritan commercial society, but was a question tied to interpretation and the perspective of individuals. Soberness of lifestyle was a wedge issue in the Massachusetts port town, but its origin was just as much political and economic as it was spiritual, and consequently changed in response to market integration through the seventeenth century.

Throughout the formation of the economy of early New England, the principal external economic connection was with the West Indies and not Britain, at least as far as markets for domestic produce was concerned.[64] New Englanders relied on capital and consumer goods from the English mainland, especially manufactures, but the wealth of coastal commercial agents in Boston and Salem extended primarily through food trade with the highly populated Caribbean colonies like Jamaica and Barbados where large plantation economies, with slave labour systems, were exporting sugar and other crops to growing European markets. The tendency for these islands to produce large amounts of a single crop meant that diversified agricultural communities like New England could profit from supplying the plantation economies with food. Through these means, coastal New England merchants could tap into the wealth of the global Atlantic economy by serving as intermediaries between their own hinterlands and English plantation colonies. These economic connections developed as a critical part of the New England

[64] Anderson, "New England in the Seventeenth Century," 193.

economy soon after its colonial founding, indicating that despite the values of religious isolation and a hypothetical communal existence on the fringes of English civilization, they never attempted to shake the commercialism of their English market town roots to an extent that it would bar participation in the extractive commodity economy of the English West Indies.

Unlike the Plymouth settlers who preceded them by nine years, the more populous settlers of the Massachusetts Bay Colony did not consider themselves true separatists. They believed that the Church of England could be reformed and that their mission into the New England frontier had just as much to do with an improvement of the religious lives of everyone in the empire as much as someone living in Massachusetts.[65] Their mission, from the beginning, did not reject global connection altogether, but instead, they saw the initial isolation of Massachusetts as more of a restart than a rejection of older social structures. For this reason, Bay colonists did not avoid publicity or social correspondence with England, but instead viewed it as a means to achieve economic, political, and religious ends.

Prior to departure for New England, most potential Puritan settlers lived in either small urban centres or wood-pasture agricultural communities. A disproportionate number of immigrants to New England had lived in towns with active markets relative to other groups within the English population.[66] Additionally, that these settlers could pay for the cost of Atlantic transit indicated that they were wealthier in net than their countrymen. An Atlantic voyage required the procuring of supplies and payment to captains that well exceeded the available capital of the average person.[67] Even though Puritans exchanged wealth they already held for the risk of colonial

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[65] Ibid, 198.
[66] Virginia DeJohn Anderson, *New England's Generation: The Great Migration and the Formation of Society and Culture in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University, 1991), 28.
[67] Ibid, 33.

settlement, they did not decide counter to economic incentive and perceived benefit. They foresaw both economic and spiritual uncertainty in England, but complete separation and asceticism did not follow naturally from this risk.

New England immigrants were not only separating physically from English life, but also politically. Their influence, along with those of other sects unfriendly to the Stuart government was diminishing prior to the English Civil War. Therefore, risk ran both ways, and the Bay Colonists decided given potential outcomes of both staying and leaving, that their interests were best pursued in another place. The information available to make such a decision proved limited as an economic calculation, but religious doctrine and pursuit of material wellbeing were not at odds in these considerations. Puritan religious language of this period indicated that the settlers would meet with material success, and an abundance of natural resources, the facilitation of travel, good weather, and favourable climates for settlement, were all portents of providential approval.

In 1638, the Stuart government made a formal demand for the surrender of the Bay Colony charter, which the colonial leaders refused. According to the eighteenth-century governor, Thomas Hutchinson, in his history of the colony, the proceedings which followed this refusal would have proved fatal to the Puritan control of New England had not the change of concern provoked by the coming Civil War in England not redirected royal attention. The ruling men of the colony were close associates of many of the leaders of the Civil War including many in Parliament. According to Hutchinson, under Cromwell, the colony received every possible political indulgence from Britain.[68] The transition in imperial approval during the English Civil

[68] Thomas Hutchinson, *The History of the Province of Massachusetts Bay* (Boston, MA: Thomas & John Fleet, 1828), 2.

War illustrated that the political environment from which the New England settlers fled was not, as an entirety, opposed to their political sentiments. Instead, their relation to the British mainland depended on political competition at the heart of the empire. The Puritan migration to New England was a communal cost undertaken during one tide of political upheaval prior to the Civil War with the intention of establishing permanent political control away from the tumult of England.

Migration from Old to New England toward the middle of the seventeenth century required relinquishing capital because of both the costs of transporting oneself and the costs of keeping anything but essentials when crossing the Atlantic. A well-established Englishman who considered migration to New England had to give up property and status as a cost to the transition between continents. For this reason, the young, who had accumulated less, and therefore had to relinquish less, more often decided to migrate.[69] Religious sentiment factored into the calculus underlying this decision making, but it was not independent of the perceived marginal benefit of the move. When the Puritan considered the potential for an errand in the wilderness, the religious incentive was inseparable from the material ones, and many reformed separatists would weigh financial costs against the spiritual costs, and decide to stay where they were, braving religious and political opposition under the Stuart state until the political upheaval of the Interregnum produced a government more commensurable with the Calvinist, nonconformist, worldview.

On the onset of the English Civil War emigration ceased and the economy of Massachusetts entered an economic depression.[70] The inflow of capital into New England occurred in unison

[69] Anderson, *New England's Generation*, 20.
[70] Ibid, 131.

with immigrants, and without permanent commercial connection or sufficient production in the domestic economy in place, some original settlers migrated back to England or elsewhere in the Atlantic. One such place was Providence Island in the West Indies where wealthy agents were attempting to establish commodity-based economies built around staple crops that were already gaining value within the Atlantic economy.[71]

With little labour and physical capital, the first New Englanders were not capable of producing enough finished goods to meet their own demand. They relied on producers in England for manufactures, especially for cloth. Colonists quickly found that it was easier for them to trade farm produce with the English mainland in exchange for such goods rather than undertake the costs of producing it themselves.[72] The majority of colonists thus engaged primarily in agriculture and animal husbandry with a small coastal minority involved in maritime trades supporting the largely agrarian economy by providing fish and transporting imports. Merchants connected the New England food producers to markets whereby they could develop credit and trade for goods which they could not produce themselves. For example, by the 1640s, Boston merchants were selling meat produced in Massachusetts to the West Indies.[73] However, as the seventeenth century progressed, occupational diversity increased, and many coastal towns developed markets for luxury goods such as silver products catering to a growing cosmopolitan class distinct from the agricultural producers who remained a majority of the population.[74] Port towns and their hinterlands were distinct cultures with connected interests.

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[71] Karen Ordahl Kupperman, "Errand to the Indies: Puritan Colonization from Providence Island through the Western Design." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (January 1988), 75-77.
[72] Anderson, *New England's Generation*, 137.
[73] Ibid, 152.
[74] Ibid, 147.

The Puritans who immigrated to Massachusetts in large numbers in the middle of the seventeenth century had a common ministerial tradition rooted in the Reformation in England. Their tradition extended from John Calvin, who rejected the individualist spiritualism and unmediated relation to scripture advocated by other Christian sects emerging in the sixteenth century, such as the Anabaptists. Calvin and his spiritual successors instead made obedience to religious law the fundamental tenant of their theology.[75] Translating religious cultures to new regions however, required the Puritan ministers to adapt the way they practiced religion to a new environment in the same way economic culture would have to adapt to a frontier with far less market development, infrastructure, and available labour than had existed in England. To adapt the belief in religious law and the critical importance of adherence to its tenants to New England settlement, ministers and their allies in government and the commercial sphere would have to adapt the means of enforcement to a natural environment far different from that in which Calvinist theology developed in Continental Europe.

Extending from Calvin, Puritan theologians and administrators in New England, along with their old country counterparts, believed that adherence to established social hierarchies and deference to superiors was necessary for the proper function of a religious society.[76] However, they disputed exactly what that meant. For example, many New England immigrants found church institutions exclusionary along secular, as compared to strictly spiritual, dictates. The implication, they felt, was an undue power rooted in the ministry that exceeded the right exercise of influence in a society of believers. The most notable example of such a dispute occurred within a few years after the first settlement of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in New England.

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[75] David D. Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd: A History of the New England Ministry in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1972), 16, 56.
[76] Ibid, 69.

This was the conflict over the test of a relation by which a person, to gain full membership in the local church, would have to present themselves to the admitted members as having an inspiration derived through some religious revelation. The majority found this task either cumbersome or vague, and by the 1640s growth of church membership fell behind the growth of the general population, which many felt to be at odds with the sentiment that inspired the migration in the first place.[77]

Before the first migration, in 1628, the future minister of Boston, John Wilson, wrote the future colonial governor John Winthrop with concerns over the exclusionary party control of Catholicism in England and in the whole of Europe. The fracture between power and others though would remain apparent in his intended religious sanctuary in New England, when it turned out that many Bostonians would interpret Wilson's influence in the same way he had identified the irreligious power seeking of papal recusants in Europe. For Wilson, the first decade of his tenure as minister in the first church at Boston would revolve around his efforts to validate his growing influence to a church which opposed his power to place his own standards on their spiritual attainment.[78]

Fears of the abuse of power in the first decades of the migration to Massachusetts took forms that were not only religious in nature, but explicitly secular. The use of religious rhetoric in secular governance as well as religious information, however, blurred the line as to where members of the local government derived their power, and, subsequently, the degree to which colonists saw secular opposition as a religious question. The dispute over the introduction of the negative voice provides an example of such conflict. Negative voice was a form of veto power

[77] Ibid, 97,99.
[78] Ibid, 73, 110.

practiced by the governor which many influential settlers such as the minister Richard Mather advocated beginning in the mid-1630s. Many settlers felt this gave the governor excessive power over town decisions.[79]

Quarrel among Puritans in New England, largely having to do with the authority of ministers and government over the general population, and other influential members, had precedents predating their arrival in the colony. The Leyden separatists, for example, who took refuge in the Netherlands in the 1590s quickly took to internal disputes that split the refugees into opposed groups which migrated elsewhere, many of which went to New England.[80] Networks of Puritans who seemed united by ideology in England realized their differences only when they attempted to form communities with each other. Following the attempt at settlement in the Netherlands, groups of Puritans under the influence of Calvinist reformed theology dispersed and reconstituted again where the cycle of ideological union and separation would play out again across the Atlantic. The earliest history of Puritan theology does not indicate a propensity for internal agreement, at least not solely along doctrinal lines.

Early settlers in New England considered religion and law as inseparable insofar as the one required the influence of the other to maintain its traditional significance. Even when the direct creation of town laws and the ability to enforce penalties did not extend to clergy, they nonetheless played a role in how the public heard and interpreted policy. For example, in Massachusetts throughout the colonial period, clergy proclaimed laws and government announcements at church meetings.[81] Through such means, the minister became the voice for the

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[79] Ibid, 112.
[80] Ibid, 37.
[81] Mark McGarvie and Elizabeth Mensch, "Law and Religion in Colonial America" in Grossberg and Tomlins eds. *The Cambridge History of Law in America,* 325.

secular leaders, which gave early government traditions more symbolic power as citizens viewed their laws as meriting divine approval. Furthermore, judges and selectmen integrated civil law with church doctrine in that their jurisdictions overlapped. A Bay Colonist could bring a potential civil complaint before a law court, town meeting, or church gathering.[82] The choice between venues indicated that power to intercede in conflict was not the realm of any one type of official but instead a collaborative effort on the part of multiple authorities.

Most Bay Colonists arrived from England in the summer and spent their first weeks living in the port towns in which they arrived before setting out to find a permanent residence in another town where town officials would allot them land for farming.[83] The groups that most often decided to stay within the towns in which they arrived were craftsmen and merchants who found them the most lucrative places to apply their trades given the constant influx of immigrants into the towns to fuel market demand and to maintain connections with foreign firms.[84] It was necessary that coastal residents adapt their professions to Atlantic commerce to maintain any economic power, otherwise they would be outcompeted with no hope to pay for land and living space. From the first years of immigration, towns like Boston were already beginning to form exclusive commercial communities revolving around the trades of the merchant and craftsman as well as the political power of the governors and prominent ministers. Residents pushed newcomers without such capacities to the outskirts of town and, subsequently, these newcomers often left to live in hinterland towns more attuned to their skillsets.[85]

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[82] Ibid, 333.
[83] Anderson, *New England's Generation,* 103.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid, 115-116.

The role that craftspeople played in the culture and economy of the port town was critical as they were the first means through which information travelled within and between Massachusetts towns as well as the wider English Atlantic. In the seventeenth century, coopers, goldsmiths, shoemakers, and others involved in craft trades would travel between houses, serving as the primary carriers of news.[86] This was a significant early overlap between commerce and knowledge. Craftspeople could mould the secondary accounts of significant events which most people received in the coastal towns. Such news, because it first had to pass through the port before it reached the hinterland, allowed this group of craftspeople to influence the entire colony. Not all craftspeople who arrived in Boston found its economic and social environment conducive to their goals. For example, a cordwainer named William Copp arrived in the town as early as 1641. The local government fined Copp soon after his arrival for concealing money and he decided to leave Massachusetts soon thereafter. Copp left behind a large amount of land north of Braintree and a plot of valuable land in North Boston.[87]

Competition for land was a significant source of social sorting among the first generation of Massachusetts settlers. Englishmen in the seventeenth century based their notion of civilization on the development of land.[88] This had strong political applications as the English government granted the charter-holders of the Bay Colony freedom in the acquisition and disposal of land.[89] The result was that the township system, which the first settlers developed, had authority in deciding the form in which colonization occurred. Settlement was not free on individual terms but instead wrapped up into the corporate governance of the colony's charter and the existing

[86] Thwing, *Crooked and Narrow Streets*, 14.
[87] Ibid, 29.
[88] Hughes, *Social Control*, 33.
[89] Ibid, 68.

constitution of towns. The granting of land was a function of colonial seats of power even if the frontier society took on a more decentralized form of control.

The system of land ownership that developed under the physical dispersion of town authority in Massachusetts remained largely unchallenged by English imperial oversight until the creation of the Dominion of New England in 1686. Prior to this, New Englanders had adapted to a situation whereby local leaders mediated land ownership. The legal structure which the colonists developed proved so entrenched by 1686 that the new governor, Edmund Andros, to mass disapproval, had to challenge all land titles granted by the townships to establish the system of land ownership used in England which emphasized more centralized control.[90]

In early modern England and its colonies, the division between an agrarian majority and a commercial class was not simply a natural tendency toward a specific division of tasks. It was a legal dictate created by a commercial and legal class, and its purpose, insofar as it was applicable, was exclusionary. The Statute of Artificers and Apprentices passed in 1563 allowed persons with sufficient independent incomes, mariners, fishermen, miners, and those in craft trades exemption from agricultural work.[91] According to the English state and the legal tradition extended to the colonies, those who could not enter such careers or accumulate enough personal wealth were farmers by default due to the demand for agrarian labour in a largely unindustrialized society.

Because of the exclusion from coastal land ownership and from certain trades, commercial groups exercised control over information. This was true for both the international merchant and the local artisans who had been establishing themselves as a powerful coastal interest group since

[90] Ibid, 69.
[91] Ibid, 97.

the beginning of the Great Migration. In New England, exclusion along lines of profession adapted to the new environment to take on a new form. As had been mandated by the Statute of Artificers and Apprentices, the agrarians were most of the population. However, in the case of New England, the constraints of moving outside of an agricultural community were not just legal but also environmental and social. Where labour was limited, people had to act in unison to produce an amount of food on which they could live. Furthermore, colonial administrators in coastal towns like Boston and Salem derived their political power through the support of the agricultural majority as well as ecclesiastical and commercial influences, such that even those physically outside of the agricultural hinterland still found themselves part of the larger culture of agricultural subsistence. Individual agricultural communities manifested themselves politically in the form of the town, which meant that without a capacity to contribute to agricultural production, groups such as fishermen and trappers had to form their own, largely homogenous, societies or contribute at least in part to the agrarian lifestyle which mainstream society actively promoted. While the movement of individuals between work groups was common, such as that between fishing and farming communities, this did not mean that interests cohered between the groups.[92]

Agriculture exacted demands on the colonial government and created demands on church and governing authorities in many towns power to the exclusion of non-farmers. Many fishermen and trappers chose to live beyond the political reaches of the majority, which often made them marginal figures in the development of the colonial economy and its laws.[93] The agricultural majority pushed merchants to a social fringe, albeit one that was not as easily alienable. In fact,

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[92] Daniel Vickers, *Farmers and Fishermen: Two Centuries of Work in Essex County, Massachusetts, 1630-1850* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1994), 52-63.
[93] Bruce H. Mann, "The Transformation of Law and Economy in Early America" in Grossberg and Tomlins eds. *The Cambridge History of Law in America,* 368.

as would become increasingly evident, the material basis of agrarian influence would have to increasingly contend with that of mercantile interests as the costs of trade diminished in accordance with the growth of the Atlantic economy.

Colonial law mandated more than the status of agrarian and maritime labour. It also constrained trade to fit government standards. The colonial law required leather sealers, market clerks, appraisers, and viewers of staves and fish to record a promise to maintain standards in goods sold in a legal registry.[94] Consequently, restriction on business by colonial government depended not only on the ability to choose a career in a coastal trade or industry. The government could also exclude entry into the market for failure to meet their regulations. For this reason, success in any coastal trade required an ability to predict and respond both to consumer demand and the intentions of local councils and courts with the ability to enforce black letter law in coastal ports.

The standards of law extended not only to products to be sold and services to be rendered, but also rights to future production. This was most significant along coastal territory, especially in Boston, where authority was most centralized and the ability to make exclusive grants for first movers was strongest. For example, in 1668 the town of Boston offered a monopoly for anyone who built a dock.[95] This practice of granting exclusive right occurred not only via direct monopoly grants but also through contracting and chartering groups with public funds such as the 1630 franchise granted for a ferry from Boston to Charlestown with rates and services set by

[94] Hughes, *Social Control*, 99.
[95] Ibid, 120.

government decree.[96] In 1636, for example, the town chose a local cordwainer named Thomas Marshall for the upkeep of the ferry.[97]

Coastal property and the capacity to invest capital in shipbuilding along the wharves in Boston created distinct economic communities that gained an exceptional amount of commercial power relative to other colonists including those living further inland within the same towns. Because of their wealth and commercial influence, the sections of the towns where these communities lived were able to influence local government to contribute to the infrastructure of these sections of the town as well as granting exclusive legal rights to their industry. For example, Boston's North End quickly became the sight of lucrative maritime trades soon after its founding and was the first place to have a public construction of roads connecting its dwellings and wharves. It became one of the major sites of the Massachusetts shipbuilding industry. The Boston town council granted leave to all the residents of the North End living along the waterfront to build a wharf off their property, and it was from these places that many of the ships arriving in Boston passed through with goods from that time onward.[98]

Within Boston, sections of the town, such as the North End, became distinct communities in themselves which often took on the form of opposition groups to other parts of the town. The most distinct of the internal factions was the social division between the North and South Ends which often manifested itself in ritualistic conflict as well as the subtler economic and political competitions which occurred every day. An example of such behaviour was the Pope's Day game in which young North and South End men would attempt to capture an effigy of the pope in the possession of the other which the winning side then burned. This game would increasingly

[96] Ibid, 139.
[97] Thwing, *Crooked and Narrow Streets*, 31.
[98] Ibid, 26.

become a part of Boston's culture into the eighteenth century indicating how local factionalism continued as a determinant of Massachusetts culture through the colonial period.[99] Bostonians established precedents for monopoly and shared interest between political and economic power through public-private projects such as the Charlestown ferry and the dock monopolies, as the holding of property and the reinforcement of economic norms through factions were self-perpetuating. This effect of localized group-interest remained an impetus for social and political turmoil through the eighteenth century. For example, the state-supported ferry would remain in place until the Boston government replaced it with a bridge after the American Revolution.

The Massachusetts Body of Liberties of 1641 dictated that the colonial government would grant no monopolies except those that were profitable to the colony. Also, it claimed that those monopolies that the government did grant would only exist for short periods of time.[100] However, as the continued development of monopolistic industry and concentration of property amongst individuals with state support attested, the definition of a monopoly that was profitable to the colony, and also how long of a period over which a monopoly grant was acceptable, was a subjective consideration decided by the interest of a governing elite with close ties to the industries they regulated.

The fear of abuse of secular and religious authority depended on the extent of their commercial power and authority in the coastal centers of colonial government. For example, influence in the organization of commercial pursuits that exceeded the common capacity to squeeze adequate comfort and independence from frontier settlement existed primarily in the port towns, such as Boston from which ministerial training and church organization extended out

[99] Thwing, *Crooked and Narrow Streets*, 78-9.
[100] "The Massachusetts Body of Liberties (1641)." Hanover Historical Texts Project.

of institutions such as Harvard College. The rigid status system through which ministerial administrators ordered students according to family exacerbated the class distinctions forming between the coastal colonial heads and the remainder of the colony. From the beginning, ministers sent their own sons to Harvard with greater frequency than any other group.[101] Being as the port towns were settled first and had first developed such educational hierarchies, this power over religious information developed most strongly amongst a coastal minority. Furthermore, because the infrastructure already existed for education in coastal towns, often access to education limited upward mobility just as much as did hierarchies enforced at Harvard. For example, many towns could not maintain the grammar schools (also called Latin schools) through which students learned the prerequisites necessary for entrance to Harvard. The result was that towns in which colonists established grammar schools early, such as Boston, sent a disproportionate number of students to the college to be trained as ministers.[102]

The capability of education systems to yield opportunities outside of agrarian labour weakened with distance from port towns. Law and material distribution created a system by which just as much education necessary to receive information existed in towns outside of Boston and Salem, but not enough educational opportunities existed to shape transatlantic information into their own, original, narratives. The colonial majority therefore remained dependent on the urban centres for the tools necessary to organize themselves along the lines of academic and religious tradition which exacerbated their dependence on them for the political and economic news necessary to connect them to the Atlantic economy and English state.

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[101] Hall, *Faithful Shepherd*, 182.
[102] Ibid, 182.

The costs of colonization took the capital held by all settlers, but the coastal immigrants who arrived early in colonial history and situated themselves as heads of colonial administration, at least legally, were the only ones that seemed most capable of recouping the initial costs of migration and reaping the highest return on their investments into the New England town system. The Winthrop family modelled this phenomenon through their maintenance of international commercial connection which gave them an influence that extended internationally as well as within the colony. Although endeavours such as the Saugus ironworks proved too costly for the Winthrops and other undertakers to profit in a land devoid of unemployed laborers, they were able to connect themselves socially and politically with the one group that benefited financially from the initial settlement. This group was the port town merchants of both Massachusetts and England.[103] The result was a distinction between the port town elite and the rural majority which resulted in separate sets of interests, a degree of detachment, and in the cases where frontier resources became scarce, conflict. At this early point, the commercial world of the port town was already becoming a distinct entity. It was also a necessary intermediary that allowed for the connection to English capital that made settlement of Massachusetts feasible in terms of cost.

V. Robert Keayne, Intracolonial Antagonisms, and the Instrumental Use of Economic Controls

Price control entered political and economic dialogue in early New England immediately following initial English settlement. In his abstract of the laws of New England, John Cotton wrote that it was lawful for the governor of the colony, with one or more of the assembly, to decide the prices arriving on all ships to be sold in the colony. Additionally, such control also

[103] Ibid, 90.

applied to wages, whereby the prices at which one could sell their labour was set by the governor for certain industries.[104] An example of this occurred in 1641, at which time the price of commodities fell in Boston, and the General Court ordered an abatement of wages.[105]

Price control was not a concern unique to the Bay Colony but had instead played a consistent role in English economic life since the Magna Carta affirmed the state's right to fix prices. Price control measures were enforced by English judges, and the economic control measures were adopted by Puritan settlers without the need to establish any new precedents for their use.[106] However, price control measures would serve as political tools to early New Englanders who employed them to empower group interests against competitors, as was evident in the life of Robert Keayne. In 1653, Keayne, a merchant and militia Captain wrote his will, which contained a defence of his past business interactions. He felt that social contention and personal attacks against his person had given him a poor public image, which he claimed he did not deserve. Keayne's will reveals a narrative of an early New England worldview which put little stress on a pervasive Puritan approach to moral economy, but instead emphasizes personal differences, political power, and disagreement between individuals.

Keayne was the son of a London Butcher. An intensely religious man, and an avid promoter of theological Puritanism, he migrated to Boston soon after the town was founded and quickly established himself as a preeminent member of the then small group of merchants who imported manufactured goods from England for sale to colonists. Keayne and his wife Anne were admitted to Boston's first church in 1636.[107] In 1639, only nine years after the founding of the

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[104] Cotton, "An Abstract of the Laws."
[105] Thwing, *Crooked and Narrow Streets*, 14.
[106] Hughes, *Social Control*, 91.
[107] Robert Keayne, *The Apologia of Robert Keayne: The Self-Portrait of a Puritan Merchant*. Edited by Bernard Bailyn. (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1970), vii.

city, Keayne was the centre of a court trial and public court censure which originated from what accusers perceived to be acts of price gouging. These charges revolved largely around an instance of his overcharging for nails for what some believed to be an excessive profit achieved by these means.[108]

One significant aspect of Keayne's extensive will was his meticulous use of his account books and letters both in directing his executors to access his estate after his death and in evidencing his innocence against the accusations which had bothered him since his censure fourteen years prior. He wrote: "The particulars of this and the persons to whom I am indebted my executors and overseers may find in a long paper book in my closet at Boston with a white parchment cover, entitled my inventory book, in which the particulars of my whole estate from year to year with all that I owe and all debts that are owing to me."[109] Keayne's purpose here was to produce evidence. He sought, through record-keeping, to make a commonly understood medium for communicating the nature of his work. At an early stage of Boston's development, its merchants were already seeking to validate actions with documents. This was a practice which Keayne adopted while he faced increased accusations within his community. His opposition used the language of community as a tool for their interest in competition against Keayne. In response, he adapted his methods.

Much of Keayne's will is the expression of public concerns and allocation of his wealth to town projects after his death. Specifically, Keayne noted his intended contribution to the construction of a marketplace and a conduit for the transportation of water in the case of fire.[110] He also expressed interest in improving the quality of education through donations to the then

[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid, 4, 68, 71.
[110] Ibid, 6.

only recently constructed Harvard College and the donation of his collection of books, some of which were his own handwritten reflections on theology including expositions on the prophecies of Daniel, Hosea, and the Book of Revelations.[111] Keayne's belief in Christian purity and generosity were not theoretically different from his accusers or Puritan society in general. He sought to prove this through his will.

Keayne's will shows his dual relation to both the commercial and martial worlds of Boston in its earliest decades. For example, he intended at the time of his death to contribute five pounds for the purchase of pikes and bandoleers for the use of the Boston artillery company, as well as an additional five pounds for the construction of a firing platform.[112] This dual intermediary position between commerce and military was common in colonial Massachusetts, and the influence acquired through one public endeavour often carried into other activities. In addition to Keayne, another example of this from the generation following Keayne's was the merchant Elisha Hutchinson, born in 1641, who was colonel of the Boston Regiment and commander of colonial forces against the French in Maine. Hutchinson was also a justice on the Court of Common Pleas, indicating that positions within the economy, military, and judicial system shared the same channels of power.[113] While this universality of institutional power may not have existed in such a developed state when Keayne faced his public censure in 1639, his influence and those of other notable leaders along the Massachusetts coast foreshadowed the increased consolidation of power by mid-century.

Keayne dedicated a significant portion of his will to documenting what he held in his possession through his business in Boston since his arrival in 1634. For example, he mentions all

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[111] Ibid, 9.
[112] Ibid, 11.
[113] Thwing, *Crooked and Narrow Streets*, 40.

the cash which he held in his possession, which was significant given its relative scarcity in the colony at that time. Keayne instructed that this cash at the time of his death be granted to the town's poor yet stated that this was contingent on the town given sufficient bond, thus ensuring that the local authorities would not utilize it for unauthorized means. [114] Keayne expressed a distrust of the town government's ability to allocate his donation effectively. This indicated that the local judiciary did not necessarily share the same moral aims as Keayne, and that without explicit documentation stating otherwise, they would use such funds toward their own goals.

Keayne followed the inclusion of the local poor in his will with a generalized complaint which read "some have a special faculty to censure another man's actions and direct what others should do or might do when they see not their own defects or neglects, and to extol and multiply small acts of their own and undervalue because they know them not."[115] The tone of Keayne's language throughout his will, is that of a person who believed he was misunderstood by his community. To Keayne, his reputation, which to a merchant and prominent citizen of an early modern town was crucial to success, had been diminished because of false accusations and undeserved negative publicity. He believed, contrary to those outside of his profession, that he had undergone great risk and personal costs in his business, and that the result was an improvement in the general good of Boston and the colony of Massachusetts. He wrote that "Considering also the great losses that I have had by sea and land, had I been wanting in care for the discharge of either of these I should have born the burden and reproach with little support or comfort from the country."[116] To Keayne, his interests and those of much of his town, were not aligned despite commonly held religious views or allegiances to the colony or king.

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[114] Keayne, *Apologia*, 21.
[115] Ibid, 27.
[116] Ibid, 27.

Keayne also believed that part of the reason that some of his fellow Bostonians had singled him out was because he was simply the first of a group of merchants to engage in business in the way he did. For example, in his will, he claimed that his offense had become the norm and that every shop and warehouse in the town had by the time of his will pursued higher amounts of excess profit than he ever had. Furthermore, he claimed, many of those in said warehouses and shops were the same ones who were most virulent in their accusations against him years prior.[117] Additionally, he argued, even at the time of his censure, the prices charged, and profits made were higher in London than what he had charged to evoke the hostility of some of his fellow colonists.[118]

According to Keayne, the accusations against him also stemmed in large part from the dishonesty and misapprehensions of his accusers. Additionally, as Keayne indicated, one of the primary accusers was a magistrate himself, such that, because of a false representation of his accuser's honour, the dishonesty could not be accurately identified by the court during the proceedings. For example, he recalled how this specific accuser, unnamed in the will, claimed that Keayne owed him money but refused to pay, which he adamantly denied, producing a receipt for the past payment of the debt and offered to contact a third party in London who had been involved in the dispute in question. Yet the unnamed accuser would not relent and took Keayne before the town elders. The elders initially acquitted Keayne of wrongdoing. He later wrote that "I told our elders that [I] intended to sue him for the slanders and injury that he had done to me. [However,] Mr. Cotton wished me rather to forbear."[119] Later, when these same accusations would come to arise again, Keayne would be less fortunate however and would

[117] Ibid, 48.
[118] Ibid, 52.
[119] Ibid, 61.

regret his decision not to be more aggressive in his counteraccusations against what he saw to be private prejudices against him.

Despite Keayne's censure and trial, and the poor personality traits which his accusers attributed to him, he was not a socially or politically isolated man. He had deep network connections with multiple powerful social spheres within Boston. In his will, for example, he expressed close relation to the influential first pastor of Boston John Wilson. In his will he includes Wilson as a beneficiary, of whom he wrote "I give and bequeath to my loving brother Mr. John Wilson, our pastor at Boston, as a token of my love and thankfulness for all his kindness showed to me ten pounds, wishing that my estate were such that my estate were such that I could have done for him and his as I desire." Furthermore, in his will he also chose to give part of his estate to the wife of the deceased John Cotton, the second of Boston's first-generation pastors, who was already deceased at the time Keayne wrote his will.[120] Keayne faced social opposition in Boston, but this did not ostracize him from the major seats of influence, including the church.

In Keayne's will, it is also evident that he had close relationships with the class of craftspeople who made up a significant portion of Boston's seventeenth-century economy. One craftsperson who appears in Keayne's will is a shoemaker, who Keayne refers to simply as Reynolds Sr., who he granted twenty shillings as a token of respect. In writing of Reynolds, and recalling the time of his censure and trial, Keayne stated that he was "not forgetting a word that he spoke publicly and seasonably in the time of my distress and other men's vehement

[120] Ibid, 41.

opposition against me."[121] Keayne connected himself to the means of information exchange over which such craftspeople were establishing a strong hold through their businesses.

Keayne was a divisive figure amongst the first generation of Bostonians, but his censure was not the result of a unanimous communal opposition to his economic practices. Keayne's censure had social roots that extended back to his arrival and legal conflict between him and other interest groups within the town. For example, in 1636, Keayne engaged in a dispute with a neighbour who claimed that he had stolen her pig, which Keayne denied. Part of the town united against Keayne on this matter and others came to his defence such that a significant uproar centred around the accusation revealing an animosity amongst the town that had previously been dormant. The judges cleared Keayne of the charge, but the neighbour accused him again, that time with the alliance of a merchant named George Story from London, who Keayne had accused of being an adulterer. Before the Inferior Court in Boston, the judges cleared Keayne of wrongdoing yet again.[122]

In seventeenth-century Massachusetts, to be seen as excessively contentious and litigious placed one at risk of censure or ostracization. Yet, at the same time, the tensions over resources and useful space which occurred within the first New England towns did not allow one to achieve success without asserting oneself against the claims of others against rights to disputed property and space. Despite the plenitude of land and resources in seventeenth-century New England, Keayne's experience indicated that within Boston, conflict over such material disputes were necessary for economic ascendency. Beginning in 1641, only two years following Keayne's censure and the years of dispute preceding it, the colonial government of Massachusetts made

[121] Ibid, 42.
[122] Thwing, *Crooked and Narrow Streets*, 120.

two mandates which seemed to directly reflect Keayne's experiences in what was initially supposed to be a society that prized communalism over material competition. First, the government dictated that the court would thereafter have the power to determine whether a person was a "common barrator vexing others with frequent and unjust suits," and that they could deny such people the future use of the law. Second, they claimed that from that point on, no church censure should degrade any man from a civil dignity or position of authority that he held within the colony.[123]

Keayne's relation to Boston society was not that of an outsider and economic deviant, but instead a man with a tendency towards dispute and a capacity to influence factions within the town. Keayne's experiences in Boston prior to his 1639 censure support the claim in his will that his accusers had personal reasons to attack his character. Far from revealing some Puritan communal notion of a moral economy opposed to excessive accumulation, Keayne's story showed dispute and power struggle through legal and economic means. As Boston fractured along lines of self-interest, a notable disputant such as Keayne found himself swept up in the anxieties and animosities of a formative coastal town.

VI. Cotton Mather and Social Disruption at the Turn of the Eighteenth Century

In *Magnalia Christi Americana,* Cotton Mather recounted popular sentiment in the Dominion of New England, a polity which consisted of most of the lands of the English colonies above Virginia, united under the rule of the royally appointed governor Sir Edmund Andros. According to Mather, as the result of Andros's execution of power, New England existed in a state of mass suffering. He claimed that, under the rule of the new governor and the royal imperative he

[123] Massachusetts Body of Liberties. 1641.

supported, the colony experienced "intolerable *Invasions* upon their *Properties*."[124] Massachusetts ministers formed one of the most consistent and influential opposition groups to the Sir Edmund Andros's political influence. This served to reinforce ministerial political influence in the colony which provided little popular support for the Andros government.[125] However, it also revealed the secular nature of their influence by showing how they took on a major role in the negotiation of terms with the English state and local government which had more to do with governance than theology.

Following the granting of the new charter under King William in 1691, quarrels between clergy and common people emerged concerning the weakened claims that the clergy seemed to have to otherworldly status.[126] Just as in the first-generation ministers' conflict with church members, the people viewed their preachers as a politically privileged group with cosmopolitan leanings unreflective of the general will. The struggle to maintain influence of clergy and their coastal allies resulted in contention within port towns, which in the case of the Salem Witch Trials yielded an outbreak of violence unprecedented within the coastal Puritan communities of New England.

According to the eighteenth-century historian and governor of Massachusetts, Thomas Hutchinson, the witch trials emerged from a turbulent political environment. He claimed that the arrival of the new charter, the abundance of hostile privateers, and inland frontiers harassed by French and Indian enemies, all contributed to a mania which swept through Puritan society and its seats of power at the time of the witch scare.[127] Additionally, Hutchinson indicated the

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[124] Mather, *Magnalia*, 288.
[125] Bushman, *King and People*, 38.
[126] Ibid, 11.
[127] Hutchinson, *The History of the Province of Massachusetts Bay*, 12.

significance of a rapid influx of new information into the colony in the form of written word and verbal communication with a transient population of commercial agents and mariners that had increased in size and influence. For example, he wrote that the accused behaviour of the supposedly bewitched in both Salem and Boston matched the descriptions found in books on witchcraft that were just then entering the colony from England. To Hutchinson, writing about seventy years after the witch trials, there was no doubt that these new stories of witches from England were responsible for introducing the spectre of witchcraft to a society that had only on a few occasions prosecuted its citizens as accused witches prior to that time.[128]

The man chosen to succeed Andros as the governor of Massachusetts following the dissolution of the Dominion of New England in 1689, Sir William Phips, was not an isolationist by any measure, yet he received wide support from the clergy and local authorities within the colony including Cotton Mather who concluded the *Magnalia* with a spiritual biography of this commercially oriented governor. Phips, contrary to the ascetic values at the base of much of the early clerical narrative of New England life, rose to power as a treasure hunter and naval officer considered by many contemporaries to be rapacious and ill-tempered. For example, on one occasion during his term as governor, Phips personally caned and imprisoned a Captain Short on a public street in Boston after he refused to give up a vessel which he had captured to the colonial government. Captain Short returned to England physically injured and furious and made a complaint to the royal government against Phips. The complaint was not successful at immediately removing Phips from his position, but suspicion concerning Phips's behaviour, both

[128] Ibid, 17-22.

in and outside of Boston, after multiple similar episodes eventually resulted in his relinquishing the governorship.[129]

Phips's short rule contained significant conflict with imperial influence, stemming largely from his tendency to use his state power to the benefit of friends when conflict arose. Phips's connections to the British navy and commercial world of the Atlantic lent him a high social status and economic influence, yet it also made him a target for those who fell outside of his influence. On one occasion, a Colonel Foster, Phips's friend, and a Boston merchant, arrived in Boston with a cargo from the Bahamas for which the customs office had not provided him a bond indicating that he had paid a duty. This occurred before Parliament had officially established customhouses in the colonies, and so officials in New England and the Caribbean operated instead under a royal appointment which lacked legal influence in far-away colonies where local populations could simply refuse to comply. Upon Foster's arrival in Boston, the collector of the town seized his vessel and goods for failure to produce a bond. There was no Court of Admiralty functional in New England during this time for appeal or prosecution, so power to confiscate was entirely a function of the collector's office. In response Foster appealed to Phips, who interposed immediately. After a heated exchange of words with the collector, Phips took the confiscated goods and vessels from the collector's possession and returned it to Foster.[130]

The clergy's support of Phips indicated that they could ignore a local leader's concern for material gain, or his tendency to provoke dispute, if he made some other contribution to the political system. The primary characteristic which separated Phips from a governor who the

[129] Mather, *Magnalia*, 282-283, 299-300.
[130] Hutchinson, *The History of the Province of Massachusetts Bay*, 75-7.

clergy opposed, like Edmund Andros, was not Puritan sensibility but local autonomy. Phips, like the original governors two generations earlier, contested the political goals and intended control of the crown and parliament. Among the Massachusetts political and commercial elite, Phips was a local insider, and this made him an ally of the clergy.

The conflict between inter-Atlantic cosmopolitan connection and the localism inherent to the initial formation of New England churches and ministry is evident in the introduction to Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana*, published in 1698, in which Mather expressed a desire to communicate a worldview developed in the context of the Boston ministry to a global audience. Like many in his generation, he wanted to eliminate the isolation that the original settlers had sought out sixty years prior, while couching his descriptions in the language derived from that same founding generation.[131] As Mather tried to reconcile the place of the ministry in a globalizing society with the rhetoric of New England settlement, the commercial and political powers through which the ministry had derived their material influence abandoned religious language in favour of the language of global commerce. Religion in New England port towns would have to adapt to a new economic and social reality, as would become increasingly apparent in the eighteenth century.

A transition in the way which New England's religious society approached global influence and connection did not change its aim to shape the behaviour of colonists. Religious narratives remained significant means through which they explained the physical world. These narratives subsequently served as mechanisms of social control as the pursuit of interests which deviated from local norms could be criticized in a spiritual, as well as secular, form.

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[131] Hall, *Faithful Shepherd*, 277.

The use of law for the enforcement of social and religious values did not disappear after the late-seventeenth century at which time the New England ministers were most strongly expressing notions of social decline. More than twenty years after Massachusetts received its new charter after the dissolution of the Dominion of New England, Cotton Mather wrote in his diary that "The General Assembly has made a Law, to restrain Abuses of the Lords-day Evening" and that "It might be a Sensible and Seasonable Service unto my Flock, if on this Occasion I preach a Sermon unto them…about the Motives…for spending that Evening in the Exercises of Piety."[132] Spiritualism remained codified in secular institutions under the influence of influential coastal ministers like Mather.

One can read Cotton Mather as a microcosm of much of the conflict that defined New England society at the beginning of the eighteenth century. He was at the same time both a member of an inter-Atlantic academic elite and a proponent of a ministerial traditionalism which he felt to be the means through which Puritan society had made the settlement and development of Massachusetts possible. Mather exhibited much of the anxiety which drove his political and social sentiments through the academic pursuits which he undertook and which he spent much of his later life trying to convince family and Bostonians to undertake. He considered his induction into the Royal Society one of his greatest achievements and was in constant correspondence with London where he published multiple texts including his ecclesiastical history *Magnalia Christi Americana.*[133] In fact, Mather realized that, to profitably publish his manuscript, and to reach a substantial audience, he had to publish the book in London. In 1698, he made the decision to

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[132] Cotton Mather, *Diary of Cotton Mather, D.D., F.R.S., for the Year 1712*. Edited by William R. Manierre, II. (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia, 1964), 25.
[133] Ibid, 93-4.

send his draft with a merchant and ship captain from Boston named Edward Bromfield on a voyage to London.[134]

Mather's religious language and representation of New England as a land defined by the traditions of its ministry, as represented in most of his work published around the turn of the eighteenth century, did not go uncontested. Beginning in 1693, immediately following the Salem Witch Trials, a cloth merchant and anti-clergy agitator named Robert Calef published multiple pieces critical to Mather's interpretation of New England life and what Calef saw as a naively superstitious understanding of the natural world. The internal divides of New England society were not simply local conflicts at that time but were playing out on a global stage through which the entire English empire were potential spectators, as Mather's publication in London attested. Despite efforts to create a traditionalist narrative for the new interconnected world, Mather and the clerical class saw an encroachment of potentially harmful influence in globalization.[135]

While the colony had been in the process of interconnection from the beginning, Cotton Mather, his father Increase, and all the preachers of jeremiads toward the end of the seventeenth century came to realize that the ministerial notion of the search for grace in the wilderness did not hold when they were no longer isolated. As power shifted towards the commercial agents who drove these changes, the ministers faced a threat to their social power and prestige which would have to be adapted if religion was to stay a major influence in the colony. Nowhere was this clearer than the anxiety evident in Cotton Mather's social critiques of the lifestyles and Christian educations of fellow New Englanders in the early eighteenth century.

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[134] Mather, *Magnalia*, 27.
[135] Ibid, 17.

Concerning his son Samuel, Cotton Mather wrote that "I will Supply him continually with Distichs, both Latin and English, to be Learned by Heart, and Rewards for his Learning of them."[136] In response to a changing social environment in which information infiltrated the daily lives of New Englanders through commercial and legal channels, Mather sought to reinforce the Puritan traditionalism which existed when such information access existed exclusively in the hands of a coastal administrative elite. Mather saw the old norms of religious education collapsing around him. Consequently, he made reinforcing Calvinist modes of thinking among his neighbours and family a significant part of his later life.

Mather also expressed a large degree of concern over the destabilization of what he saw as traditional Puritan values expressed within his family. For example, he wrote in his diary that he had a strong suspicion that his son Increase, who would later become a mariner, did not maintain a habit of private prayer.[137] A common theme in Mather's later writing was the spiritual failure of those around him. In the context of early eighteenth-century globalization, this was representative not only of Mather's metaphysical beliefs but also an anxiety over the diminishment of the power of the clergy.

Mariners and transient life were a prominent target of Mather's accusations against a perceived, growing, social disfunction in Massachusetts. In his diary he wrote that "in the Very populous town of *Marblehead*, which is near unto us, there is a most grievous want of Household-Religion… I would immediately write unto the Schoolmaster…and send him a Number of Books, on that subject."[138] It followed naturally that mariners in coastal fishing towns like Marblehead were one of the groups in which Mather identified cultural dispositions most

[136] Mather, *Diary*, 89.
[137] Ibid, 110.
[138] Ibid, 121.

contrary to old social mores. This group was the most transient of the early New Englanders and, for that reason, they were more likely to access information outside of traditional communities. They could develop their own cultural practices around an unpredictable Atlantic environment. To Mather, whose worldview developed around a perceived objective value of Puritan traditionalism, such foreign influences were tantamount to contagion. Through education, Mather believed he could create a bulwark by converting these mariners to more conservative New England values. Nonetheless, the interests of seamen, which had been ever-present since the colony's founding, were beginning to overtake the information monopoly which the Winthrops and Mathers had developed from their administrative positions.

Puritan merchants, early townspeople, craftsmen, and the ministerial institutions to which they all to some degree belonged, had been driving the globalization process in unison with the mariners and new immigrants whose influence they contested since the founding of the first port towns. With the increased connection of the early modern world, the traditionalist Puritan cohorts of Massachusetts, however, could no longer protect their disproportionate social influence with the old buffer of commercial exclusivity and distance from England. The politics of the old England which they had escaped seventy years prior was encroaching again bringing with it both new social conflict and integrated markets. The same social connections of religion, town, and family did not disappear but instead adapted.

As the world encroached on the traditions of Puritan life which had developed through the course of the seventeenth century, Mather and others had to create a story that seemed to grant them a preeminence rooted in a mythologized colonial history in which religious uniformity and social dominance were paramount. In *Magnalia Christi Americana*, Mather wrote: "*Religion* brought forth *Prosperity*, and the *Daughter* destroyed *Mother*. Though one would expect, that as

they grew in their *Estates*, they would grow in the Payment of their *Quit-rents*, unto the God who *gives them Power to get Wealth*."[139] Facing a dominant materialist force, Mather claimed that this new development had its origins in the world of religious life, and had only now parted from the religious tradition for which the New England ministers, like Mather, had so long been the voice.

VII. Law, Coercion, and Control in a Period of Global Integration

The legal barriers to trade outside of national systems often allowed for the success of large-scale merchant enterprise across the English Atlantic in both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Navigation Acts, first introduced by Parliament in 1651, dictated that colonial products could only be shipped within England or territories under English control. Furthermore, it prohibited shipment on vessels owned by foreign merchants, and mandated that the crews of all vessels transporting English cargo had to be a majority English. This had very early implications for coastal New Englanders, as Parliament specifically enumerated cod, ling, whale, and any other kind of fish or marine creature commonly caught in New England waters in the Acts.[140]

Merchants and statesmen could interact repetitively with the legal system, because they often constituted the legal system, or were at least closely associated with the judges and ministers who formed its ranks. Because of this repetitive exposure to the judicial system, their knowledge of the law allowed them to impose limitations to competition. They accumulated influence, connections, and subsequently the commercial networks necessary to amass the credit and goods needed to take large risks and intimidate the less wealthy, or less connected, who

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[139] Mather, *Magnalia*, 143-4.
[140] "The Navigation Act." 1651. Constitution Society. 1651.

otherwise may have attempted to supplant their influence. These repeat legal participants had the institutional connections and the bargaining power. On the other hand, the average citizen of colonial Massachusetts was less likely to participate in the colony's legal system and instead relied on local town custom.[141] In the first decade following the founding of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the distribution of populations within towns lent itself to a type of conflict that did not allow for the development of formal legal practice, but instead a more flexible negotiation of power and threats which excluded the methods of attorneys. For example, the first Bostonian to attempt to practice law as his primary profession, Thomas Lechford, came to Boston in 1638. However, finding little demand for formal legal work in the small exclusive town, he left after only three years.[142]

Because of a limited capacity of early courts to enforce laws, distance from the town became a means of escaping the dictates of other settlers. As early as 1635, the General Court mandated that no house be built outside of a half-mile from a meeting house to control for this distance.[143] Such legal controls had earlier precedents in English society. A Privy Council Order of 1605 specified that anybody seeking justice in English territory must be within eight miles of

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[141] As articulated by the scholars of the Law and Society movement, namely Stewart Macaulay and Marc Galanter, a "gap" forms between law as determined by both judges and legislators and law as practiced in an actual social setting. In determining how knowledge affected the way different groups influenced the legal system, it is critical to view the parties based on the likelihood of their success in the litigation process. Litigation, in this sense, includes all forms of legal action, including the enforcement of contracts in court, accusations against a neighbour, and other actions which would have resulted in the prosecution of a defendant.
Writing on litigatory experience, Galanter separated classes into two distinct conceptual types, which he called "repeat-players" and "one-shotters". The first of which interacted repetitively with the legal system, gaining an experience and knowledge of how it worked. In contrast, one-shotters rarely interacted with the law and would be at a disadvantage based solely on lack of preparation when the judiciary summoned them to court. In seventeenth-century Massachusetts, repeat players were the learned magistrates and Harvard-educated men of wealth who the towns elected as selectmen and to other political positions. These men were also often representative of an emergent merchant faction, with inter-Atlantic commercial activity situated in the same coastal towns as the seats of provincial governance. Marc Galanter, "Why the 'Haves' Come Out Ahead: Speculations on the Limits of Legal Change" 9 *Law and Society Review* 95 (1974) in Kennedy and Fisher, eds. *The Canon of American Legal Thought*, 495-545.
[142] Thwing, *Crooked and Narrow Streets*, 14.
[143] Cotton. "Abstract of Laws."

a court, and in the first decade of Massachusetts settlement, towns could be found within this distance of the major Massachusetts port towns of Salem, Boston, and Ipswich, in which settlers founded the first courts and legislators.[144] If one wanted access to the social benefits of a town, they also had to subject themselves to its penal influence and social controls. This was a cost-benefit decision that did not favour the hermit, being as existence in a newly settled environment with little available capital made mutual dependence necessary even for basic subsistence.

The General Court, the highest legal body of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, wielded extensive legal power. From the centre of its power in Boston, the court had exclusive legal right in many significant decisions made in the colony during that time. For example, the General Court held all capital criminal cases and cases concerning dismemberment. Furthermore, The General Court was the only legal body in the colony with the legal right to take any private citizen's goods for public purposes and set the prices of compensation for what they took. Additionally, this court administered all public oaths and contracts.[145]

The prosecution of Philip English and his wife during the Salem witch trial exhibited the cultural power of the legal elite and the potential dangers of opposing their influence. English migrated from the Isle of Jersey, a channel island with a culture more like France than the rest of England and its colonies. Through his inter-Atlantic connections and international commercial acumen, he became the most prosperous shipowner in Salem where he built an extravagant mansion called the "Great House" in the north part of the town. Through his connection with other transplants of French and Channel Island origin, who were largely fishermen and common sailors, in 1683 English worked his way into political office as a constable and then selectman,

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[144] Konig, *Law and Society in Puritan Massachusetts*, 33.
[145] Massachusetts Body of Liberties. 1641.

positions traditionally only within the reach of the Puritans, and most often those from elite families. However, his Anglican religious leanings and his propensity to sue instead of arbitrating for what his debtors owed him caused an intense social tension between himself and the heads of Puritan society. English and his wife were "cried out" or accused of witchcraft before escaping to New York from the Boston gaol. The witch trial court sentenced all the witches accused at the same time as English, who were unable to escape from Boston, to death, indicating that he would have likely faced a similar fate.[146]

One of the most significant English legal introductions of the late seventeenth century was the development of the Board of Trade in 1696 and the governing powers granted to it over the colonies. According to J.R.T. Hughes this development introduced four new developments to the structure of the colonial economy. These were judicial review, strong admiralty courts, effective customs controls, and the introduction of centralized imperial governance to overseas trade.[147] Judges of the admiralty courts who were charged with hearing cases concerning offences at sea and enforcing customs law, held appointments from London but were generally local New Englanders who were often reluctant to jeopardize social relationships by prosecuting neighbours who may have been in violation of English laws.[148]

Each of these controls, and the introduction of institutions with power over trade, indicated an increased drive to exercise power over a dynamic, and new, commercial system. This was significant in the case of Philip English's prosecution, as those who competed against

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[146] Ralph E Paine, *The Ships and Sailors of Old Salem: The Record of a Brilliant Era of American Achievement* (Boston, MA: Charles E. Lauriet Co., 1927), 25-6. Hunter, *Purchasing Identity,* 65-7.
[147] Hughes, *Social Control*, 157.
[148] Bruce H. Mann, "A Great Case Makes Law Not Revolution" (Review of M.H. Smith, *The Writs of Assistance Case*) in Hendrik A. Hartog, ed. *New York University School of Law Series in Legal History* (New York, NY: New York University, 1981), 10.

him commercially also held influence over legal institutions. Economic competition and state competition were one and the same. This was evident in the dual positions of merchant and judge which those whom the Royal government appointed to the special witch trial court of Oyer and Terminer held, specifically Samuel Sewall and William Hathorne.

On 11 September 1707 Samuel Sewall wrote "Col. Hathorne and Mr. Leverett turn'd off to Cambridge from Jamaica", an island where Salem ship captains and merchants operated extensively, as it was a market for fish and agricultural products produced in the New England hinterland. Hathorne integrated state and economic activity, improving his sway over both realms of activity in the process. For Sewall and Hathorne, Philip English's presence in Salem was not simply a cultural abnormality. they also considered him commercial competition. This is not to say that Hathorne and Sewall orchestrated the trial for their own purposes, however, this trial was a microcosm of a larger struggle between a Puritan faction and a contradictory lifestyle growing in social influence.

New England merchants sought to maximize their ability to utilize the threat of law to their economic advantage. Through such tools, the judicial system could relegate the merchant without the law as a tool to a lower position within the colonial power hierarchy. New generation of merchants sought to combat entrenched local influence with uniform standards across the Atlantic effectively turning commercial, social, and legal competitions with local rules into one economic game that stretched across all English coastal territory. This produced a new language of commerce that merchants and their employs understood regardless of locality. This bridged information networks, creating a disruptive market integration that allowed for new economic participants, but created social friction in the process.

Knowledge of the law, and the interpersonal learning that underlay the political connections on the coast of Massachusetts, solidified the class structure in favour of those adept at penal statecraft over those who had their learning rooted solely in the realm of commerce or other maritime work. The hierarchy of early modern Massachusetts was not however, altogether fixed, as while a select group had control over the formal legal procedures in the town, and the British state's power extended onto the open sea, where it could at times both combine and conflict with the interests of local lawmakers, commercial agents, and would extend through the coastal towns into the Massachusetts hinterlands where the majority of colonists lived and worked.[149]

VIII. Financial Uniformity, Commercial Integration, and Atlantic Markets

In the latter half of the seventeenth century, English global commerce increased dramatically. According to Nuala Zahedieh, trade with colonies outside of England by the end of the century including in the Americas and India, accounted for thirty percent of imports and fifteen percent of exports.[150] The creation of corporate bodies and joint business ventures drove

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[149] Stewart Macaulay in his article "Non-Contractual Relations in Business" pointed to the disconnect between the intentions of legislators in the drafting of contract law and what seemed to be secondary forces in how the businessmen and other contractors utilized such law. It seemed that, when law on paper became law in practice, commercial agents utilized the original legislation for unintended purposes, or did not use it at all. In this setting, commercial interactions often took place in a contractual fashion while businessmen resolved actual disputes through informal means. In the words of Macaulay in his analysis of twentieth century business interaction: "Businessmen often prefer to rely on "a man's word" in a brief letter, a handshake, or "common honesty and decency"- even when the transaction involves exposure to serious risks." The merchants and ship captains of early modern Massachusetts were no more alien to this disposition than the men described by Macaulay. For example, due to the inherent information disconnect between factors in Boston or Salem and their employees at sea, merchants often gave the captains leeway relative to initial agreements when they reached a foreign port where market prices were prone to fluctuation. Contracting parties could change initial legal agreements in response to the unforeseen. Likewise, commercial sailors while formally bound by contract, established cultural norms which allowed for free movement including the abandonment of the ship while formal law attempted to regulate the sailors' and their respective employers' abilities to contract, attempting falsely to enforce the words of the legislator without the adequate threat of violence, which was almost impossible to evoke upon a population as mobile as the Atlantic seafarer. Stewart Macaulay, "Non-Contractual Relations in Business." *American Sociological Review* 28, no. 6 (1963) in Kennedy and Fisher, eds. *The Canon of American Legal Thought*, 453, 469.

[150] Nuala Zahedieh, "Overseas Expansion and Trade in the Seventeenth Century" in Nicholas P. Canny ed. *The Origins of Empire*. Vol. 1 of *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, 399.

this new global economic system. Through this pooling and organization of capital, businessmen in a port like London or Bristol could furnish foreign factors with the necessary tools to mass produce commodities for European markets. However, English merchants and statesmen with interest in colonial projects soon found that joint-stock operations did not allow for sustained growth of colonial economies and began rejecting absentee management in favour of proprietary rights. Initially, the ship captain served as the intermediary between proprietary colonies and England and merchants would extend them credit that would be used to fund trade in the colonies. However, as communications evolved, this system declined, and commodities were shipped on the account of the planter.[151] By the eighteenth century, the economic connections between Europe had transitioned from a series of interlocked autonomous groups to a more direct relationship between colonial producers and European consumers.

Much of the social and cultural disconnect which existed between New and Old England after the founding of the colony extended from the inability to extend administrative institutions to the colonies in combination with locals' refusal to accept influences that did not originate locally. The weak communication of legal information that came with distance proved a costly barrier to ensuring that legal restrictions and resources could exist in the colonies. For example, Bay Colonists could not appeal cases at royal courts in England but only to the Privy Council. However, even appeals to the Privy Council occurred rarely.[152] The inefficiencies of requesting imperial oversight or government services remained a complaint of imperial officials well into

[151] Ibid, 403.
[152] Richard Ross, "Legal Communications and Imperial Governance: British North America and Spanish America Compared" in Grossberg, Michael and Christopher Tomlins eds. *The Cambridge History of Law in America*. 105-6.

the eighteenth century, with colonial statesmen like Governor Thomas Pownall complaining of ineffective communication and collection of legal information as late as 1760.[153]

The implications of inefficient and indirect communication between Old and New England were twofold. First, it meant that local colonial autonomy was unavoidable, being as imperial administrators could not always communicate their dictates, at least not in a way specific enough to avoid the necessity of interpretation by colonial officials. Second, it localized business relations because the geographic influence on network formation strengthened because of the physical barrier to communication imposed by distance and the dangers of ocean travel. As institutions developed in New England, and elsewhere, citizens significantly reduced these restrictions, which allowed for a complete remodelling of global English society in the eighteenth century.

The postal system in Boston, through which merchants transmitted business letters to foreign factors, developed into a transatlantic institution as communications passed within mercantile networks. Originally, Boston ship captains and passengers brought letters between merchants where they sometimes distributed them haphazardly. In 1638, to assure more efficient communication between Boston and its economic connections throughout the Atlantic, the town council appointed the house of Richard Fairbanks as the designated site at which all arriving passengers were to bring letters entering the town for purposes of distribution.[154]

Until 1673, the transportation of letters into Boston had no guaranteed monetary compensation attached to it. That year, the town council began paying those who transported letters into the town a reward of three pence per mile travelled. However, merchants still

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[153] Ibid, 106.
[154] Thwing, *Crooked and Narrow Streets,* 19.

complained of a loss of letters and by 1677 the Boston government tasked a scrivener named John Hayward with the responsibility of delivering incoming letters within the town. In 1680, masters of ships arriving in Boston legally had to bring their letters to a post office where Hayward would then collect and distribute them.[155] William T. Baxter, in *The House of Hancock*, pointed to the insufficiency of formally established postal systems in the business strategies of colonial Boston merchants. He claimed that the official postal service was so costly that Thomas Hancock once wrote that he "saved" the colony several pounds a year through his connection with captains, who would disregard regulation and hand letters directly to distant merchants while transporting cargo around the Atlantic.[156]

A significant question which has arisen in the historiography of commercial credit is the degree of formality of credit relations and their representation in the account books and diaries studied by historians. Historians have largely defined formality, in this sense, as the degree to which creditors enforced obligation through standardized litigation. With the question of formality in mind, Muldrew claimed that the account book of the sixteenth-century merchant, Henry Tooley, was simply a rough keeping of mostly erased interactions only useful to Tooley himself.[157] This is a case of informality, which some have interpreted as a sign of a society which had yet to transition to a modern, capital-based, economy.

Muldrew, in *The Economy of Obligation*, framed the job of the historian of commercial interaction, especially concerning credit relations, as operating within past judicial structures. He claimed that the contractual nature of bargaining for wages in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century

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[155] Ibid, 19.
[156] Baxter, *The House of Hancock*, 197.
[157] Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (New York, NY: St. Martin's, 1998), 61.

England was evident in not only diaries of employers but also in court records.[158] Muldrew, in his analysis of the use of courts for debt enforcement determined that, often, instead of formal recording in an account book, a lender or purchaser would extend credit orally in front of a witness. Under this system, according to Muldrew, the threat of litigation was a tool used primarily to pressure a debtor to compromise in later interactions.[159] Formal and uniform introduction of money and financial tools eliminated these more localized methods of accounting for exchange. In speaking about the type of business transaction that existed in the early modern period, based around the communication of credit, Daniel Vickers wrote that cash payment by its nature extinguishes obligation.[160]

Max Weber provided a concept of economic transition rooted in Protestant culture, which was relevant to the commercial changes which occurred in early modern Boston because of its Calvinist founding principles. He stated that capitalism, despite its origination in the delayed gratification of religious asceticism, eventually rejected the encumbrances of its theological roots in favour of secular "mechanical foundations."[161] The result, according to Weber's theory, was a change in the norms of commercial collaboration and cultural perception of that interaction. However, it does not necessarily follow that the formalized commerce and finance that Weber described emerged from protestant religious orthodoxy. Instead, Bay Colony Puritanism emerged from modern commerce rather than the other way around. Puritan elites sought to monopolize commercial power within likeminded networks such that economic modernization protected prevailing authority. Colonial elites retained their social status by accumulating financial

[158] Ibid, 41.
[159] Ibid, 96, 202.
[160] Vickers, "Errors Expected," 1040.
[161] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 182.

influence within personal networks and by communicating within those networks using increasingly sophisticated financial instruments.

In *The Ties that Buy*, Ellen Hartigan O'Connor described the commercial importance of both local and interregional network formation when she said: "Scholars who study networks note that although strong ties, like those of kinship, are crucial to the trust-dependent activities of raising money and risky business ventures, weaker ties of acquaintance and employment can act as important bridges for transferring knowledge."[162] Here, Hartigan-O'Connor complicated depiction of networks by highlighting both the size of the social unit and the kind of relationships between the people who interacted within it. Muldrew approached this same local unit of interacting economic agents and sought a point of chronological origin, concluding that by the late medieval period the English citizen organized, production, distribution, and sale of most goods around the household while at the same time they increasingly began to understand trade by sophisticated monetary terms.[163] Additionally these household units incorporated themselves into the larger unit of the "market town" where individuals organized local communication concerning price and the availability of material goods.[164] Hartigan-O'Connor made the claim that economic cooperation mirrored spatial cohabitation in early American port towns, and that these cohabitations, primarily domestic living spaces, were the primary units through which communication flowed.[165] Furthermore, urban merchants, and other major drivers of regional commerce who struggled with finding market information and useful associations with other merchants looked not outward into other areas, but instead turned to local social groups based

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[162] Ellen Hartigan-O'Connor, *The Ties that Buy: Women and Commerce in Revolutionary America* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 2009), 10.
[163] Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation*, 37.
[164] Ibid, 42.
[165] Hartigan-O'Connor, *The Ties that Buy*, 13.

around family or religion for help. The result, according to Hartigan-O'Connor was the formation of informal, yet commercially powerful, associations.[166]

In addressing the question of transition between types of economies, Stephen Innes, in *Creating the Commonwealth*, argued that colonial New Englanders crossed the threshold that separates a pre-capitalist from a capitalist society.[167] In addition, Innes described the origins of the account book as part of his argument for the existence of an early New England transition to capitalism. He claimed that double entry bookkeeping, the standard for many historians for the identification of a capitalist enterprise, originated in medieval Italy three centuries before the Protestant Reformation.[168] This idea problematizes the notion of a definable emergence of a modern global economy by placing the origin of one of its many parts in an earlier time. The question of the time of the introduction of a practice, as evident in Innes's writing indicates that the historian of the early modern economy must find a way to describe not just observations in chronological order but also the constantly changing nature of the economy itself. At the base of this economy, as the Atlantic population experienced it, was information concerning labour, consumerism, and capital.

In *The Economy of Obligation*, Craig Muldrew wrote that credit, and its recording, was a public means of social communication and circulating judgement about the value of other members of the community. He defined credit in this period as a "currency of reputation."[169] Within a generation of the first settlement of New England, book debt, the traditional means of accounting for transaction, was declining in importance relative to new formal instruments.

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[166] Hartigan-O'Connor, *The Ties that Buy*, 34.
[167] Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth*, 45.
[168] Ibid, 113.
[169] Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation*, 2-3.

Furthermore, the Massachusetts General Assembly began setting legal rates of exchange by which citizens were to make public transactions such as the payment of taxes.[170]

Ian Steele, in his 1986 book *The English Atlantic*, captured a critical theme concerning the differences between society in England and its American colonies when he wrote that "Although their family links with England were less immediate than those of their parents, their communities, were developing patterns of life that were less peculiar."[171] What Steele indicated here was a convergence based on mutual interaction in a global environment between the two regions which united economies and cultures in a way that kin and religious ties could not.

William T. Baxter, writing on the eighteenth-century Boston merchant Thomas Hancock, signified the critical alliance between merchant and captain as a social connection revolving around trust. He stated that Hancock and other Boston merchants often found the creation of rigid plans to be inefficient, preferring instead to give "a roving commission" to a captain who would then move from port to port searching for a place to profitably sell their cargo.[172] Because of this business structure, and the impossibility of quick communication across the Atlantic, it was important that the captain-merchant relationship was rooted in some other form of dependence other than simple commercial partnership. Baxter mentioned specifically the propensity for selecting supercargoes and captains with family connections to the employer, and the importance of kin ties in the selection of which foreign firm to work with.[173]

Ian Steele stated that colonial governors and assemblies printed their proclamations and laws, and that they assumed that adequate local literacy would allow for the dissemination of

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[170] Mann, *Neighbors and Strangers*, 12-3.
[171] Steele, *The English Atlantic,* 261.
[172] William T. Baxter, *The House of Hancock: Business in Boston, 1724-1775* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1945), 55-6.
[173] Ibid, 199.

legal knowledge in a colonial setting in which attorneys and other more formal channels for this knowledge were in short supply.[174] Comparatively, this type of information exchange extended into the realm of commercial publications and formation of learned societies by London's merchant elite, as described by David Hancock in his 1995 book *Citizens of the World*.[175] In contrast to this description of a commercially-conducive education culture, Jack P. Greene claimed that education in early New England deviated from norms relating to education elsewhere in the Atlantic as, instead of being an agency for modernization, it was instead a means of maintaining their traditional communitarian norms and Puritan moral foundations.[176]

In his 2005 article "The Demise of Distance", John J. McCusker wrote of John Campbell, the editor of *The Boston News-Letter*, who in the first decade of the eighteenth century, included London bills of entry and London commodity price currents in the newspapers he sold around Boston. Comparatively, McCusker also wrote that newspapers were not particularly likely to publish local business news, indicating that other social mediums may have been more useful or better established in the commercial settings of the colonial port towns.[177] Such news fit into the connection between information availability and colonial learning as it applied to merchants and other tradespeople operating in port towns on both sides of the Atlantic. McCusker stated that the introduction and spread of commercial and financial newspapers, first in seventeenth-century Europe and then throughout the Atlantic in the following centuries was pivotal not only in

[174] Steele, *The English Atlantic*, 164.
[175] David Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 33-5.
[176] Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness*, 24.
[177] John J. McCusker, "The Demise of Distance: The Business Press and the Origins of the Information Revolution in the Early Modern Atlantic World." *The American Historical Review* 110, no. 2 (April 2005), 311, 313.

making information available outside of select circles, but also reduced the impact of physical distance and time.[178]

According to Bernard Bailyn, by the end of the seventeenth century, the fundamental interests of the New England merchants were "to maintain connections with highly placed individuals in England; to dominate the colonial councils; to control the English functionaries in the colonial service; and to find a solution of the money problem which had been created by the enforcement of the navigation laws and imbalance of trade."[179] As stated by Bailyn, between the establishment of the Bay Colony and the beginning of the eighteenth century, a period of roughly seventy years, the interests of major traders came to revolve primarily around increasing connective power of their networks and negotiating the legal and institutional frameworks which gave them an edge over competitors.

A merchant handbook written in London in 1739 stated that "The Merit of the Merchant is above that of all other Subjects; for while he is untouched in his Credit, his Hand-writing is a more portable coin for the service of his Fellow Citizens, and his word the Gold of Ophiz to the Country wherein he resides."[180] Most people familiar with business in the Atlantic world knew that such credit and the capacity to endorse it through writing was the source of a successful merchant's commercial power. Reputation, and the ability to express it to other traders through calling on debts and outlaying personal credit for large purchases, was the attribute that allowed one to trade commodities at a profit where locals could not efficiently produce them otherwise. The same handbook, however, also stated that "The most unhappy of all men, and the most exposed to the malignity and wantonness of the common voice, is the Trader: Credit is undone

[178] Ibid, 296.
[179] Bailyn, *New England Merchants*, 189.
[180] Business Instruments Collection. Volume 6, Box 10. Baker Library.

by whispers."[181] The fear of dishonour provoked by communication between competitors and customers was evident in the concerns expressed by merchants. When reputation was synonymous with purchasing power, slander was equivalent to theft. This added a unique legal dimension to the services demanded by merchants. The need to develop methods, not only for them to record the nature of credit relations, but also to make them uniform in a way they could prove their reputation when questioned, became a necessity.

William T. Baxter, in his book *The House of Hancock*, detailed many of the tools used by those within early American networks to maintain communication and organize exchange. For example, according to Baxter, payment methods of eighteenth-century Boston were diverse and included "bookkeeping barter," commodity money, contracts in both goods and stable currency, and triangular exchanges of credit between multiple parties. Furthermore, attached to the mechanisms, Baxter exhibited credit and payment as a relationship, with both fiscal and social connections involved. He stated that: "There must have been a marked tendency to buy from a man simply because he was one's debtor, and possibly the best way to get orders from an unfriendly merchant was to run deep into his debt."[182] For Thomas Hancock specifically, Baxter noted the inter-regionality of these relations, including the drawing on notes from the southwest of England and the hiring of transient fishermen coming to New England from abroad to catch cod.[183] Each of these patterns and mechanisms which Baxter described were part of transitions in a society that, by Thomas Hancock's time, found itself enmeshed within the Atlantic commercial world.

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[181] Ibid.
[182] Baxter, *The House of Hancock*, 17, 21.
[183] Ibid, 45-6.

The origin of what traders called double-entry bookkeeping developed largely in Italy, and other European and colonial merchants soon adopted it as well. The style which became popularized as "merchant accompts" or the "Italian method" of bookkeeping became increasingly uniform, replacing local styles developed prior to the beginning of the market integration of the Atlantic. A common instruction text in bookkeeping methods, the *Gentleman Accomptant* stated that:

> "All other methods which particular persons have occasionally instituted for their own private concerns are found in this; and all those methods whatsoever they are, were, or may be invented for the use of any Accounts are part of and as it were taken out of the Debitor and Creditor; and so much as they want of that, however in private concerns serviceable enough just so much they want of desirable perfection"[184]

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when book debt was the common means of recording transaction, the account book provided little assurance in cases of dispute over a transaction. If a judge or jury found that an amount demanded by an accuser differed from what their books said the defendant owed, it was rarely sufficient evidence to force the defendant to pay. The courts recognized these books as informal and dependent on the perspective of their owner. However, signing books to assure a transaction in exact form developed early between creditors and debtors even though most people did not feel the need to use this method, relying on social pressure instead.[185] As Bruce H. Mann wrote: "People may have found it easier to trust neighbours with whom they had a variety of relations and knew well, albeit not favourably, than it was to trust strangers."[186] The availability of information explains this preference. Credit inherently relied on the capacity to pass knowledge between potential creditors. Credit could not exist without the ability to identify the ability to repay. For this reason, when it came to trust, the

[184] Business Instruments Collection. Volume 6, Box 10. Baker Library.
[185] Mann, *Neighbors and Strangers*, 15.
[186] Ibid, 19.

variety of relations indicated by Mann were not the cause of the willingness to extend credit but were instead separate factors with the same cause. This cause was physical proximity. Evidence for this exists in the rate at which townspeople became willing to extend credit to strangers once methods of uniformity and enforcement divorced the need for knowledge of credit from the ability to collect from an agreed exchange regardless of the debtors perceived capacity to pay.

While account books were insufficient as legal evidence, and thus relied on social arbitration and the threat of economic isolation from the community to enforce payment, a distant court could interpret written instruments and could then coerce the debtor to pay so that the creditor did not have to find their own means of coercion. The result was twofold. First, the instruments eliminated distance as a barrier to transaction, allowing for a spread of an individual's economic influence to a place where their everyday social influence did not reach. Second, it separated the creditworthiness from the likelihood of future transactions. Prior to the assurance of payment by legal coercion, engaging in business with those unlikely to repay was dangerous because the mechanisms for recovery did not exist. Consequently, a potential creditor saw excessive risk taking on the part of a potential debtor as a risk to themselves as well.

Arbitration was a significant part of legal proceedings in colonial Massachusetts. As a method of dispute resolution, the social, as compared to instrumental, nature of arbitration fit naturally into the Puritan society of the first two generations of New England settlers, during which period social ostracization was the only punishment enforceable in the sparsely settled frontier communities with undeveloped formal legal systems. However, in unison with the globalization of society and economy at the end of the seventeenth century, arbitration itself became the subject of imperial formality and regulation. In 1698, the Board of Trade enlisted the help of John Locke to draft and Arbitration Act which would provide a formula to encourage the

privatization of disputes between merchants while minimizing the complicating entanglements of adjudication. This change in arbitration enforcement added a new characteristic which made the process fundamentally different from the anti-institutional framework practiced by the first settlers of Massachusetts. The major difference was the introduction of uniform business instruments and penal violence to hold society to a standardized norm instituted by a court. The 1698 Arbitration Act stated: "Whereas it hath been found by Experience that References made by Rule of Court have contributed much to the Ease of the Subject in the determining of Controversies because the Parties become thereby obliged to submit to the Award of the Arbitrators under the Penalty of Imprisonment."[187]

The Arbitration Act was a response to the end of locally enforced penalties that came because of failure to meet the demands of others on whom one was dependent. When distance was less of a factor and New Englanders could extend economic dependence beyond the reach of their community, failure to adhere to an agreement had new implications. Social ostracization no longer worked. Credit was useful for the most part, but relied on imperfect information, which could backfire if a potential purchaser failed to live up to their perceived creditworthiness. As far as the English state was concerned, the only option remaining was the threat of imprisonment.

Formal instruments were not new at the time they became powerful methods of organizing exchange in the seventeenth century. For example, conditioned bonds, which were legal mechanism of proving liability for payment, were part of many contracted agreements for centuries before English colonization of the Atlantic. However, a consideration of distance illustrates why only later in the seventeenth century did these instruments become tools for

[187] Parliament of Great Britain. *Arbitration Act. 1698*. Reprinted on Trans-Lex.

organizing commerce over the alternative of personal book credit. By the 1720s, the instrument had surpassed book debts as the most litigated form of obligation, reflecting new needs for assurance in a world where paper became more important than verbal communication in organizing trade across an ocean. In the case of conditioned bonds, for example, merchants and artisans in coastal towns continued to use these into the eighteenth century as a means to secure long-term obligations involving large sums of money such as loans and performance of a contract. These remained primarily a tool in coastal urban centres but increased in use throughout smaller towns as well.[188]

The central motivation for trade continued to revolve around the self, the community, and like-minded neighbours even if people directed their commerce outside of their immediate surroundings and were more willing to use state violence to assure compliance to an agreement. In the seventeenth century, merchants were more likely to sue those outside of their communities.[189] This meant that, while merchants and others began to take up competitive and contentious stances against each other, they retained a sense of informal community with those whom they lived near and with whom they developed social, spiritual, and familial bonds.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, colonial courts decided disputes based on the details involved in the occurrence in question, while by the eighteenth century, an argument's legal form became the means through which judges often made their decisions. This was most apparent in the decline of jury decisions in the eighteenth century in favour of decisions from the bench.[190] A result of this turn toward legal interpretation was that the final decision to use coercion became the decision of a judge and not a dispersed group of citizens, thus shifting more

[188] Mann, *Neighbors and Strangers*, 61.
[189] Konig, *Law and Society in Puritan Massachusetts*, 84.
[190] Mann, *Neighbors and Strangers*, 65, 83.

power and influence to a professional class with exclusive knowledge of the operation of new legal bureaucracies. In the first generation of New England immigrants, settlers had the option to ignore what they saw as unjust decisions and take the potential social ramifications of their refusal to pay, including ostracization.[191] However, with the increased emphasis on legal institutions, this reaction became unviable given the universality of the court system and their ability to enforce a penal code. Standardization of business practice through written instruments, the growth of legal institutions, and globalization, combined to radically alter the form by which opposed interest groups conflicted with each other in the eighteenth century. A range of different instruments served different purposes allowing specialization within the state rather than all mercantile and juridical roles falling within the purview of a limited Puritan elite like the Winthrops or Salem witchcraft judges.

A type of business instrument that tax collectors and property owners used regularly in a local context in seventeenth-century towns, both in Massachusetts and England, was the tax bill. This bill functioned as a receipt that served as evidence for the payment of a tax on land. One such bill from 24 May 1687 read "Received of Madam Huntington to the sum of sixteen shillings in full for one half years duty for sixteen fire-hearths in his house." The tax bill was at this time, following the practice that would become increasingly common, of producing uniform printed templates that the collector filled in with names, dates, and the value of the exchange, as is apparent by the word "his" to refer to the said Madam Huntington. The collector could not adapt the bill to the circumstances as the printers had already produced the format.

[191] Ibid, 131.

The cost of inflexibility imposed by standardized, printed, language, however, yielded two positive attributes as well. These were the ability to mass produce a document without having to reproduce it by hand each time and to make it universally recognizable such that its purpose and meaning were undeniable in case of dispute. While other business instruments during this period remained largely handwritten (although also tending increasingly towards a uniformity of language), within the next hundred years, such templates would become the norm throughout the world of Atlantic commerce. They also became more common within communities of consumers throughout the British Empire and in a separated American Republic following the American Revolution. Thus, the use of this type of tax bill signalled the increased uniformity, and reliance upon, the standardized business instrument.

Private bills served a separate purpose than that of the evidentiary bills provided by the tax collectors or the formalized bills of exchange that were becoming increasingly popular among traders in the eighteenth century. Stores, craftspeople, merchants, and medical doctors all issued bills as proof of a transaction. Additionally, these bills could serve to prove the validity of an exchange in which a debtor or creditor introduced a third party as part of a payment. An example of a bill, as issued by a store are those given by the tobacco seller Paul Desca from his store "Plume and Feathers" on New Street in London who marketed his firm as the "snuff maker to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales." Such bills made their way from London stores to coastal New England largely in the hands of traveling merchants, captains, and immigrants, one of which was a Mr. Woolmers who purchased snuff from Desca in 1751. Forty-seven years after Desca provided Woolmer with his bill of purchase, a like example appeared out of the Boston firm Brenver & Carter, a wholesaler on State Street. The bills were comparable in form, and like Desca's bill, the printer decoratively illustrated and added a printed word template in which the

owners wrote the name of the purchaser. Also, the issuer in this case wrote that he received payment for the initial purchase.[192] The use of the bill to show proof of two sides of a transaction, the providing of a good by the store and the payment of the purchaser, became a main staple of local and international business throughout the eighteenth-century credit economy.

An example of a bill as issued by a craftsperson was the one which the shoemaker William Manning issued to the Boston merchant and colonel William Brattel. Manning charged Brattel 2 pounds 14 shillings and 6 pence for mending his shoes and for making a pair of shoes for his granddaughter. The bill stated that Brattel paid the debt incurred in full, thus providing evidence first that the two parties agreed to the transaction, and second, that the Brattel paid the debt.[193] These bills thus served to facilitate the credit economy which was reliant on the ability to defer payment instead of extinguishing the debt with a one-time cash or commodity payment.

An example of a bill as issued by a merchant was that issued by William Brattel to Nathaniel Loring, both international traders, for the purchase of a barrel of flour imported from Philadelphia on 29 November 1758. Merchants used these bills in local transactions in which they made exchanges with local customers and other businessmen. For example, in 1788, the cooper and merchant Joshua Pico Jr. paid John Hancock for six months' rent on his house in North Boston. Pico's bill showed the amount he owed, debts owed to him by Hancock, and the transactions that he had already undertaken to pay back the debt incurred for rent, specifically, he mentioned his payment "by Sundrys at Sundry times to this day" worth a total of 12 pounds 9

[192] Business Instruments Collection. Volume 31, Box 14. Baker Library.
[193] "William Brattel Esqr. Of Boston of Nathaniel Loring." Business Instruments Collection. Volume 28, Box 14. Baker Library.

shillings and 4 pence.[194] What Pico's bill showed is that he had incurred a debt and had paid it through some varied assortment of means over an extended period. Through such an exchange, one could document book credit and put subsequent payment on hold while wealthy merchants had their capital tied up in ventures. The function of the bills was to organize this process and prove that the exchanges, both initial and subsequent, had occurred.

An example of a bill as issued by a medical doctor was that representing medical services rendered by Augustus Holyoke of Salem to Joshua Pico Jr. and his family in 1775. This bill ends with a statement of payment from a Nathaniel Appleton, indicating that debt held for even the most mundane interaction like buying medicine for ill children became assignable and passed as payment within Boston's eighteenth-century credit economy.[195]

An example of a bill as used as proof in a triangular trade, was that which Isiah Stodder gave on behalf of Samuel Treat on 20 November 1766. Samuel Treat, a cooper and business partner of Joshua Pico Jr. at the cooperage Treat & Pico, died two years prior to the creation of this bill. His representatives and creditors charged the bill to his estate for outstanding debts. It read: "Sir please to pay to Daniel Loring the sum of four pounds seven shilling [and] four pence Lawfull Money & Charge to Account of your Humble Servant [Isiah Stodder]"[196] Treat owed Loring the sum, and when his executors assessed his debts after his death, they resolved the debt by requesting that one of Treat's debtors pay to avoid having to make a cash payment out of Treat's estate. In this transaction, Treat and his executors functioned as a middleman through whom one credit and another debt passed and cancelled each other out.

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[194] Business Instruments Collection. Volume 31, Box 14. Baker Library.
[195] Medical Bill from Augustus Holyoke to Joshua Pico. Harvard Medical Library.
[196] Business Instruments Collection. Volume 29, Box 14. Baker Library.

In the early eighteenth century, promissory notes became increasingly prevalent in coastal commercial communities. A promissory note was an instrument that was endorsable from one person to another. Endorsing these notes entailed writing one's name on the back and delivering it to a new party to whom the endorser intended to assign over property as part of a transaction. It was critical for the person endorsing the bill to write a receipt to prevent the other party from negotiating it after the first owner paid by delivering the good or service promised. The rate to which tradespeople produced these receipts to assure that nobody negotiated the bill after payment is not clear, but the instructional literature of the time advised that endorsers not skip this step.[197]

A legal stipulation concerning both promissory notes and book debts in eighteenth-century England, and its colonies, was that if a creditor did not legally demand the debt transacted in six years, they could not recover it by legal means. Furthermore, if one kept a promissory note less than three days and the person on whom they drew upon failed in their ability to pay, the holder was responsible for the loss of the note and could not demand reparation from the debtor.[198]

When conducting business across the Atlantic, Merchants and ship captains utilized the invoice as an instrument. It would likely include cost and charges upon the sender and receiver of distant ports as well as an inventory of goods loaded within the arriving ship. This type of document was important for the communication between a merchant and their agent.[199] Invoices were important as they were the primary means through which merchants could communicate costs and charges of goods sent by sea. Tradesmen referred to the person who would send the

[197] "Promissory Notes." Business Instruments Collection. Volume 6, Box 10. Baker Library.
[198] Ibid.
[199] Business Instruments Collection. Volume 6, Box 10. Baker Library.

invoice as the factor, and they were responsible for conducting business on behalf of another merchant who generally paid them a cut of the profit called a commission and sometimes an additional flat payment that the factors often used to pay for the costs of living in the port where they were conducting business. The tasks of the factor included buying and selling goods, paying charges for shipment, and communicating with the employer. The factor completed the communication task through invoices and other like instruments which they produced in uniform style and which any trader could understand if they were to see one.[200]

An example of a ship invoice which circulated through Boston was the one which a London merchant with the surname Sanford used to consign shipped goods to John Clarke of Boston in February of 1713. This invoice included pieces of cloth tapestry in addition to various other manufactured cloth. With limited industrial capacity, New Englanders were reliant on firms in London and Bristol to supply the colony with manufactured goods, especially fabrics and woven goods like the ones in Sanford's invoice. Clarke likely functioned as a local agent for Sanford, selling the goods within the local population either wholesale or to some specific shopkeeper. The invoice was critical to communicating exactly what goods were to be received by Clarke and at what cost.[201]

A merchant conducting business through factors, or directly with a foreign firm, needed to commission a ship captain, also referred to as a master of a ship, to transport goods. This commission could be paid by an employing merchant or a factor. If the factor paid, the merchant who employed them might reimburse them, or the factor may have deferred payment in goods or cash with a bill of exchange issued by them or their employer. The factor also often paid the

[200] "Invoyces." Business Instruments Collection. Volume 25, Box 10. Baker Library.
[201] "Invoice of Shipment." Business Instruments Collection. Volume 12, Box 4. Baker Library.

captain and other crewmembers out of pocket, effectively undertaking a cost with the expectation of the profit of the commission paying back enough to cover the credit or cash extended to the captain.[202] In modern parlance, this was a form of inside contracting, whereby a merchant employed by contract, or some other agreement by another firm or merchant, issues another layer or contracts to employees and functions autonomously with the stipulation that they meet the demands dictated by their employer. In this case, the factor would have been responsible for determining their own costs of operation.[203]

A letter of commission to a ship captain would state the name of the merchant or firm hiring the captain, the name of the ship, the name of the captain, and a stipulation outlining general rules for the shipment of goods and a confirmation of agreement on the part of the captain. An example of stipulations reads: "The said Master shall not take on board his said ship either for account of himself or any other person whatsoever, any Goods or Merchandize, without a Permit or Warrant from the said Company, or their proper officer, specifying the Nature, Quantities, kinds, species, weights, Numbers, and Package." In addition, the stipulations would likely include the requirement that the captain, upon reaching port, should deliver to a company's agent a full account of the merchandize on the ship, and an account of his lading including who put the goods onboard, to who the foreign factor consigned the goods to, and which account the captain, and the agent to whom he made the delivery, were to sign. Also, a letter of commission would likely include the length of terms for which the commission was good for. Merchants creating a letter of commission most commonly expressed length of terms as the number of voyages for the captain to undertake.[204]

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[202] "A Commission to the Master of a Ship." Business Instruments Collection. Volume 25, Box 10. Baker Library.
[203] John Buttrick, "The Inside Contracting System." *The Journal of Economic History* 12, no.3 (Summer 1952), 205.
[204] "A Commission to the Master of a Ship." Business Instruments Collection. Volume 25, Box 10. Baker Library.

When it came to formal documentation of business and evidencing the transaction, merchants put much of the onus on ship captains as part of their commission. In addition, by restricting the goods transported by the captain to a list of enumerated, and documented, goods, the merchants brought the captains into the mercantilist economic framework dominant during the period. However, the degree to which captains, factors, and other merchants followed rules varied across all commercial participants and was dependent on the capacity of the state, and the merchants who abided by state dictates, to enforce their intended restrictions. Merchants tied seamen into the globalizing economy, giving them a potential route to accumulate credit and economic influence by serving as intermediaries for distant merchants and their factors.

Often the credit reputation of an agent could expand at the bequest of their more influential employer. The employer accomplished this through letters of credit. Such a letter would state the name of the agent, the potential need for money or an extension of credit and would advise the potential creditor to take a receipt from the agent. Later, the agent's employer would repay the creditor from whom their factor borrowed. An example on a letter of credit from a 1738 instructional script from London read: "The Bearer Mr. Thomas Holt, being on his Travels, may have Occasion for Money; Please to furnish him as his occasions require, taking his Receipts, and your Draughts for the value shall receive due honour."[205]

Bills of debt served the function opposite to letters of credit. They served to indicate the incurrence of debt to distant parties. In addition, these bills served as admissions to a debt that a creditor could use in debt litigation. An instructional script from 1738 read: "That I Thomas Simpson, of the parish of St. Dunstan in the East, Citizen and Sadler of London, do owe- and am

[205] "Letters of Credit." Business Instruments Collection. Volume 24, Box 10. Baker Library.

indebted to Simon Johnson, of the said place Grocer, the sum of Forty pounds of good and lawful money of Great Britain, which sum I promise to pay."[206]

In the first decade of the eighteenth century, New Englanders such as Cotton Mather complained that the local government had driven gold and silver out of the colony, leaving only unstable public bills of credit. Consequently, following the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, the New England colonies drove the bills out of use by taxing them. Within years, most of the bills were gone, and what remained was hoarded instead of exchanged.[207] The significance of this policy was largely in its timing. Local government did not begin the removal of the bills until the formal end of the War of the Spanish Succession, indicating that public credit was a function of war time expenditure.

The variety of mediums of exchange available depended on how the public treasuries taxed, awarded contracts, and fluctuated in response to international affairs. Conflict then arose in direct opposition to control over these instruments, and in an indirect form, as disapproval of the economic conditions provoked by the circulation of one medium over another. This conflict was part of larger international disputes and wars, and the subsequent domestic unrest would become an increasingly significant part of colonial politics as the eighteenth century progressed. Coastal merchants supported the circulation of public credit in the early eighteenth century despite local disapproval of some of its effects both because of the interregional connections that correlated with government expenditure and the ability to hold debt supported by the public treasury. As a result, in 1725 a group of merchants based primarily in Boston pressured the

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[206] "A Bill of Debt." Business Instruments Collection. Volume 24, Box 10. Baker Library.
[207] Joseph A. Ernst, ""The Labourers Have Been Great Sufferers": The Truck System in Early Eighteenth Century Massachusetts" in Rosemary Ommer ed. *Merchant Credit and Labour Strategies in Historical Perspective.* (Fredericton, NB : Acadiensis 1990), 16.

Massachusetts government into creating a public loan office which they used to expand trades including manufacturing, shipping, fishing, and land speculation in present-day Maine.[208]

As the economies of European states became increasingly globalized, they came to rely on bills of exchange to organize business in foreign regions. Traders created these instruments as one of three varieties; inland bills of exchange, foreign bills of exchange, and bills of exchange in the excise.

An inland bill of exchange stated the receiver of the bill the issuer was to pay, who they had received the bill from, and indicated an account to which the holder made their charge. These inland bills functioned effectively as a formal extension of book credit and the double-entry account keeping common by the seventeenth century. An example of what would be written on an inland bill is: "At sight pay Mr. William Longan, or Order, one hundred and thirty pounds, value received of Claudius Devins Esqr. And place it to Accompt per advice from…" then the issuer would sign.[209]

A foreign bill, on the other hand, functioned as a kind of currency with a limit on potential exchanges between dispersed parties. These were common among merchants who bought and sold on credit and who often needed to reassign someone debt that they held to another trader as payment. Passing the initial bill could happen multiple times before the final holder called the issuer for the debt, usually to be paid in cash or goods. The bill often passed through many hands, although as a sample of bills from Boston and London indicate, merchants and others generally stopped trading bills after they passed through three exchanges. An example of what would be written on a foreign bill of exchange is: "At sight pay this my second Bill, my

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[208] Ibid, 20.
[209] "Inland Bills of Exchange." Business Instruments Collection. Volume 24, Box 10. Baker Library.

first not being paid, unto Mr. Lawley Ealing, or Order, the Sum of five hundred and seventy-two pounds ten shilling and ten pence sterling. Exchange at thirty-five shillings and ten pence sterling and one Grot Flemish for 1 [pound] Value received of himself, and place it into Account as per advice from…" then the issuer would sign. These bills would often be printed with the phrase "without further advice" indicating that the recipient required no further information to reassign the bill regardless of their distance.[210]

An example of a bill of exchange circulating through Boston was that which George Champlin of Newport paid to the Boston merchant Isaac Winslow in 1792. This bill followed the same written pattern as most bills common throughout the eighteenth century, in that it named the issuer whom the holder collected from and was endorsed on the back by new holders, who in this case was a man named Joseph Cardis. Additionally, this bill stated not only the sum owed but also that it would be paid with Spanish milled dollars, indicating that the type of physical currency could influence one's decision to accept the bill.[211]

Bills of exchange, like promissory notes, were endorsable and functioned to assign credit which a debtor would be responsible for later. The result was that the bills could function to both pay for goods in the short term and to raise money through selling the bills with an intended amount of interest for the purchaser. A function that these instruments would come to serve is funding for defence spending, whereby a public agent, or factor, would sell bills for a contractor who some government would appoint to arm, victual, or transport combatants. The contractor would raise money by commissioning these factors. They would then use the money raised through various merchant investors who purchased the bills around the empire to pay for the

[210] "Foreign Bills of Exchange." Business Instruments Collection. Volume 24, Box 10. Baker Library.
[211] Business Instruments Collection. Volume 32, Box 1. Baker Library.

goods required by the military. The public treasury would pay the contractor for the task and interest would be paid to purchasers in addition to the commissions and interests owed to factors. By the time of the Seven Years' War, this was the dominant method used for war funding and was responsible for the accumulation of wealth by many merchant families, including Bostonian family firms like the merchant houses of Hancock and Apthorp.

After bills of exchange became common, and provided increased surety of enforcement, the British government restricted the use of the less formal promissory notes that did not meet mandated stipulations. In 1704, Parliament passed the Act for Giving Like Remedy on Promissory Notes, which dictated that every person making a promissory note made payable to another person had to do so in the same manner as an inland bill of exchange according to the custom of merchants.[212] The powerful merchants and statesmen within the English Atlantic economy did not just introduce new methods for the exchange of credit through formal instruments, but also contributed to this formalization through legislating against alternative measures that did not meet their standards.

Bills of exchange in the excise functioned much like the other two types of bills of exchange except that issuers used them to pay an excise tax. They included the value that the issuer was to pay as well as the name of the tax collector. An example of what would be written on a bill of exchange in the excise was: "Twenty days after date pay to the Honourable the Comissioners of Excise or order ninety-seven pounds sixteen shillings sixpence value- received of Mr. Sam Love Collector being His Majesty's money as by advice from…" then the issuer would sign.

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[212] England and Wales. *An Act for Giving like Remedy upon Promissory Notes, as is Now Used Upon Bills of Exchange, and for the Better Payment of Inland-Bills of Exchange*. 1704.

Shipping, an economic activity that was rapidly expanding in scale throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, required a formal method of expressing exchange and permission by both private and public actors. In this way, the uniformity of documentation for communication, and possibly legal evidence, became part of how merchants and ship captains interacted in bringing commodities and manufactured goods across the Atlantic. One type of business instrument that filled this function was the bill of entry. The document listed goods with values upon entering a port. It would also name the ship and ship captain responsible for transporting the cargo.[213]

Like a bill of entry, a bill of lading served to indicate to a merchant, or agent, the contents which a captain brought into port onboard a vessel. It would state the name of the ship, the name of the captain, where the ship was at the time it was loaded and where it was headed to unload. Bills of lading exhibited remarkable uniformity very early in the history of their use and English colonization. Beginning as early as 1655, the exact language of bills of exchange was set for at least the next 150 years, with little alteration.[214] For example, a sample of 8 bills of lading dated between 1655 and 1782 , each from different firms and ships, showed the same format and, with the exception of proper nouns written in, the same wording.[215] An example of these bills of lading read: "Shipped by the Grace of God, in good order and well Conditioned by [the firm] Sumley & Soams, in and upon the good ship called the Sea-Nymph, whereof is Master under God, for this present voyage, John Parker, and now Riding at Anchor in the River of Oporto, and by God's Grace bound for London, to say Twenty Pipes of Red Oporto Wine for Account and risque [sic] of Mr. Andrew Dix."[216] By the eighteenth century, printers were producing this exact

[213] "Bills of Entry." Business Instruments Collection. Volume 24, Box 10. Baker Library.
[214] Business Instruments Collection. Volume 32, Box 1. Baker Library.
[215] Ibid.
[216] "A Bill of Lading." Business Instruments Collection. Volume 25, Box 10. Baker Library

format with blank spots to fill in information such as date, sender, receiver, ship, and captain. The format, like the legal and business systems to which commercial agents connected it, became standardized and formally assessed.

Another means of communicating purchase, sale, and the transportation of goods was to contact a factor through a letter and have the factor obtain a good or complete a task on their own account to be reimbursed later. Such a letter to a factor would likely include a demand and a promise for repayment. Merchants often saved these communications in business letterbooks as a record, and either the requesting merchant or the factor could use them for evidence in litigation if a dispute arose. An example of such a letter read in part: "Pray send me per the first opportunity 50 pieces of your best Linen, which I hope you will procure for me at a reasonable price, and draw on me for the amount. Which shall receive due honor."[217]

A factor generally responded to an employer's letter once they completed the assigned task. A response from the factor generally included the means through which they accomplished the requested action as well as evidence of its completion and information concerning costs. The need for this evidence meant that a response from a factor to an employer would likely include additional documents such as an invoice or bill of lading which detailed the inventory, the cost of the undertaking, and the desired port. Given this communication, the employer could both expect a ship to reach a port and follow up with an acquaintance or factor in that region. Merchants and factors enmeshed documentation and business instruments into their planning and communication which became standardized as they brought more and more factors and other merchants into their networks.

[217] "Letter to a Factor." Business Instruments Collection. Volume 24, Box 10. Baker Library.

The development and improvement of the use of the business instrument was critical to the development of the economy of early New England because their use reduced local costs through efficient communication. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the distance of New England from major sites of manufacturing in Europe, and small internal markets, yielded some very high prices for imports relative to those seen in England. Goods sold in colonial ports in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries averaged twenty percent higher than English ports[218], an effect of high costs of transportation and a relatively limited willingness for foreign suppliers to interact with New England consumers. Through cutting the costs of trade through efficient organization of credit, the barriers to full integration into a global economy faded.

Other than those business instruments used for the purposes of transaction, evidence, and communication, instruments used for the purposes of formal agreement or contract were increasing in prevalence as merchants began organizing themselves across the Atlantic. One of the most significant of these agreements was the formation of partnerships, the result of a combination of available capital and time necessary for large undertakings. These partnerships often included the pooling of resources by two or more merchants or a merchant's employment of a factor, or factors, in some other region where they operated their firms.

Partnerships often yielded lengthy agreements filled with stipulations outlined before any of the parties involved conducted any business. One such agreement was that made between a group of three Londoners in 1728. These three were John Mosdeu (draper), Edward Baugh (painter and stainer), and Mathew Hewytt (grocer). The three contributors each concluded that

[218] Claire Priest, "Law and Commerce, 1580-1815" in Grossberg and Tomlins eds. *The Cambridge History of Law in America*, 407.

the scale of their business would increase "by way of Trading" and "Concluded and agreed…to be and become joynt Dealers together in the Trade and business of a mercer in the Shop belonging to the Dwelling House of the said Edward Baugh."[219] They further decided to set a limit on the duration of the agreement to seven years. The agreement also explicitly listed the initial investments made by each of the three parties and stated that equal shares should be made of "all the profits gains and increase and the rent of 78 [pounds] and which is allowed for the Rent of the said ship as is hereinafter mentioned."[220]

The function of such an agreement was mutual assurance. In the increasingly litigious commercial world of the eighteenth-century English Atlantic, if everyone privy to an agreement had spelled out the exact nature of the obligation, then they could use it to prove that another was at fault should one of them fail in their assignments. However, because of social bonds, such formal relationships did not always form. Instead, some partners organized themselves around family, religion, geographical proximity, and other functions of network homophily. In some cases, formal legal assurances between such groups were a social taboo and if disaster struck a business and some friend or family member failed to perform adequately, the accuser had to use less definitive documents like letters.

Competition in seventeenth and eighteenth century inter-Atlantic trade depended on the formation of partnerships. For example, in the late seventeenth century, building, fitting, and victualing a vessel could cost £2000 to £3000, more than the net wealth of most people even within wealthier coastal towns.[221] Besides the pooling of wealth through formal partnerships, major port towns developed means of organizing the sale of goods involved in the long chains of

[219] Business Instruments Collection. Volume 3, Box 27.
[220] Ibid.
[221] Zahedieh, "Overseas Expansion and Trade," 409.

exchange involved in long-distance trade. These included both formal commissions and wholesale services, both of which would become increasingly critical when supplying goods to growing colonial populations.[222] By the time of the American Revolution, merchants like Charles Ward Apthorp and John Hancock existed in chains of commissions through which a contract holder would pay factors who then paid their own agents in an interlocking system of dependency that connected everyone from ship crews to the heads of state into economic units. Furthermore, when dealing in commodities and manufactured goods, these commissioned agents were dependent on connections with urban wholesalers and shopkeepers like Benjamin Dolbeare and Samuel Abbott in Boston, both of whom dispersed goods between neighbouring towns and ports and within the city itself.[223] On the eve of the Revolution, many of these economic dependencies ran through New England towns and would have to be severed, even if only temporary, in order for any political separation to take place.

IX. Material Motivations and Political Change in Eighteenth-Century Massachusetts

In his 1790 historical commentary *Discourses on Davila*, John Adams wrote: "As nature intended [humans] for society, she has furnished them with passions, appetites and propensities, as well as a variety of faculties."[224] Furthermore, he stated that "There is none among [the passions] more essential or remarkable than the *passion for distinction*."[225] Adams divided the fame derived from the drive for distinction into three categories. The first, he claimed, was glory which was the acclaim of lawgivers who manage the affairs of the state. The second was reputation, which was the fame attributed to all great people. Adams considered this to be a basic

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[222] Ibid, 420. Samuel Abbott. Daybook Began 1755. Baker Library Historical Collection, Harvard Business School.
[223] Thwing, *Crooked and Narrow Streets*, 130.
[224] John Adams, *Discourses on Davila: A Series of Papers on Political History* (New York, NY: Da Capo, 1973. First published 1805 by Russell & Cutler), 25.
[225] Ibid, 25-6.

immunity of one's character to accusations of wrongdoing. The last of Adams categories of fame was credit, the distinct acclaim attributed to merchants and tradesmen.[226]

Adams unified his theory of passions, and the drive toward distinction, with tangible action on the part of the state. He claimed: "the theory of Education, and the science of government, may be reduced to the same simple principle, and be all comprehended in the knowledge of the means of activity, conducting, controlling and regulating the emulation and ambition of the citizens."[227] Adams, writing after the American Revolution, described what he believed to be the primary human motivator, distinction, in terms of its manifestations in state and commerce. As far as Adams could determine, the approaches to government which had spurred the tumultuous events of the Revolution, and all of history, had been a product of an attempt to control and regulate an otherwise chaotic conglomeration of individual pursuits. Furthermore, he considered education and information functions of this same process.

Adams mirrored the political worldview of the earliest Puritan settlers of New England, in that he recognized contending ideals as a problem which a centralized authority should confront. Following the model of his Reformist colonial forbearers, Adams overlooked the inevitability of contention. Additionally, in promoting the role of an elite group of colonial politicians in precipitating the American Revolution, he failed to recognize the role which commercial, political, and social network conflicts played in the evolution of New England culture and its ultimate political separation from Britain. The revolutionary events of the 1760s and 1770s came not because of a movement to regulate socially harmful ambitions. Instead, it was precisely because of ambition and the dominance of some colonial interest groups over others.

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[226] Ibid, 38.
[227] Ibid, 48.

The ideas concerning human drives and status which Adams expressed in *Discourses on Davila* extended from experiences which he derived in the years prior to the Revolution. In 1765, for example, he wrote that "poor people…have been much less successful than the great. They have seldom found either leisure or opportunity to form a union and exert their strength; ignorant as they were of arts and letters, they have seldom been able to frame and support a regular opposition."[228] From Adams's perspective in the decade leading up to the Revolution, a group of elites had long maintained political dominance through their access to formal education and available time outside of work.

Writing a decade prior to the American Revolution, much of Adams's political language concerned the prevalence of information on law and governance. In 1765, he wrote that between the beginning of the Protestant Reformation and the first English settlement of America, new knowledge spread across Europe. Yet, according to Adams, this information revolution also produced a civil and ecclesiastical tyranny as those with access to this new information began to manipulate the canon and feudal laws to their advantage.[229] This, by Adams's reckoning was a cause of the Puritan immigration to New England. He wrote that the first New England settlers were men of learning who did not oppose monarchy or the English state. Instead, according to Adams, they deviated from other factions in English society insofar as they believed that popular powers were a necessary guard against the monarch and the priest in any government.[230]

The historian Samuel Eliot Morison wrote that "high Anglicans" and "Tories" attacked free schools, like those which emerged under the town-based compulsory systems common in early

[228] John Adams, "A Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law." The Federalist Papers Project. First Published 1765 in *Boston* Gazette, 2.
[229] Ibid, 3-4.
[230] Ibid, 5.

New England, as dangerous to both monarchical government and the social hierarchies that existed under it. Morison's reasoning for how this divergence occurred was the communicative power of the compact town social networks that formed in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.[231] It is important to note that Puritan education culture was a unique learning system which would compete with other traditions and means of comprehension around the Atlantic. The result was often conflict, over methods of understanding, which would cause transitions in how commercial information travelled. The correlation between globalization, and the growth of education systems adapting to an increasingly international environment, is evident in Phyllis Whitman Hunter's description of John Adams's cosmopolitanism. Hunter claimed this emerged through his growing up in rural Braintree, his Harvard education, and his experiences working in the local circuit court.[232]

According to Adams, the political problems which arose in port towns, such as Boston, were the result of a new deviation from the popular check on power which took the form of legal and commercial conflict. For example, he saw local custom officers as seeking to enforce submissiveness on the part of port town colonists as part of a pursuit of unethical power.[233] The root of this undue power granted to the custom officers and other colonial officials was foremost, in Adams's view, a result of the manipulation of information by tyrannical interest groups both in England and within the colony itself. For example, Adams wrote that the Stamp Act of 1765 was a design implemented by these groups to strip colonists of knowledge by restricting access to print materials with duties and trade barriers. Through these means, Adams claimed, the

[231] Morison, *The Intellectual Life of Colonial New England*, 61, 64.
[232] Hunter, *Purchasing Identity in the Atlantic World*, 148.
[233] Adams, "Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law," 9.

government reintroduced the dependencies of the feudal system by taking property from poorer citizens and conferring it to stamp officers and their deputies.[234]

Prior to the American Revolution, the drive for success and notoriety, and the information necessary to achieve it, was at least in part a function of state power. For example, colonial printers aimed to work their way into the government printing business, which yielded the most consistent business and highest returns. In addition, maritime tradespeople, such as mast makers were dependent on state approval and monopolistic licensing practices, whereby a royal approval was necessary to fell the trees necessary to produce the masts. Being as it was the royal navy and British shipyards who purchased most of these masts, the costs of enforcement were low. When the consumer was the state, the ability to control economic activity increased.[235]

In 1764, the Boston lawyer James Otis asserted that "men cannot live apart or independent of each other…In solitude men would parish; and yet they cannot live together without contests. These contests require some arbitrator to determine them." To Otis, a Bostonian vehemently opposed to the intrusion of imperial governance in colonial affairs, humans were destined by their nature to associate for self-preservation. This idea was reflective of a mindset developed in a colonial society where a small land to labour ratio had proven for 135 years that local populations had power largely because of their material dependency on other members of their networks. Because of this, Otis concluded, true power was naturally in the hands of the people, and it was contrary to "human law" to challenge this power from outside the society in which it existed.[236] Like Adams, Otis presented tyranny as the result of a fractioning of interest, or as humans moving apart from a core community as the result of the disproportionate influence of

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[234] Ibid, 12.
[235] Bushman, *King and People*, 140.
[236] James Otis, "The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved." 1764. Constitution Society.

some interest group. However, as evidenced by the economic and political interests which contributed to revolutionary network formation, the rhetoric and practice of the radical Whig spokesmen of Boston did not cohere. The "people" which Otis alluded to were not one unit. When Otis, Adams, and other political agitators became notable voices in their community, they did so through the advocacy of their own networks.

In 1764, the Whig political thinkers of Massachusetts, such as Adams and Otis confronted the question of whether, and to what degree, the authority of Parliament and the king extended to the colonies. To Adams, the answer to this question had existed in New England political language since the foundation of the first towns, which was the social contract, or covenant. According to Adams, an attempt on the part of an authority to annul a social contract validated the constituents' rejection of their contributions as well. For Adams, in the case of the British colonies, this meant that an attempt to deprive the colonists of creating and executing their own internal laws validated revolution.[237]

Adams located the source of imperial conflict not in the disproportionate power of the British state, but within the conflicted interests and alliances of the government within the colonies. For example, Adams claimed that the source of corruption at the time he was writing was foremost the political influence of a group which he called the "junto," which consisted in part of two governors Thomas Hutchinson and Francis Bernard. According to Adams, this group assumed power during the Seven Years' War, because the colonies were too engaged with the war to recognize an open attempt against their liberties.[238]

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[237] John Adams, "Novanglus Essay #1". The Federalist Papers Project. First Published in 1764-5 in *Boston Gazette*, 7.
[238] Adams, "Novanglus Essay #2," 11.

Adams's arguments against the colonial government in 1764 described perceived injustices in terms of economic violations as well as purely along terms of political and legal agreement. Reiterating a point raised by Benjamin Franklin, Adams claimed that colonists had hazarded their fortunes to bring commerce within the English commercial system. Adams concluded therefore that taxation outside of their political influence deprived the colonists their part in the British economic system to which they were primary contributors.[239] Adams's accusation, in this sense, emerged from an understanding of empire fundamentally mercantilist in nature. His claim was that the colonists were critical to the wealth of the national unit, and that their benefit was not proportionate to their input. He claimed that the colonial interest and the national interest were not at that point aligned, and that they should be.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, this pursuit of influence through association with state powers yielded a conflict in Massachusetts which foreshadowed the onset of the American Revolution. To Adams, such association between national defence and political power only validated radical reaction when it did not grant due influence to the colonists involved. Adams believed that there was no reason that the colonists would not decide on their own accord to contribute to their defence, making taxation outside the colony unjust and unnecessary.[240]

In addition to his accusations concerning the overreach of parliamentary political influence, John Adams, in 1764, asserted that the conflicts of interest which contributed to the political injustices of his day were in large part the result of collusive rent-seeking on the part of colonial officials. Adams recalled the argument which those friendly to the provincial government of the period had proposed. This was that the government's purpose of raising revenue through

[239] Ibid, 10.
[240] Adams, "Novanglus Essay #2," 9.

legislation was to pay off the national debt and to lessen the financial burdens of the poorer of English subjects who would face the costs of government expenditure themselves if not for the imposition of colonial duties. Adams believed this to be false and claimed instead that the heads of the colonial provincial government were using their connections in Parliament to raise money for personal salaries for themselves and the judges of common law and Admiralty.[241]

Adams did not end his accusations of corruption with the local provincial authorities but instead identified their self-interested behaviour as being part of a larger economic system with an interlinked network of nefarious intentions throughout the English Atlantic. Writing in 1764, Adams used the Molasses Act of 1733, and subsequent attempts at colonial trade restriction, as proof of such inequities. He claimed that such duties arose from a collusion between planters in the West Indies and the colonial governors of Massachusetts. He believed that the result of these restrictions was foremost the advancement of the estates of the planters. However, Adams stated outright that such duties were rarely collected such that the idea of colonial contribution to imperial revenue was unprecedented in American society.[242]

Despite his description of the immoral actions of government and mercantile colluders, Adams explicitly affirmed the right of Parliament to regulate Atlantic trade and claimed that colonists believed it to be its primary economic function. To Adams, this was the proper realm of parliamentary action in the colonial economy, and that its power did not rightly extend to taxation or internal regulation. Furthermore, he claimed that illicit trade was both harmful in its ends and perpetrated foremost by those in allegiance with the royally appointed colluders of the provincial government. He wrote: "The question is not whether the authority of parliament

[241] Ibid, 13.
[242] Adams, "Novanglus Essay #4," 28.

extends to the colonies in any case, for it is admitted by the whigs, that it does in that of commerce; but whether it does in all cases."[243]

The solution which Adams gave to the problem of illicit trade and national debt was that acts of trade and navigation be introduced and voted upon within the colonial government. According to Adams, this homegrown solution would meet with popular approval and eliminate the incentives for illicit trade, and the channels through which it occurred, altogether.[244] Adams's based his commentary concerning economic matters of governance on the interest of the colony. The problem to him was never that the crown and Parliament sought too much power in general, but that they exercised too much influence over the colonists. Adams, in this way, deviated from the idea of the political union of subjects as a whole, and served instead as a representative of the interests of his colonial neighbours.

While true that transatlantic colonization ventures like those which England, and other European powers, developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were primarily absent in the earliest years of the republic, the conflict at the level of the network revealed many of the same interests and competitive instincts that defined the global economy prior to the American Revolution. The economic experience of the individuals living in the early republic was a pragmatic indicator of whether, and in what form, a fundamental economic transition occurred following the Revolution. Through this criterion, what one observes in the strongest period of revolutionary upheaval between the passing of the Molasses Act in 1733 and the early years of the American nation, was not a shift in economic philosophy or culture at all, but rather who exercised power to make state decisions.

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[243] Adams, "Novanglus Essay #7," 66.
[244] Ibid, 66, 70.

In 1733, Parliament passed the Molasses Act which imposed a duty of six pence per gallon on molasses and other sugar products. The rate of enforcement of these duties indicated that it was cheaper to bribe or find an alternative to paying the rate set by law.[245] Already by 1733, there was a conflict between the commercial influences of colonial importers and the empire. The result was a negotiation of the law to the advantage of the local population. This was fundamentally a struggle over enforcement which had existed at least since William Phips's rejection of customs enforcement forty years earlier. However, what changed was the formality of the new regulation which meant that the colonists' rejection of its stipulations was more clearly a political attack on the influence of Parliament. However, while this was an assertion against imperial influence, it did not follow that the colonists were promoting economic individualism in general, but instead the interests of the specific importers and the collective political autonomy of the colony.

Following a realization that local interests and limited police power limited their ability to collect revenue from import duties, the courts sought a means to give the right to enforce trade law to locals within the port towns. It did this by granting rights to search in exchange for payment through lucrative government positions. The legal form of this right to search was the writ of assistance. The superior court issued the first writ of assistance for the enforcement of customs to Charles Paxton, who the courts appointed as surveyor and searcher of customs for Boston sometime around the beginning of 1756. Following Paxton, in 1760 James Cockle, collector for the ports in Salem and Marblehead applied to the superior court for a writ, and they granted it that year.[246] In response to the colonial merchants' assertion of influence, imperial

[245] Mann, "A Great Case Makes Law Not Revolution," 1010.
[246] Ibid, 11.

powers began promoting a division of interest within the colony itself by granting power of the British state to colonial officials. Through these means, Parliament and the crown created relations of dependency between themselves and a group of colonists who would become influential loyalist proponents. However, the power of colonial merchants to influence state decisions was already so developed through contracts and personal connections that their influence within the economy of the English Atlantic was impossible to uproot via imperial state intervention.

Merchants who held lucrative contracts granted by European states such as France and England most often owed their commissions to their personal connections.[247] In addition, a successful firm working within this public-private framework, according to the historian Jacob M. Price, required usable connections in court and administration, existing financial resources, and a capacity to manage the organization of commercial exchange as well as state bureaucracies.[248]

William T. Baxter provided an example of the meeting between individual private and public power in the case of Thomas Hancock's appointment as selectman in 1740 which he held intermittently throughout his life. At the same time, the local community charged him with producing and upholding regional laws, he was simultaneously operating counter to existing imperial legislation through his illicit commercial involvement with Dutch traders. Additionally, as the result of government contracts connected to the fulfilment of London gunpowder orders, Hancock profited from government controls and subsequent centralization of economic influence

[247] Jacob M. Price, *France and the Chesapeake: A History of the French Tobacco Monopoly, 1674-1791, and of its Relationship to the British and American Tobacco Trades* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1973), xx.
[248] Ibid, xix.

resulting from his business involvements in the Seven Years War beginning with pre-war preparations as early as 1754.[249]

The rejection of the imperial control of international trade took two forms, first was political punditry and the other, and highly precedented, measure was illicit trade. These two activities worked in tandem prior to the Revolution to secure economic influence in coastal towns. The arguments of these deviants to the established commercial law rarely took the form of a complete rejection of the right of Parliament to regulate trade for the benefit of the nation, but rather they contested the specifics through which they managed that right. Merchants and tradespeople in towns like Boston saw themselves as contributors to the national welfare, and they saw disruption to their trade as undue given their influence within the English mercantilist economy. When Parliament sought to further internalize commerce by shutting out trade with the French West Indies through the Revenue Act in 1764, the New England traders were indignant and their arguments against the policy were almost immediately circulating around the colony in print.[250]

Gautham Rao, in *National Duties*, tied the ideas of enforceability and credit into a larger picture of competition between state powers. He described how "fiscal-military states" in early modern Europe used customs duties to secure credit to finance government and fund military expeditions.[251] Within this fiscal-military context, Rao emphasized the ways that citizens circumvented these legal methods employed by the state. One example he gave was how colonial American customs officials consistently broke rules outlined within the Navigation Acts prior to the Seven Years' War. The cause of this, Rao claimed, was the unremitting pressure from local

[249] Baxter, *The House of Hancock*, 69, 72, 129.
[250] Bushman, *King and People*, 153.
[251] Gautham Rao, *National Duties: Custom Houses and the Making of the American State* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 2016), 4.

merchants and other commercial agents.[252] Merchants of the revolutionary generation imported illegal Dutch goods into the Boston market. Thomas Boylston, Thomas Hancock, John Hancock, John Rowe, and William Mollineux were all to some degree involved in this illicit behaviour.[253]

The Sugar Act of 1764 was a creation which imperial powers intended primarily to acquire revenue following the large expenditures of the Seven Years' War which had ended a year prior. With a knowledge of the potential for clandestine trade within the colonial economy, the drafters of the act wrote that a major dictate of the act would be disallowing securing trade between the colonies and Britain. The means through which the act detailed how officials would accomplish this securing of trade was primarily the use of receipts to assure the payment of duties and increased revenue channelled into the policing of intra-imperial trade. With all purchases made with the intention of sale in the colonies, the buyer would have to receive a receipt of payment of duties from the office of the Exchequer to be presented upon arrival in the port in which the owner intended to sell. Furthermore, the act also required that every master of a ship take a certificate proving legal sale before departing the colony where he received his lading.[254]

In the decades preceding the American Revolution, the sanction that officials evoked in the case of an intercepted attempt at the violation of navigation laws, or tax avoidance, was seizure of the offenders good and vessel which the offender would forfeit after a legal proceeding.[255] In 1764, John Adams wrote that "it seems to be acknowledged, that the governor did write for a military force to strengthen government [to] enable it to enforce stamp acts, tea acts, and other

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[252] Ibid, 21.
[253] Hunter, *Purchasing Identity in the Atlantic World*, 149.
[254] "1764 Sugar Act Original Text." StampAct Online. 1764.
[255] Mann, "A Great Case Makes Law Not Revolution," 9.

internal regulations, the authority of which the people were determined never to acknowledge."[256]

According to Bruce H. Mann, the first episode to articulate what would later become an American tradition of constitutional hostility to powers of search was the Writs of Assistance Case of 1760.[257] This episode began with the attempted enforcement of customs law through a search of a ship to unload goods in Boston. This resulted in a legal conflict in which James Otis Jr. resigned his office as advocate general to represent the merchant defendants against Jeremiah Gridley who represented the king as the head of the bar.[258]

The Writs of Assistance case was not an isolated event but was instead the result of a contentious escalation of opposing interests. Merchants' connection to the sea extended from their acquisition of property and political power on the Boston waterfront. For example, in 1683, a wealthy merchant and member of the Boston Artillery Company, Thomas Clarke, built a wharf which was later purchased by the Hancock family. At this location, in 1768, John Hancock's ship *Liberty* attempted to unload a cargo of wine from Madeira without paying a duty, which Parliament prohibited under the Sugar Act.[259] John Adams represented Hancock in the subsequent trial. Both the Writs of Assistance Case and the confiscation of the *Liberty* illustrate that the legal and political radical influences of coastal Massachusetts, represented by Otis and Adams, and the commercial interests, represented by Hancock and others, were forming a coalition with a sense of political determination held exclusively within the civil structure of the colony.

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[256] Adams, "Novanglus Essay #5," 42.
[257] Mann, "A Great Case Makes Law Not Revolution," 6.
[258] Thwing, *Crooked and Narrow Streets*, 109.
[259] "1764 Sugar Act Original Text." StampAct Online. 1764.

In the decades preceding the Revolution, the traditional political language of isolationism used by clergy and governors since the founding of the colony found common use for merchant interests as well. As the threat of the control of trade escalated in the 1760s, political anxieties focused on the colonial agents in whom imperial power seemed most concentrated. Thomas Hutchinson, who judged the Writs of Assistance Case, and who served as governor of the Massachusetts soon thereafter, became a principle target of Bostonian animosity. One of the arguments which whig colonists raised against him was that he was taking payment outside of the colony, implying that he was not dependent on the will of those he was meant to govern. This was a long precedented criticism in Massachusetts political culture which had been raised against town officials and governors for more than a century.[260] Those with interests in destabilizing the influence of the British state upon the colony could therefore use the public sentiment of the past as a tool to diminish the power of the officials like Hutchinson who were the greatest threat to their economic pursuits. For one faction to rise to power, they had to introduce rhetoric which discredited their local opposition.

Within colonial society, the language and understanding of law's relation to conflict caused a large amount of political contention which resulted in occasional episodes of both violence and popular uprising. The experiences of Thomas Hutchinson as governor prior to the outbreak of the American Revolution illustrated this conflict. To Hutchinson, a life-long New Englander, law remained an extension of the sovereign and English constitutional principles. He did not see constitutional rights as fundamental, but instead the ramifications of government as they existed at the time.[261] His understanding of law in the colony was material and concrete in its

[260] Adams, "Novanglus Essay #2," 12-3.
[261] Mann, "A Great Case Makes Law Not Revolution," 29.

implications relative to many of his fellow Bostonians especially the whig legal thinkers such as John Adams and James Otis. The whig alternative to Hutchinson's legal worldview presented law as having natural roots that extended beyond the physical enforcement and upholding of any sovereign or state power. Hutchinson was the most prominent member of a class of political realists who the revolutionaries would need to remove from power if they were to convince a greater majority that their ideal colonial community carried promise beyond their own perspective. Discrediting Hutchinson and his royally appointed allies was an effort to establish political and economic unipolarity.

The fractioning of interest, and opposition to the English state, was apparent in the formation of clubs, circles, and juntos, especially in Boston, where the public support of commercial interests was strongest.[262] Distinct networks formed for the purpose of opposition to imperial governance, and their political influence increased in proportion to the power that figures like Thomas Hutchinson appeared to hold over the interests of the local population.

Boston and other coastal towns in Massachusetts, prior to the Revolution, were places with a unique political climate. Their commercial influences connected them to Europe and the West Indies in a way that inland towns were not, yet they shared a sense of autonomy with the rest of New England which proved problematic to the government in England. Radical language was stronger in Boston than anywhere else in Massachusetts prior to the Revolution, which resulted in a political isolation of the metropole from the more neutral remainder of the colony. Boston often found itself in the minority of assembly votes after a major shift in popular party politics in the 1730s.[263] However, it remained a critical political centre for the entire colony because it was

[262] Bushman, *King and People*, 184.
[263] Ibid, 263.

the nexus through which most information concerning global affairs passed. For this reason, given the increased power of economic tension in the mid-eighteenth century, Bostonians became a powerful minority interest which influenced much of how the colony reacted even if there was not complete political agreement between coastal radicals and their colonial compatriots.

The influence which the radicalizing population of Boston perceived Hutchinson to hold over their popular political and economic power reached a critical point in 1765, at which point a mob ransacked Hutchinson's house and destroyed most of his belongings and valuable legal and academic papers.[264] Hutchinson attributed this event to uproar over the Stamp Act, stating that it "disturbed the minds of the people of America. In such a state of affairs, the vicious, the abandoned have a peculiar opportunity of gratifying their corrupt affections of envy, malice, and revenge."[265] Significantly, the ritualistic opposition between North and South Boston only ceased upon the passage of the Stamp Act in 1765 when Boston leaders, such as John Hancock, decided that the parties should unify and direct their opposition outward toward the offending imperial powers who he claimed threatened the mutual economic wellbeing of the entirety of Boston. Hancock organized meetings between the factions to reach this political end.[266]

Hutchinson's experience captured a reality of life in Boston which many of his contemporaries failed to reach through their social commentary, which was the inevitability of internal conflict of interest which had long precedents in the history of the colony. For example, in speaking of the political turmoil in the 1760s which resulted in the destruction of his property, Hutchinson wrote: "We shall never be all of one mind in our political principles. I desire no more

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[264] Thwing, *Crooked and Narrow Streets*, 56.
[265] Hutchinson, *The History of the Province of Massachusetts Bay*, ii.
[266] Thwing, *Crooked and Narrow Streets*, 78-9.

candor from those who differ from me, than I have ever been, and ever shall be ready to shew to them."[267]

Religion in Massachusetts adapted to the radical sentiments of the mid-seventeenth century. For example, Jonathan Mayhew, pastor of the West Church in Boston broke with Calvinist Orthodoxy in 1749 when he preached seven sermons that emphasized anti-institutional individualism. His politics were as radical as his theology, and his church attracted the patronage of the newly wealthy merchants who were gaining influence in the city at that time. This new religious language became a means through which its adherents could express radical thought to like minds. In this way, the response to the material reality of globalization and the opposition politics that came as a result extended into religious institutions as well.[268] Mayhew represented a culmination of the forced adaptation of the New England ministry to the globalization of ideas. This same process first came to the fore with Cotton Mather and his generation of clergy who found themselves pinned between the traditions of a religious frontier settlement and new competing economic influences. Mayhew, in contrast to his strictly Calvinist forebearers rejected the old mores and adopted a new radicalism more in tune with local influence in a more globally connected Boston.

Prior to the American Revolution, Bostonians connected church and economic networks as tools or furthering of like interests. For example, in 1712, a group of North End mechanics, a relatively distinct network in the town with strong global commercial connections, formed the New North Church on the east corner of Clarke Street near the wharves and shops of North Boston.[269] Joshua Pico Jr. and his family were life-members of this church and it became a social

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[267] Hutchinson, *The History of the Province of Massachusetts Bay*, iv.
[268] Bushman, *King and People*, 261.
[269] Thwing, *Crooked and Narrow Streets*, 60.

and spiritual centre of one of the most quickly radicalizing sectors of the town following the increased imperial emphasis on duties and trade restrictions in the 1760s.

As unrest escalated in the 1760s, Thomas Hutchinson attempted to open a debate with the Massachusetts council and house of representatives. He was hoping to win public approval so that he could buttress his authority to influence the enforcement of parliamentary decree through formal legal argument and political rhetoric.[270] However, this attempt met with little reciprocation within the radicalizing coastal community. If Hutchinson wanted to influence a colonial interest group to recognize the validity of the legal authority of which he was a proponent, Boston and its environs was the wrong place for it. The economically conflicted port town traders and mariners profited little from recognizing any legal argument which seemed to result in a decline of their power. Interest proved stronger than formal language and theory as the perceived encroachment of parliamentarian economic control loomed in the minds of coastal New Englanders. Given the political information already circulating around the wharves and town centres, the course of revolutionary foment was already unfolding before the crown appointed Hutchinson as governor.

In January of 1774, the mariner Ashley Bowen witnessed an official paraded through the streets of Marblehead, who a hostile crowd had tarred and feathered. This image stuck in his memory to a degree that he would record it in his autobiography years later.[271] However, for him, it would stay a memory, while for other coastal residents like E.H. Derby of Salem and Joshua Pico Jr. of Boston, and the founding statesmen with whom they associated, it was a very active part of their economic mobility in the upcoming years. This threat of violence was the same in

[270] Mann, "A Great Case makes Law Not Revolution," 33.
[271] Bowen, *Autobiography,* 103-4.

the abstract whether it occurred in the court or battlefield, if initiated by work contract, or by "crying out" against witches in the seventeenth century. Even in routine acts, the penalty for non-compliance would at some point result in a violent act initiated by the well-connected state-class through the medium of government and the penal system.[272]

Ralph D. Paine in *The Ships and Sailors of Old Salem* stated that the difference between privateers and pirates was not distinct in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and that "polyglot freebooters" found that the threat of English protection was a bluff. They realized that they could, often without recompense, acquire ships and goods by force outside the reach of any formally established legal system.[273] In contrast to the social conflict surrounding the witch trials, in the case of these pre-revolutionary freebooters, one would have seen the ability to gain economically not through the utilization of the law, but through the knowledge of its avoidance. This "negation" was nonetheless a crucial tool that came about through the existence of the state. The successful privateer was the one to whom customs law did not apply while his competition had to bear the cost of taxes and regulation.

The transition in legal norms stemming from non-enforcement or operation outside of the reach of government raised the question of what made law, as it existed on paper, manifest itself in the real world or not. Ashley Bowen, in his autobiography penned in old age in the years following the American Revolution mentioned a "tidewater" or a customs official who would come out onto ships in the harbours of major port towns to prevent illicit trade on the part of captains who may have tried to exchange goods from ship to ship instead of coming into town markets and through customs.[274] In this description, Bowen witnesses the hand of governance in

[272] Robert Cover, "Violence and the Word," 757.
[273] Paine, *The Ships and Sailors of Old Salem,* 8-9.
[274] Bowen, *Autobiography,* 105; Gautham Rao, *National Duties*, 15-6, 29-39.

the commercial world enforced through one of their agents. However, the structure of the state did not always incentivize compliance. A critical form of commercial knowledge would be that of making the law, as it appeared on paper, simply not apply to one's actions.

Importation was another area where adherence to the law proved dynamic beyond the extent to which formal documents of the judiciary represented it. The Boston Port Act of 1774 illustrated this. The British government put this act in place as a method to stymie the revolutionary activity, such as the Boston Tea Party, which was becoming entrenched in Boston's commercial culture. It closed the port to all trade as a penal measure.[275] Concerning the precipitation of the Revolution, the Port Act was significant as it was a breaking point between the communication of information through commercial channels. This was effectively a severing of ties of dependence through which perspective of potentially opposing groups could be understood to a degree that would prevent the further escalation of conflict.

Ashley Bowen, who was prone to see the British as an unstoppable force of state power, marvelled at the extent to which the British influence in coastal Massachusetts manifested itself in the everyday workings of local business in the critical months preceding American independence and the outbreak of war. In Marblehead, on June 1, 1774, Bowen wrote:

> "The Port of Boston blocked up by the British and 14 days allowed the merchants to sail for the port of Marblehead as a free port, and all the wood coasters were ordered here to Marblehead and examined before they could go to Boston. There was soldiers planted here and guard boats. The Custom House was here and goods were sent to Boston by land and our streets filled with strange faces and Boston full of British troops."[276]

Bowen's observation was representative of the manipulations and illegal dealing that would define much of the era's commercial intelligence, which was based in the art of smuggling, a

[275] Parliament of Great Britain. *Boston Port Act*. March 25, 1774. Reprinted on ushistory.org. Thwing, *Crooked and Narrow Streets*, 56.
[276] Bowen, *Autobiography,* 114.

custom increasingly pitted against the encroachment of formal British imperial law and state power necessary to attempt for the first time to force adherence in the colonies.

X. Revolutionary Networks, Commercial Relations, and a Boston Cooper

Following the Revolution, the Boston government appointed the cooper, Joshua Pico, culler of staves for multiple years and held the title of warden periodically until 1789.[277] These positions were responsible for the regulation of boards used in the making of barrels and other receptacles used in trade, and for the guarding and overseeing of the port, respectively. Through his title and political influence, the merchant was also the regulator, with all the conflict of interest that would have entailed. It was the connection that allowed the commercial agent and tradesmen to overstep the law and given the number of such people with whom Pico interacted, he could have served as a window for such action.

Before the American Revolution, the town of Boston consisted of approximately 15,000 people. The town's economy was based largely on maritime trade. Ships filled with cargo sailed back and forth to Europe and the Caribbean. Captains and their crews carried raw materials from the colonies and traded for manufactured goods in a more industrialized Europe. Merchants, ship captains, and maritime craftsmen such as coopers and ropemakers, played critical roles in this system. Activities related to this commerce took place primarily on the harbour and in the Town House, close to the Long Wharf.[278] As David Hancock describes in reference to the parallel, and connected world of merchants in London, membership in a commercial group provided a tradesman with many opportunities, and throughout the eighteenth century these connections

[277] Boston Evening Post. March 15, 1762, 1. Boston Evening Post. March 21, 1763, 1. Boston Post Boy. April 23, 1764, 1.
[278] Baxter, *The House of Hancock,* 184.

came to weigh more in commercial culture than the "age-old nepotistic structures of family advocacy."[279] For years in Boston and Salem, families, like the Hathornes, organized ventures by family and formed strict linkages between the Massachusetts founding families, powerful merchants, and the maritime ship captains who formed the local coastal elite.[280] However, what one would have seen in cases like that of Joshua Pico Jr.'s post-revolution career, was a revolutionary knowledge of state, a learned process that in the war against Britain would rearrange class structure around new lines through commercial alliance and social alignment.

In understanding the connection between learning, state, and the social and commercial connections of Joshua Pico Jr., it is important to determine the political world in which he situated his personal network. Pico was an ardent opponent of imperial intervention in Boston and member of the Sons of Liberty. He was at a dinner held by this group at Dorchester in 1769.[281] He supported the non-importation of British goods, in response to what he saw as unrepresentative taxation and commercial policy. He stood guard at Boston's harbour to prevent the landing of goods, on one occasion with Paul Revere. Revere and Pico's political connection was probably due foremost to their similar economic and geographic background. Both were North Boston craftsmen with transient mariner fathers, Joshua Pico Sr. and Appollos Rivoire. Revere was born in 1734, just two years after Pico, and had established himself as a successful gold and silver smith in the 1760s, the same time at which Pico began his trade as a cooper.[282] As had long been the norm in Boston, craftsmen like Pico and Revere interacted with a large number of different customers and made critical connections with dispersed, transient, and often

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[279] Hancock, *Citizens of the World,* 244.
[280] Hunter, *Purchasing Identity,* 40.
[281] "Alphabetical List of the Sons of Liberty who dined at the Liberty Tree, dinner, in Dorchester, Aug 14, 1769", masshist.org.
[282] Thwing, *Crooked and Narrow Streets*, 53.

economically powerful people. As in the case of the travelling craftsmen of the first generation of settlers in Massachusetts, the tradespeople became distributors of news and information through their commercial channels, and their coastal shops became centres through which radical political information could pass.

In the early 1760s, when Pico would have been in his early thirties, he was working in his own coopering partnership along with Samuel Treat. Treat and Pico packaged materials such as meat, oil, flour, and blubber for trade and storage.[283] They made regular business trips to the Penobscot region, in present day Maine, in order to trade materials from Boston.[284] Pico operated his cooperage in commercial connection with such notable revolutionaries as John Adams and John Hancock, who provided him with legal bookkeeping and loans respectively.[285] Pico's credit network, and personal acquaintances, were a part of the formative, tumultuous, propagation of a new government, in which his role would be greater than that handed down to him by his deceased father or even his wealthy merchant stepfather, Hugh Kennedy. Through his connections to the new state, Pico was economically mobile. Through interpersonal learning he could come to enter a higher strata of Boston society, under a new state regime.

The power of Pico's network was evident when compared to that of another contemporary businessman who dealt in wholesale trades and therefore made fewer local exchanges, such as the Boston wholesale merchant Samuel Abbott. Between 1764 and 1766, more than 83 percent of the eighty people with whom Joshua Pico made business exchanges made less than four interactions with Pico.[286] This meant that Pico maintained many weak connections with a large

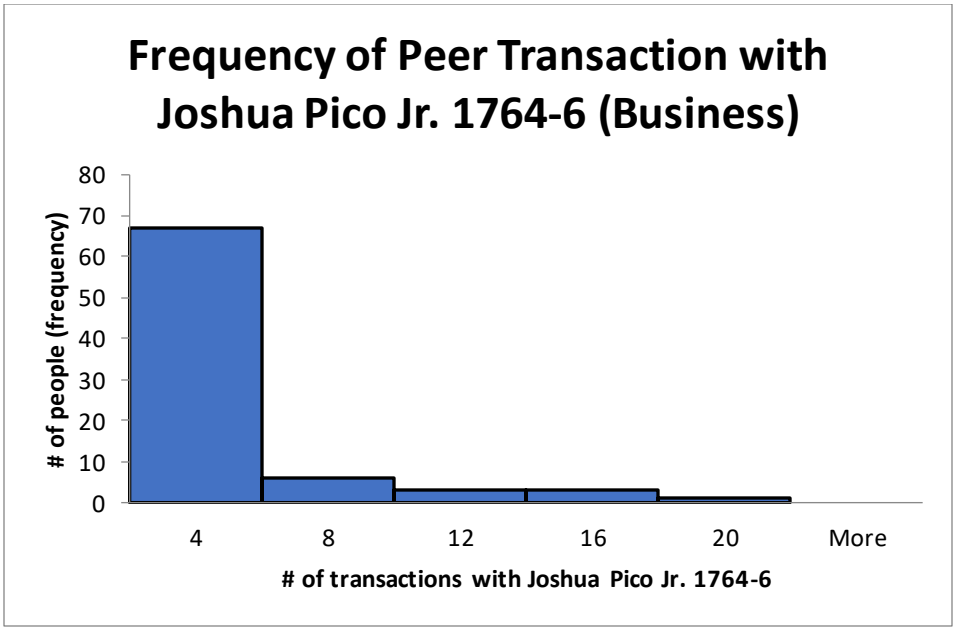
[283] Joshua Pico, Account Book. June 23, 1764.
[284] John Harvey Treat, *The Treat Family* (Salem, MA: Salem Press Publishing and Printing Company, 1893), 218.
[285] Pico, Account Book. August 22, 1765; April 18, 1766.
[286] Ibid.

number of customers. Consequently, through his coopering business, he was able to communicate with a diverse group of people who likely fell outside of his immediate social network consisting of family, close acquaintances, and North Boston neighbours. Like the travelling tradesmen of seventeenth-century Boston, the dispersed demand for Pico's services made him a critical hub for information exchange. This meant that if businessmen like Pico adopted a revolutionary perspective through association with whig and merchant interest groups, then it followed that the news which other coastal residents received would be presented with a bias towards that perspective. Given his association with Hancock, Revere, and Adams, and his membership in the Sons of Liberty, this was almost certainly the case.

Despite his dispersed connections with many customers and suppliers, Pico maintained a few business relationships with family and a few other associates. While Pico's influence spanned a large community, he concentrated his primary social and economic aims in kin-networks such as with his sister Lucey Rob, and the family of his merchant stepfather Hugh Kennedy.[287]

Figure 1

[287] Ibid.



# of transactions	*# of people (Frequency)*
1 to 4	67
5 to 8	6
9 to 12	3
13 to 16	3
17 to 20	1
more	0

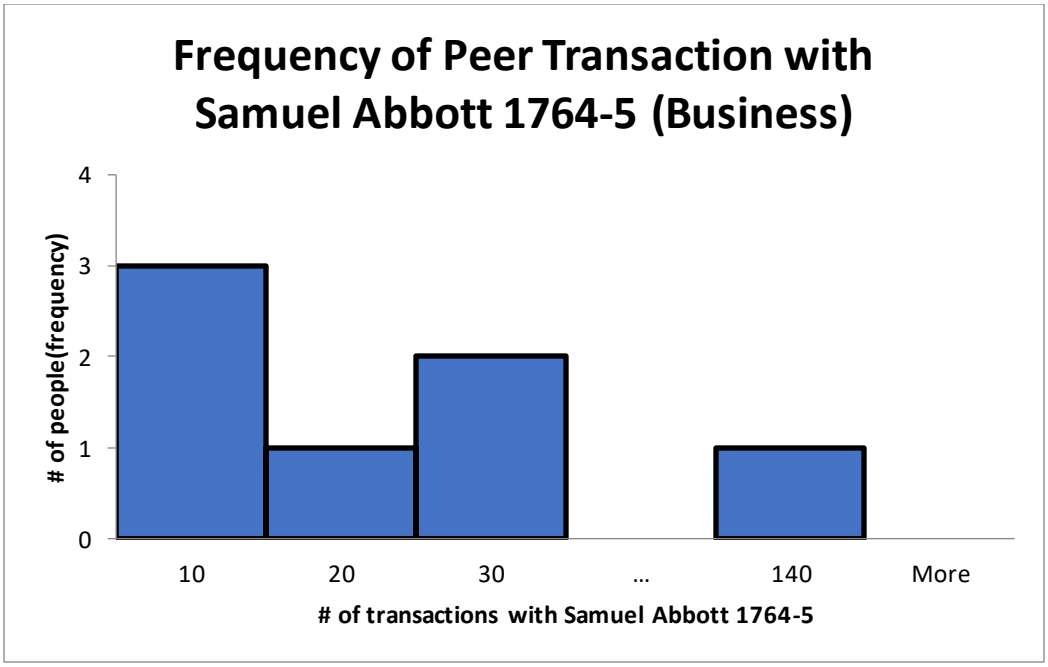
People with business structures like Pico were necessary for the distribution of political information from the economic and political elite. Hancock and Adams required connection with such social power to communicate to a wide audience through regular interaction. Through such means they reinforced their political philosophies and economic interests in contexts that immediately affected the public, which was the purchasing and selling of goods and services.

The business relations of Samuel Abbott provided a contrast to that of Pico. Abbott was a Boston wholesaler and cloth merchant who sold large shipments of goods to a few other sellers in Boston, Salem, and their immediate environs. Between 1764 and 1765, for example, Abbott made exchanges with only nine people.[288] Additionally, when one defines exchange as the transfer of a single type of good on a specific date, one commercial acquaintance, Captain Richard Lee of Salem, was the subject of 137 of all 211 of Abbott's exchanges during that period.[289]

Compared to Pico, Abbott had a far more exclusive network with less popular reach. Contractors, and large-firm merchants like John Hancock, or lawyers, had network connections limited by exclusive access to the mercantilist economic system and repeat-player access to courts and law. Their networks were limited in the same fashion as Abbott. However, through maintaining connections with the class of tradespeople working within the coastal commercial industry, the radicalizing elite could influence the entirety of the colony. Since international organization travelled first through the coast, it was inevitable that the disconnected hinterland would follow the lead of their port town connections who may very well have been customers at firms like Pico's.

Figure 2

[288] Samuel Abbott. Day Book.
[289] Ibid.



# of transactions	*# of people (frequency)*
1 to 10	3
11 to 20	1
21 to 30	2
….	…
130 to 140	1
More	0

In the 1790s, Joshua Pico Jr.'s role in Boston's economy changed from that of a private North Boston craftsman to that of a politically influential trader responsible for enforcing many of the importation rules that he had opposed when they British agents enforced them thirty years prior. A bill with the date 15 Nov 1796 showed Pico's enforcement of an importation fee when he served as port warden in Boston. On this bill, Pico listed six ships, their captains, taxes for the

ship owners to pay, and some cargo as the ships entered Boston.[290] It appeared by the shift in roles following the war, that the sentiment underlying much of the radical unrest concerning taxation and commercial restriction had less to do with the act of enforcement than who was doing the enforcing.

Joshua Pico Jr. died on January 5, 1807, at the age of 76.[291] At the time of his death, Pico stylized himself as a gentleman indicating a new distinguished position in Boston's elite social circles.[292] Pico's probate inventory included such indicators of wealth as silver plate (candlesticks and a watch), and mahogany furniture, indicating that the social function of wealth display had not abated in post-revolutionary America. His net worth at the time of his death exceeded $40,000, putting him among the wealthiest Bostonians at that time.[293]

XI. Conclusion

Social change in colonial Massachusetts emerged from material interests and competition for limited resources. Colonial society developed and transformed in response to globalization and market integration, but the transformation emerged from changes in economic scale rather than fundamental cultural change. Commerce and competitive individualism undergirded the structure of society and government through the colonial period. However, writers and ideologues proved adept at deploying political and spiritual language to impose a retrospective idea of cohesion, homogeneity, and traditional stability onto a factional past. This served the purpose of allowing both incumbent and emerging elites to give their positions popular legitimacy by right of precedent. This use of language by the colonial elite existed from earliest

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[290] "A Balance Due me one Ship Cumberland" Business Instruments Collection. Volume 30, Box 14. Baker Library.
[291] Thwing, *Inhabitants and Estates of the Town of Boston, 1630-1800* [electronic resource], *and The Crooked and Narrow Streets of Boston, 1630-1822*.
[292] Joshua Pico, "Will. January, 1807." Massachusetts Historical Society. Boston, MA.
[293] Jedidiah Parker and Samuel Clap, "Estate Inventory of Joshua Pico," 1807.

settlement by English migrants through the American Revolution. John Winthrop created an early narrative of the ascendency of spirituality over worldly atomism. This worldview supported Winthrop's claim to his place within the Puritan hierarchy after leaving Europe. However, upon arriving in America, the conditions determining hierarchies changed and Winthrop and others had to readapt the language of hierarchies to the new environment.

Puritan elites also needed to use their influence to establish and maintain property and commercial networks. This economic power could then be used to establish control over the provincial state. Control over the state meant control over a coercive apparatus which elites could use as a regulatory instrument to further maintain economic influence by enforcing existing monopoly rights and market shares. The legal framework did not operate as a neutral arbitrator of conflict but served as an instrument of specific interests. Justice and political legitimacy depended on individual perspectives that arose from competition, factionalism, and resource scarcity. Outside observers, like the traveller John Josselyn, noted the internal factionalism and materialism among Bay Colonists despite claims of spiritual unity among the colonists themselves. Josselyn's observations indicate that any type of pre-capitalist moral economy had already broken apart under pressure of intracolonial competition. Colonists like the merchant Robert Keayne appear to have faced criticism of a society that eschewed profit maximization over the social good. However, closer readings of these situations reveal events like Keayne's censure as arising from rival interests rather than any culture against excessive gain as a matter of principle. Despite instability, interest, and factionalism, Massachusetts colonists maintained a common political identity and state apparatus not because of their commonalities but because of more extreme conflicts and differences with external groups. Warfare with other colonial subjects and indigenous societies allowed for stability of the

Massachusetts provincial state and associated elites as colonists focused their animosities outward.

The late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries saw significant disruption of provincial power as financialization and imperial oversight provided new political forums where the orthodox Puritan elite had a longstanding political monopoly. Consequently, a significant emphasis on narratives of traditional Puritan piety emerged at this time under elite writers and political leaders like Cotton Mather. As uniform financial norms drew colonists into larger, more integrated markets, with direct transatlantic connections to England, a more cosmopolitan culture established itself in the colonies. This produced social frictions as change eroded the influence of established authority. However, as domestic markets developed, provincial interests maintained their ability to determine their own standards for political legitimacy in defiance of imperial mandates. The conflict of interests between colony and empire culminated in the revolutionary conflict of the second half of the eighteenth century.

Massachusetts colonists during the American Revolution successfully supported the provincial interest against imperial authority and metropolitan commercial interests. Colonist revolutionaries benefited from their domestic network connections disproportionately to many wealthier peers. Revolutionary success emerged from the power of the colonial economic substructure. However, just like provincial elites in previous decades, prominent revolutionary writers and politicians drew on a mythologized past to buttress their claims to authority in Massachusetts.

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