

**BRITISH IMPERIALISM,
LIVERPOOL, AND
THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION,
1763-1783**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis draws upon evidence from over twenty archives in the UK and US. It uses the context of Liverpool, arguably the 'second city of empire' because of its extensive social, economic, and political networks overseas, to enhance knowledge of British imperialism during the American Revolutionary era (1763-1783).

Part One analyses the 'gentlemanly capitalist' paradigm of P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins. In brief, this theory argues that the landed elite and financial-commercial services, concentrated upon the City of London, held sway over British imperial policy-making. This was chiefly because these interests were regarded as being 'gentlemanly', or socially acceptable, to the landed elite. In contrast, northern manufacturers were less influential in the imperial decision-making process. By working longer hours and being associated with labour unrest, industrialists were not perceived as being sufficiently gentlemanly by the ruling order. My dissertation tests this theory within the context of the late-eighteenth century. This is an original contribution to knowledge because most, although not all, studies of Cain and Hopkins focus upon later periods. Hanoverian Liverpool is an ideal test case because the town had a mixed economy. It contained a manufacturing base, served a wider industrial hinterland, and, because Liverpool was linked to the Atlantic empire, spawned a mercantile service sector community with interests in commerce and finance. This thesis generally supports Cain and Hopkins, but with some modifications. One of these is to view the late-eighteenth century as a period of emerging gentlemanly capitalism, referred to here as 'proto-gentlemanly

capitalism'. The fact that Liverpool merchants and the local landed elite were not yet fully socially integrated, is one of several reasons why the town lacked success in influencing imperial policy-making between 1763 and 1783.

Warfare was synonymous with the Hanoverian empire. Therefore, Part Two expands our knowledge of the empire at home, or how the American War (1775-1783) impacted upon Liverpool economically, socially, and culturally. Previous histories of the economic impact of this conflict upon Liverpool concentrated upon overseas trade, and therefore stressed its negative consequences. However, this thesis looks at both overseas trade and domestic business. It paints a more nuanced picture, and, by using Liverpool as a case study, shows that the impact of warfare upon the UK economy produced mixed results. Finally, this thesis considers the socio-cultural impact of the war upon Liverpool. In the process, it demonstrates that military conflict affected both the northern and southern regions of Britain during the eighteenth century. Militarisation of the local community prompted discussions regarding the boundaries of national and local government. The War of Independence split opinion, thereby revealing divergent trends within British imperial ideology. Finally, on balance, the American War cultivated a 'British' national identity in the town (although there were still other identities present).

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I came to do a PhD on the eighteenth century British Empire through an unconventional route. Whilst completing an MA in Twentieth Century History at the University of Liverpool, an immediate family member was diagnosed with chronic illness. Under these difficult circumstances, I began sessional teaching at neighbouring Liverpool John Moores University, and was granted a fee waiver to complete a part-time doctorate. I have always been interested in the American Revolution, and the rest, as they say, is history. Reflecting upon this journey, I have experienced genuine excitement, surprise, and frustration. But I am fortified in the knowledge that I have a solid base from which to draw inspiration.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>BBA</i>	Barclay's Bank Archives
<i>BHR</i>	Business History Review
<i>BL</i>	British Library
<i>BOD</i>	Bodleian Library
<i>BRO</i>	Bristol Record Office
<i>CO</i>	Colonial Office records
<i>CRO</i>	Chester Record Office
<i>EHR</i>	Economic History Review
<i>EIC</i>	East India Company
<i>HCA</i>	High Court of Admiralty records
<i>HP</i>	History of Parliament
<i>JEEH</i>	Journal of European Economic History
<i>JEH</i>	Journal of Economic History
<i>JICH</i>	Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History
<i>LA</i>	Liverpool Athenaeum
<i>LANA</i>	Lancashire Archives
<i>LIVRO</i>	Liverpool Record Office

<i>LMA</i>	London Metropolitan Archives
<i>ML</i>	Mitchell Library
<i>MMM</i>	Merseyside Maritime Museum
<i>MNHL</i>	Manx National Heritage Library
<i>NMM</i>	National Maritime Museum
<i>OHBE</i>	Oxford History of the British Empire
<i>PA</i>	Parliamentary Archives
<i>PDBP</i>	Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments Respecting North America, 1754-1783
<i>PHE</i>	Parliamentary History of England from the Earliest Period to the Year 1803
<i>P&P</i>	Past and Present
<i>SJL</i>	Sydney Jones Library
<i>SRO</i>	Sheffield Record Office
<i>TCHS</i>	Transactions of the Caernarvonshire Historical Society
<i>THSLC</i>	Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire
<i>TNA</i>	The National Archives
<i>UBA</i>	University of Bangor Archives
<i>UNA</i>	University of Nottingham Archives

INTRODUCTION

The introduction identifies the original contribution to knowledge made by this thesis, outlines the structure and arguments of this work, defines key concepts, and comments on methodology. In brief, this study looks at Liverpool, arguably the second city of empire because of its extensive overseas networks, during the American Revolutionary era (1763-1783). It therefore enhances knowledge of British imperialism 'at home' during the late-eighteenth century.¹ In particular, how accurate is the gentlemanly capitalist thesis in relation to imperial policy-making? What were the economic and socio-cultural consequences of the American War (1775-1783) upon Liverpool?

GENTLEMANLY CAPITALISM AND ITS CRITICS

One of the most controversial debates in British imperial history is the gentlemanly capitalist paradigm of P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins. This theory gradually emerged through several articles during the 1980s, and was published in the two-volume *British Imperialism* in 1993. It was later reissued and revised into one bumper edition in 2001.² Cain and Hopkins began their analysis with the Glorious Revolution of 1688. This event witnessed the replacement of the supposedly

¹ C. Hall and S. Rose, 'Introduction: Being at Home with the Empire', in C. Hall and S. Rose, eds., *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge, 2006), 1-31.

² P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, 'The Political Economy of British Expansion Overseas 1750-1914', *EHR*, 33, 4 (1980), 463-90; P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, 'Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Expansion Overseas I: The Old Colonial System 1688-1850', *EHR*, 39, 4 (1986), 501-22; P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, 'Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Expansion Overseas II: New Imperialism 1850-1945', *EHR*, 40, 1 (1987), 1-26; P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion 1688-1914* (London, 1993); P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Crisis and Deconstruction 1914-1990* (London, 1993); and P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism 1688-2000* (Harlow, 2001).

despotic Catholic James II by the virtuous Dutch Protestant William III. J.C.D. Clark argued that 1688 did not mark a significant watershed in British history. For him, the ancien régime of the landed elite and Anglican Church survived into the nineteenth century.³ These social groups maintained their authority over the legal system, public expenditure, and defence. Equally, the control exercised by the peerage over the House of Commons remained largely undisturbed prior to the 1832 Great Reform Act.⁴

However, Cain and Hopkins argued that the regime after 1688 was 'substantially new'.⁵ After allegedly liberating the English people from Catholic 'tyranny', William III sought to protect his native land from what he perceived as French aggression. England now found itself increasingly drawn into European wars. This change in circumstances paved the way for a massive expansion of 'services'. No satisfactory definition of services has been devised. However, Cain and Hopkins stated that services 'cannot be stocked... This definition produces a substantial list of activities, notably in banking, insurance, the professions, communications, distribution, transport, public service and a multiplicity of personal services'.⁶ The gentlemanly capitalist thesis particularly emphasises the importance of commercial and financial services.⁷ Indeed, these were required to fund and supply the larger armies and navies of the period. Henceforth, the 1690s led to the genesis of the 'financial revolution'. This centred upon the foundation of the Bank of England, and

³ J.C.D. Clark, *English Society 1688-1832: Ideology, Social Structure and Political Practice during the Ancien Régime* (Cambridge, 1985). Also see R. Porter, 'English Society in the Eighteenth Century Revisited', in J. Black, ed., *British Politics and Society from Walpole to Pitt 1742-1789* (Basingstoke, 1990), 29-52.

⁴ Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism 1688-2000*, 66-7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 36-7.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 35.

the creation of the National Debt. There was also growing use of mortgages, the appearance of a financial press, and the rise of the Stock Exchange. The shares from the EIC formed a sizable part of the stock market. Lloyds also became the international centre for underwriting.⁸

Gradually, both the established landed elite and rising financial services became intertwined. This was not a quick or smooth process. As Tory Viscount Bolingbroke derogatorily wrote in the early-eighteenth century: 'the landed men are the true owners of our political vessel; the moneyed men, as such are but passengers in it'.⁹ Nonetheless, the economic and political arguments for incorporating the City into the upper echelons of power were compelling. The need to combat the French abroad, as well as Jacobites (supporters of the deposed James II) at home, gave rise to what John Brewer termed the 'fiscal-military state'. Here the bureaucracy of the English government was expanded, with clerks and book-keepers recording in detail the rising incomes derived from taxation and loans.¹⁰ This increased desire for revenue led to the National Debt. Valued at £14 million in 1700, the National Debt mushroomed to £700 million by 1815.¹¹ Financial interests could help service these sums, and fund the wars that upheld the Revolution Settlement.¹² In addition, the landed elite had a tendency towards generosity, which promoted indebtedness. Again, members of the City could service these debts.¹³

⁸ *Ibid.*, 68. Also see M.J. Braddick, *The Nerves of State: Taxation and the Financing of the English State 1558-1714* (Manchester, 1996) and P.G.M. Dickson, *The Financial Revolution in England: A Study in the Development of Public Credit 1688-1756* (London, 1967).

⁹ Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism 1688-2000*, 72.

¹⁰ J. Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State 1688-1783* (Cambridge, 1988), xvii.

¹¹ Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism 1688-2000*, 79.

¹² *Ibid.*, 72-3.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 41.

Another factor that linked these groups together was that merchants in financial-commercial services aped the gentlemanly life-styles of their landed social superiors. For some, the word 'gentleman' implied either land ownership or a high standard of moral conduct, which provided legitimacy to govern. It was not until the expansion of public schools in the nineteenth century that the notion of a gentleman became 'all-embracing'. Being called a gentleman now referred to individuals who displayed courtesy towards women, fulfilled their obligations, and exercised leadership.¹⁴ For Cain and Hopkins, a gentleman placed duty above self-advancement. After a long education, gentlemen commanded positions in society that provided them with time to perform gentlemanly activities, such as leadership, light administration, and competitive sports. Significantly, a gentleman would acquire money from a distance, as directly working for money implied inferiority and dependence. Employment in financial and commercial services did not suggest performing manual work to acquire an income. Henceforth, working in the higher reaches of the service sector proved a suitable occupation for gentlemen.¹⁵ Once incorporated into powerful elite networks, merchants were entrusted with information, and cultivated social connections that boosted their commercial success. Such merchants gained in prestige and authority.¹⁶ To facilitate the gentrification process, this New Money purchased land, inter-married with the elite, and acquired titles.¹⁷ Hence gentlemanly capitalism was born. By the end of the eighteenth century, leading financiers and merchants in the City were accorded gentlemanly status.¹⁸

¹⁴ P. Mason, *The English Gentleman: The Rise and Fall of an Ideal* (London, 1982), 9-14.

¹⁵ Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism 1688-2000*, 38-9.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 44.

Certain aspects of the Cain and Hopkins thesis require further elaboration. Firstly, this gentlemanly ethic 'formed a tight bond' between the landed elite and financial-commercial services.¹⁹ It provided them with a common view as to how the world should be ordered. By the late-eighteenth century, this ethic was decidedly conservative in tone. 'New conservatism' was established during the American and French revolutionary wars, as the British propertied classes closed ranks, curtailed civil liberties, and put the economy on a war footing. These strategies overcame the twin challenges of foreign republicanism and domestic radicalism. By 1815 the British system of the landed order and Anglican elite (often termed 'Old Corruption' by its critics) was reinforced. However, the advance of the middle classes and provincial industry, of which more will be said later, during the early-nineteenth century challenged this gentlemanly unity. The decision to end the EIC's monopoly over Indian trade in 1813 revealed fissures within the City. But, eventually, the gentlemanly order introduced gradual reform to patronage networks, the constitution, and economic policy. The latter witnessed the replacement of regulation and mercantilism by free trade, especially between 1840 and 1860.²⁰ Henceforth, the political rise of British provincial industry was curtailed, and, far from weakening the gentlemanly elite, reform saw the City emerge as the chief beneficiary.²¹ Cain and Hopkins conceded that the gentlemanly capitalist tie did not necessarily equate with unanimity. Indeed, disputes still occurred within the City. But, crucially, unity was preserved as differences were confined amongst the gentlemanly capitalist family. This consensus cast a long shadow, as British

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 43.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 46, 80-7.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 86.

officials at home and abroad were largely drawn from the landed elite and financial-commercial services.²²

Secondly, whilst the gentlemanly capitalist network was enduring (affecting even British decolonisation after 1945), its composition was not static.²³ Between 1688 and 1850 agriculture remained the most important sector of the UK economy, and therefore preserved the lofty status of the landed elite. By 1790, no less than three-quarters of all agricultural land was owned by 4-5,000 aristocrats and gentry.²⁴ However, by the mid-nineteenth century, the position of British agriculture was in decline. The worldwide application of new technology and agricultural techniques ensured that cheaper cereals from overseas flooded the UK market. Henceforth, agriculture's share of the British economy declined from one fifth in 1850 to one sixteenth in 1900. In contrast, the share of services in employment was higher in Britain than anywhere else, except the Netherlands.²⁵ Thus, 'After 1850, as one form of gentlemanly capitalism began to fail another arose to take its place'.²⁶ Landed wealth steadily gave way to wealth generated in the service sector.²⁷ But, for the purposes of this thesis, based in the eighteenth century, the landed interest was still the chief component of the gentlemanly capitalist order.

Gentlemanly capitalism 'undoubtedly helped to promote expansionist forces of investment, commerce and migration'. Indeed, global business was to be

²² *Ibid.*, 43.

²³ *Ibid.*, 619-59.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 66.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 109-12.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 103.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 42.

transported and insured by British firms.²⁸ This was evident in the Hanoverian empire prior to the American Revolution. Members of the landed elite had migrated to the Americas, and espoused a gentlemanly lifestyle on their plantation estates. The needs of the City were also reflected in the colonies, as the terms of overseas trade were legislated through the Navigation Acts.²⁹ When business failed to grow at a pace that satisfied British commercial lobbies, this encouraged military conflicts and territorial annexations. For example, the outcome of the Seven Years War in 1763 increased the British geo-political and economic presence in the Americas. Similar commercial imperatives operated in the East too. By the 1720s, the EIC was challenged by the breakup of the Mughal Empire and French commercial rivalry. The result was British expansion in India led by Robert Clive. These territorial acquisitions helped transform the EIC from being a monopolistic trading organisation into a fiscal-military state. Hence the Company had its own army, bureaucracy, and tax-raising powers. The search for revenues to pay off the EIC's considerable debts became a constant struggle.³⁰ Hunger for revenue also arguably contributed towards the origins of the American War of Independence. With the addition of new territories after 1763, increasing financial strains were placed upon imperial governance. London therefore imposed tighter controls to pay off these debts. As a result, Britain lost the allegiance of vital sections of the colonial elite.³¹ Although the assertiveness of the 1760s and 1770s resulted in the loss of the Thirteen Colonies, it did not discredit imperialism in Britain. The continued threat posed by France ensured that the process of imperial centralisation continued. For instance, authoritarian governors were appointed to

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 55.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 87-8.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 92-4.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 94-6.

the penal settlement in New South Wales. The established landed order also continued as a bastion of empire, for the Indian Raj became a citadel of landed values and agricultural improvement during the nineteenth century.³²

Imperial expansion as a result of gentlemanly capitalism also created 'an international trading system centred on London'.³³ Before 1688, the capital was already a large and expanding urban area, but the financial revolution served to catalyse this process further. As the leading English port, London was distinguished by the wealth and cosmopolitan character of its merchant community. No other English town developed such refined gradations of status as were found amongst London's service sector gentlemen. True, other urban locations such as Bristol and Glasgow were involved in the imperial project, and their merchants engaged in commercial activities. Nonetheless, Cain and Hopkins noted that there was only one Bank of England and one National Debt - both of which were in London. The City also enjoyed the additional benefit of being physically closer to the organs of state, such as the Monarch and Parliament. Henceforth, this was where the mercantile and landed elite congregated. Provincial business had no choice but to follow their example. But if the provinces attempted to imitate London, this merely flattered the centre of power, rather than diluted it.³⁴

Finally, the gentlemanly capitalist thesis considers the role of industry in British economic development and imperial history. Cain and Hopkins acknowledged that industrialisation was 'undoubtedly central to modern British history.'³⁵ Even before

³² *Ibid.*, 96-100.

³³ *Ibid.*, 55.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 69-70.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 35.

the Glorious Revolution, the woollen industry contributed towards domestic employment and export earnings. But the growth of industry was less impressive than once thought. The spurt of the 1780s was largely confined to cotton goods. Equally, N.F.R. Crafts pointed out that it was not until the 1820s that the quantitative weight of industry imposed itself. Cain and Hopkins also argued that industrialists were less socially influential. The number of large fortunes amassed by manufacturing did not compare with those derived from land and services. Nor did industrialists earn money in ways that were acceptable to the landed elite. Manufacturing was associated with long hours and labour disputes. Henceforth, industrialists had less time to pursue gentlemanly activities. Furthermore, the direct political influence of industry proved limited. Attempts at lobbying by this sector in the late-eighteenth century, such as the founding of the General Chamber of Manufacturers in 1785, had limited success. Even this chamber declined a mere two years after it first convened.³⁶ Still, with the gathering pace of the Industrial Revolution, the decline of the landed interest in relation to British industry 'seemed a strong possibility' by the 1840s.³⁷ But instead, through a process of gradual reform, the landed elite and commercial sector retained their social and political hegemony. Manufactured exports were obviously a large part of British global commerce. However, industrialists did not draw this design, and their interests were not paramount.³⁸ Whilst the landed elite did supply wool to

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 74-6. Also see N.F.R. Crafts, *British Economic Growth during the Industrial Revolution* (Oxford, 1985); R.M. Hartwell, ed., *The Causes of the Industrial Revolution in England* (London, 1967); P. Hudson, *The Industrial Revolution* (London, 1992); and P. Mathias, *The Transformation of England: Essays in the Social and Economic History of England in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1979).

³⁷ Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism 1688-2000*, 85.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 55.

textile manufacturers, and leased mineral rights, aristocrats and bankers generally used money derived in London to improve their country estates.³⁹

Since its original publication, *British Imperialism* has been subject to intense scrutiny. Both volumes considered over 300 years of history, and incorporated case studies from around the globe. One academic wrote that it was 'the most ambitious attempt yet to explain British imperialism'.⁴⁰ Nonetheless, there have been several criticisms. Dane Kennedy suggested that gentlemanly capitalism relied too much upon older models of British imperialism, such as J.A. Hobson's attachment to financial interests in London.⁴¹ D.K. Fieldhouse also argued that the Cain-Hopkins thesis was seemingly mono-causal, tending to depict the gentlemanly capitalists as almost the sole factor behind imperialism.⁴²

Perhaps the most contentious issue surrounding Cain and Hopkins's work is the debate over the role of services and industry in British overseas expansion. M.J. Daunton questioned the extent to which the financial City was unified. Indeed, he believed that there was 'no cohesion' amongst this group. At the same time, Daunton challenged the notion that industry was less significant in policy-making. Even if the industrial bourgeoisie did not seek representation in Parliament, they were still active in ensuring social stability within urban areas.⁴³ J.R. Ward also pointed out that whilst industrial output was more modest than once thought, by the late-eighteenth century manufacturing did play an important economic role. The main source of Britain's balance of payments came increasingly from its

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 74-6.

⁴⁰ A. Webster, *The Debate on the Rise of the British Empire* (Manchester, 2006), 146-7.

⁴¹ D. Kennedy, 'Imperial History and Post Colonial Theory', *JCH*, 24, 3 (1998), 345.

⁴² D.K. Fieldhouse, 'Gentleman Capitalists and the British Empire', *JCH*, 22, 3 (1994), 531-41.

⁴³ M.J. Daunton, 'Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Industry 1820-1914', *P&P*, 122 (1989), 156-8.

domestic exports, which were principally manufactured goods. This figure rose from £13.6 million per annum in 1784-1786, to £41.2 million in 1804-1806.⁴⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, too, noted that although by 1750 Britain was a nation of commerce and trade, the economy benefited from a manufacturing base. This ranged from the production of cloth to metal goods. Henceforth, some agricultural villages eventually changed into full-time industrial villages. This change had two consequences. Firstly, landlords had a direct interest in the mines and manufacturers in their villages. Secondly, manufacturing 'could...determine government policy'. Trade did seem more lucrative and prestigious than manufacturing. But, whereas merchants mobilised only London and a few ports, manufacturers had large stretches of the country behind them.⁴⁵

Most significantly for this thesis, David Cannadine suggested that the years 1688-1850 were treated 'very schematically, and occupy scarcely fifty pages of text' in *British Imperialism*.⁴⁶ This pattern was subsequently replicated in many works on gentlemanly capitalism, with most focusing upon the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁴⁷ That is not to say that gentlemanly capitalism during the Long Eighteenth Century (1688-1832) has been ignored entirely. Anthony Webster considered the decline of the EIC after the 1790s, and its implications for the Cain-Hopkins thesis. He concluded by offering a modification to gentlemanly capitalism: industry and City financiers were not estranged from each other. If anything, the latter actively solicited the views of provincial industry. However, Webster still

⁴⁴ J.R. Ward, 'The Industrial Revolution and British Imperialism 1750-1850', *EMR*, 47 (1994), 55-62.

⁴⁵ E.J. Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire* (Middlesax, 1983), 29-31.

⁴⁶ D. Cannadine, 'The Empire Strikes Back', *P&P*, 147 (1995), 189-93.

⁴⁷ Examples include S. Akita and N.J. White, eds., *The International Order of Asia in the 1930s and 1950s* (Farnham, 2010); A. Dilley, *Finance, Politics and Imperialism: Australia, Canada and the City of London c.1896-1914* (Basingstoke, 2012); and R.E. Dumell, ed., *Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Imperialism: The New Debate on Empire* (London, 1999).

supported the general argument of Cain and Hopkins. Whilst there were undoubted divisions, the City managed on the whole to offer a consistent voice on imperial / economic policy. The City tended to be dominated by a relatively small number of gentlemanly capitalists, who often acted in unison. Henceforth, the gentlemanly capitalist order established itself as the senior partner amongst commercial groups by the 1850s.⁴⁸

H.V. Bowen also commented on gentlemanly capitalism during the eighteenth century. He stressed the centrality of gentlemanly ties to the Hanoverian empire. Whilst thousands of ordinary men and women took part in British expansion, the governing political and business elite in London were involved too. Metropolitan investors often sought to influence the direction of the imperial enterprise, but distance prompted them to devolve affairs to the periphery. Henceforth, investment, religion, and migration, integrated the centre and periphery of the Empire. This gave rise to a trans-oceanic elite moulded by gentlemanly values, which enhanced the stability of the British Empire.⁴⁹ Indeed, despite the loss of America in 1783, this rupture did not destroy the whole. This was partially because gentlemanly ties that had developed over decades bound the remaining imperial possessions together.⁵⁰ Bowen noted that this system 'possessed many of the

⁴⁸ A. Webster, *The Twilight of the East India Company: The Evolution of Anglo-Asian Commerce and Politics 1790-1860* (Woodbridge, 2009), 152-64. Also see Y. Kumagai, *Breaking into the Monopoly: Provincial Merchants and Manufacturers Campaigns for Access to the Asian Market 1790-1833* (Leiden, 2013).

⁴⁹ H.V. Bowen, *Elites, Enterprise and the Making of Overseas Empire 1688-1775* (Basingstoke, 1996), 146.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 194-6.

characteristics embodied in the metropolitan gentlemanly capitalism defined by Cain and Hopkins'.⁵¹

Bowen also commented on the role of finance and investment in the Empire. He argued that whilst British territorial expansion in India between 1740 and 1756 was triggered by events on the periphery, the pressure from London to increase corporate investment helped sustain expansionist momentum.⁵² Whilst recognising the role of investment, Bowen crucially observed that British overseas savings were often invested and directed locally, rather than from London. The availability of such resources gave British provincial merchants the opportunity to invest in empire themselves. Henceforth, the financial context of British imperialism 'should not be seen as being shaped solely by the needs of the City and investors located in the south of England'.⁵³ In what appears to be yet a further modification of Cain and Hopkins, Bowen showed that there were links between the EIC and manufacturing. Yes, merchants, clerks, and intermediary carriers assembled in London, and transported goods eastwards. Nevertheless, between 1756 and 1800, the EIC spent £28 million on domestically produced manufactures and raw materials for export. This included Cornish tin and Norwich wool.⁵⁴

Andrew Porter labelled gentlemanly capitalism's preoccupation with London and its environs as 'insular and parochial'. One cannot ignore the contribution made by

⁵¹ H.V. Bowen, 'Gentlemanly Capitalism and the Making of a Global British Empire: Some Connections and Contrasts 1688-1815', in S. Akila, ed., *Gentlemanly Capitalism, Imperialism and Global History* (Basingstoke, 2002), 38.

⁵² H.V. Bowen, 'Investment and Empire in the Later Eighteenth Century: East India Stockholdings 1756-1791', *EHR*, 42, 2 (1989), 204.

⁵³ Bowen, *Elites, Enterprise and the Making of Overseas Empire*, 100.

⁵⁴ H.V. Bowen, 'Sinews of Trade and Empire: The Supply of Commodity Exports to the East India Company during the Late Eighteenth Century', *EHR*, 55, 3 (2002), 484.

the Celtic peripheries of the British Isles towards the Empire. Indeed, Scotland contained one of the nation's largest concentrations of heavy industry, and from this base developed extensive overseas connections.⁵⁵ Ireland has also been termed 'the first and the last colony of the British Empire'.⁵⁶ In addition, there were Welsh migrants and missionaries in the Empire.⁵⁷ Of particular importance to this thesis, Porter noted that the northern regions of England played an important role in imperial expansion. From the 1720s onwards, Lancashire proved to be the most dynamic regional economy in Britain. This was because Liverpool participated in the Atlantic economic system, and political lobbying from Lancashire and North West compelled governments to heed the needs of industrialists and merchants.⁵⁸

Building upon these existing modifications, this thesis further expands our knowledge of gentlemanly capitalism in several respects. Firstly, it focuses upon the late-eighteenth century, which, as we have seen, is a period relatively neglected in the historiography of this field. Secondly, by drawing upon a particular case study, it enhances our understanding of the role played by northern English towns in the imperial policy-making process. In addition, did the Liverpool landed elite interact with the local mercantile community? What was the balance between industry and (financial-commercial) services in decision-making?

⁵⁵ A. Porter, 'Gentlemanly Capitalism and Empire: The British Experience since 1750?', *JGH*, 18, 3 (1990), 277. Also see J.M. MacKenzie and T.M. Davine, eds, *Scotland and the British Empire* (Oxford, 2011).

⁵⁶ K. Kenny, 'Ireland and the British Empire: An Introduction', in K. Kenny, ed., *Ireland and the British Empire* (Oxford, 2004), 1.

⁵⁷ H.V. Bowen, 'Introduction', in H.V. Bowen, ed., *Wales and the British Overseas Empire: Interactions and Influences 1680-1830* (Manchester, 2011), 3-5.

⁵⁸ Porter, 'Gentlemanly Capitalism and Empire', 278.

GEORGIAN LIVERPOOL: DOMESTIC SIGNIFICANCE, SECOND CITY OF EMPIRE AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Hanoverian Liverpool was significant in several respects. Demographically, the town's population grew 'spectacularly' from over 5,000 inhabitants in 1700 to almost 90,000 by the end of the century.⁵⁹ Whilst natural population growth contributed towards this trend, inward migration from surrounding areas was important.⁶⁰ Migrants were drawn to Liverpool because of its expanding economy. Indeed, the town was located in the North West, which Stobart termed the 'first industrial region' in England. This area was characterised by dynamic manufacturing industries, and by the 1750s Liverpool was emerging as the major industrial centre within the North West mineral economy. The town was renowned for processing Cheshire salt and consuming Lancashire coal. Stobart also noted that the region possessed a strong service sector, which stimulated new patterns of demand.⁶¹ Moreover, like other towns, Hanoverian Liverpool enjoyed growing links with its industrial hinterland.⁶² This was made possible by a network of turnpikes and navigable waterways, such as the Leeds-Liverpool Canal. As we shall see in Chapter One, the economic value and technological potential of this infrastructure ensured that the Mersey estuary became 'the cradle of the canal age proper'.⁶³

⁵⁹ P. Borsay, 'Introduction', in P. Borsay, ed., *The Eighteenth Century Town: A Reader in English Urban History 1688-1820* (London, 1990), 6.

⁶⁰ D.E. Ascoli, F. Lewis, and M. Power, *Liverpool 1680-1750: People, Prosperity and Power* (Liverpool, 2006), 63.

⁶¹ J. Stobart, *The First Industrial Region: North West England c.1700-60* (Manchester, 2004), 220.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 130-3.

⁶³ P.S. Bagwell, *The Transport Revolution from 1770* (London, 1974), 3.

Because of its status as a port, Liverpool was the principal link or entrepot between the North West and wider Atlantic World.⁶⁴ The town subsequently developed economic, social, and political networks throughout Britain's Atlantic empire. This section will begin to illustrate why Liverpool has sometimes been referred to as the 'second city of empire'. The town's association with the empire of the seas pre-dated the eighteenth century. During the medieval period, Liverpool was involved in the transportation of troops over to Ireland. After the Restoration of 1660, Liverpool vessels sailed to the West Indies to purchase sugar.⁶⁵ But this association with overseas initiatives was transformed after 1709 with the construction of the Old Dock, probably the first commercial dock in Britain.⁶⁶ In 1702, the town owned 8,600 tons of shipping. By 1788 the figure reached 106,000 tons. Although these figures were behind London and Newcastle, Liverpool was still ahead of other competitors, such as Bristol and Hull.⁶⁷

As a hub for shipping, Georgian Liverpool facilitated the migration of people across the Empire. Bernard Bailyn noted that by the mid-eighteenth century, the town was a point of departure for free migrants moving from Britain to North America.⁶⁸ The port was also involved in the overseas movement of un-free labourers, such as convicts. However, Liverpool's participation in this activity was limited, as North

⁶⁴ See D. Armitage and M.J. Braddick, eds, *The British Atlantic World 1500-1800* (Basingstoke, 2002); B. Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concepts and Contours* (Cambridge, 2005); and J.P. Greene and P.D. Morgan, eds, *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal* (Oxford, 2009).

⁶⁵ F.E. Hyde, *Liverpool and the Mersey: The Development of a Port 1700-1970* (Newton Abbot, 1971), 1-12.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁶⁷ R. Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (London, 1962), 35.

⁶⁸ B. Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York, 1986), 89.

West England was removed from the areas with the heaviest concentrations of felons requiring transportation.⁶⁹

Georgian Liverpool was synonymous with the trans-Atlantic slave trade. In terms of the number of vessels dispatched from England to Africa, Liverpool overtook Bristol and London during the 1740s. Several factors are attributed to this, not least that the town was less geographically exposed to an enemy during wartime.⁷⁰ Such is the perceived strength of the relationship between Liverpool and the slave trade, that the town is often cited as evidence in the debate over profitability. Gomer Williams suggested that there was a 30 per cent profit with each transaction.⁷¹ However, more recent studies have revised this figure downwards. Richardson drew upon the records of Liverpool slaver William Davenport, and found marked fluctuations in profitability from one voyage to another.⁷² Famously, Eric Williams used Liverpool to justify his view that the profits of the slave trade catalysed Britain's Industrial Revolution. One of the examples Williams provided was the Heywood family. After profiting from slavery, the Heywoods opened a bank in Liverpool in 1773.⁷³ However, the Williams thesis has not found universal acceptance.⁷⁴ It is also possible to over-state the importance of slavery to Liverpool. After analysing the records of local businessman Thomas

⁶⁹ A.R. Ekich, *Bound for America: The Transportation of British Convicts to the Colonies 1718-1775* (Oxford, 1987), 78.

⁷⁰ K. Morgan, 'Liverpool's Dominance in the British Slave Trade 1740-1807', in D. Richardson, S. Schwarz, and A. Tibbles, eds, *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery* (Liverpool, 2007), 14-34.

⁷¹ G. Williams, *History of the Liverpool Privateers and Letters of Marque with an Account of the Liverpool Slave Trade 1744-1812*, 2nd edn (London, 2004), 598.

⁷² D. Richardson, 'Profits in the Liverpool Slave Trade: The Accounts of William Davenport 1757-1784', in R. Anstey and P.E.H. Hair, eds, *Liverpool, Slave Trade and Abolition* (Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1989), 80-1.

⁷³ E. Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, 3rd edn (Chapel Hill, 1994), 105-6.

⁷⁴ See S. Engerman, 'The Slave Trade and British Capital Formation in the Eighteenth Century: A Comment on the Williams Thesis', *BHR*, 46, 4 (1972), 430-43; S. Drescher, *Econocide: British Slavery in the Era of Abolition* (Pittsburgh, 1977); and B. Solow and S. Engerman, eds, *British Capitalism and Caribbean Slavery: The Legacy of Eric Williams* (Cambridge, 1987).

Case, Sheryllyne Haggerty argued that Liverpool had such a diverse portfolio that it did not need to rely exclusively upon the African market.⁷⁵

Haggerty's argument underscores the fact that eighteenth century Liverpool had links to the wider Atlantic economy. Indeed, the town was connected to what Breen referred to as the 'Empire of Goods'.⁷⁶ Beginning in the late-seventeenth century, the locus of Britain's commercial gravity shifted westwards towards the Atlantic, away from the traditional linkages with continental Europe. Liverpool, fortuitously located in the North West, was well placed to take advantage of the North American and West Indian markets. Thus, the town imported colonial commodities such as rice, tobacco, and sugar. In return, it exported coal and salt. Wealthy Liverpool merchants such as John Tarleton even owned plantations in Jamaica. Meanwhile, Liverpool did not entirely eschew its traditional connection with Ireland and the Continent. Agricultural and mineral commodities from Norway and Archangel remained important, as did the wine trade with Iberia. Nonetheless, by 1750, Liverpool stood second only to London in the volume and value of its Anglo-American trade.⁷⁷ In this respect, Liverpool was clearly the second city of empire. The use of Bills of Exchange underpinned this commercial system. Typically, a drawee (buyer) purchased a bill of exchange from the drawer or seller. The paper note was then sent to the individual who dispatched the goods (payee), who could submit it to a merchant, bill broker or banker (payer). If the drawee endorsed the bill, they guaranteed it within the period specified. After being

⁷⁵ S. Haggerty, 'Liverpool, the Slave Trade and the British-Atlantic Empire, c.1750-75' in S. Haggerty, A. Webster and N.J. White, eds, *The Empire in One City? Liverpool's Inconvenient Imperial Past* (Manchester, 2008), 17-34.

⁷⁶ T.H. Breen, 'An Empire of Goods: The Anglicization of Colonial America 1690-1776', *Journal of British Studies*, 25, 4, (1986), 486.

⁷⁷ P.G.E. Clemens, 'The Rise of Liverpool 1665-1750', *EHR*, 29, 2 (1976), 216-7.

cashed, the bill was returned to the original drawer to show the sum had been paid.⁷⁸ This process was like a modern cheque, except that it did not necessarily pass through a bank. The flexibility of Bills of Exchange was crucial for credit supply. Often given at six months, by the late-eighteenth century it was becoming common for bills to extend over a year.⁷⁹

Liverpool's links to overseas commercial empire also stimulated the development of the 'consumer society' back home. By the time of the Georges, more men and women than ever before were enjoying the experience of acquiring material possessions.⁸⁰ The local Liverpool press illustrates this trend, containing advertisements for the sale of colonial produce at auctions in the town. There were also adverts for luxury items, such as Chinese tea and pottery sold by London dealers.⁸¹ This reference to Chinese goods in Hanoverian Liverpool is significant. During the Georgian era, the capital city enjoyed monopoly trading rights with the East, but English provincial towns such as Liverpool were clearly turning their attention towards this distant market. Chapter Two, in particular, shows that the Liverpool lobby was concerned about the management of the EIC during the 1760s and 1770s. Thus, the eighteenth century background paved the way for Liverpool's nineteenth century expansion, and its status as a 'world port'.⁸²

⁷⁸ K. Morgan, *Slavery, Atlantic Trade and the British Economy 1660-1800* (Cambridge, 2000), 75.

⁷⁹ S. Haggerty, *The British Atlantic Trading Community 1760-1810: Men, Women, and the Distribution of Goods* (Leiden, 2006), 153-4, and E. Kerridge, *Trade and Banking in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 1988), 45-7.

⁸⁰ N. McKendrick, J. Brewer and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth Century England* (London, 1982), 1.

⁸¹ *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 22 July 1768.

⁸² G.J. Milne, *Trade and Traders in Mid-Victorian Liverpool: Mercantile Business and the Making of a World Port* (Liverpool, 2000), 12-7: 219-21.

Given Liverpool's extensive links to the imperial economy, academics have expressed interest in the local business community. Traditionally, this stressed the role of 'merchants'.⁸³ According to Chapman: 'In common parlance a merchant can be almost anyone who buys and sells goods, but such indiscriminate usage is much too wide for manageable research.' A more precise definition is that a merchant is someone engaged in foreign trade and wholesale.⁸⁴ Jacob Price noted that merchants often learned their trade from an early age by serving as a factor or clerk to a company. In this capacity, they kept the firm's books and served customers. Later in their careers, merchants would leave the everyday operations of a counting house to a clerk.⁸⁵ The one thing a merchant could not delegate, however, was the giving of credit, which maintained financial liquidity.⁸⁶ Eighteenth century merchant businesses were often varied. Some partnerships were heavily capitalised with large numbers of employees, whilst others were small-scale concerns with limited capital and labour.⁸⁷ More recently, Haggerty took a broader approach by viewing Liverpool as a member of the larger 'British Atlantic Trading Community'. In addition to the merchants, this network incorporated brokers, factors, warehouse keepers, and female entrepreneurs. These communities were significant because they linked the British Isles to the peripheries of empire. Such interconnections provided current information, and

⁸³ See T.M. Devine, *The Tobacco Lords: A Study of the Tobacco Merchants of Glasgow and their Trading Activities* (Edinburgh, 1975) and D. Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community 1735-1785* (Cambridge, 1995).

⁸⁴ S. Chapman, *Merchant Enterprise in Britain: From the Industrial Revolution to World War One* (Cambridge, 1992), 3.

⁸⁵ J.M. Price, 'What Did Merchants Do? Reflections in British Overseas Trade 1660-1790', *JEH*, 49, 2 (1989), 278-82.

⁸⁶ Chapman, *Merchant Enterprise*, 3-4.

⁸⁷ See J. Hoppil, *Risk and Failure in English Business 1700-1800* (Cambridge, 1987), 9 and P. Hudson, 'Financing Firms, 1700-1850', in W.M. Kirby and M.B. Rose, eds., *Business Enterprise in Modern Britain from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century* (London, 1994), 90.

helped judge one's credit worthiness.⁸⁸ Business was not transacted 'merely for money', as commercial networks were often built upon personal trust.⁸⁹ Chapter One of this thesis shows that Liverpool merchants were a diverse group, who were generally associated with commerce and services. Amongst the latter, they offered distribution and transportation, and, crucially as indications of their 'gentlemanliness', banking facilities (albeit limited).

As a commercial town with established ties throughout the Atlantic empire, Liverpool had important connections with the metropolis in London. Indeed, although it was Britain's leading slave port by 1750, Liverpool was still economically linked to the capital. London merchants guaranteed bills of exchange drawn by slave factors in the West Indies and North America, in favour of Liverpool. The reputation of bills drawn on London merchants maintained financial liquidity, and contributed towards Liverpool's commercial expansion.⁹⁰ Unsurprisingly, therefore, Liverpool maintained political and lobbying networks with the metropolis. These ties were imperative during the late-eighteenth century, as the American and French revolutions threatened overseas trade. As Ascott, Lewis, and Power pointed out, mercantile interests heavily influenced Liverpool's local government and lobbying forums.⁹¹ S.G. Checkland also claimed that eighteenth century Liverpool merchants were mercantilists.⁹² However, Power later contended that: 'It is not easy to generalise about the attitude of such a varied

⁸⁸ Haggerty, *British Atlantic Trading Community*, 241-5.

⁸⁹ S. Haggerty, *Merely for Money? Business Culture in the British Atlantic 1750-1815* (Liverpool, 2012), 1-8.

⁹⁰ D. Richardson, 'The British Empire and the Atlantic Slave Trade 1660-1807', in P.J. Marshall, ed., *OHE Volume 2: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1998), 448-9.

⁹¹ Ascott, Lewis and Power, *Liverpool 1660-1750*, 137-57.

⁹² S.G. Checkland, 'Economic Attitudes in Liverpool 1793-1807', *EHR*, 5, 1 (1952), 58-60. For more on mercantilism see E.F. Heckscher, *Mercantilism*, 2nd edn (London, 1962) and D.C. Coleman, ed., *Revisions in Mercantilism* (London, 1969).

group of people. As the beneficiaries of the English Navigation Acts they clearly approved of government protection but opposed regulations which interfered with their trade.⁹³

Robert Bennett has written about the structure of the Liverpool lobby during the late-eighteenth century. After 1774 the governing Liverpool Corporation formed a Committee of Trade, and the town established its first independent Chamber of Commerce. A Chamber of Commerce is an independent voluntary organisation designed to represent local interests.⁹⁴ Whilst manufacturing was represented on this particular body, most of the Chamber's members were merchants involved in shipping and trade. Bennett also found that many of these subscribers were linked together through formal partnerships, as well as by familial, religious, and social ties. The Chamber frequently sent petitions and delegations to London, and addressed issues ranging from overseas trade to infrastructure projects.⁹⁵

Yet, Bennett's work contains several gaps. It concentrates primarily upon the activities of the local merchant community. In the process, it pays only brief attention to the town's Members of Parliament, and there has been little work on the Liverpool MPs during this period. Sir Ellis Cunliffe, Sir William Meredith, and Richard Pennant, do feature in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and the *History of Parliament*. They are also mentioned in some works on political

⁹³ M.J. Power, 'The Growth of Liverpool', in J. Belchem, ed., *Popular Politics, Riot and Labour: Essays in Liverpool History 1790-1940* (Liverpool, 1992), 27.

⁹⁴ R.J. Bennett, *Local Business Voice: The History of Chambers of Commerce in Britain, Ireland, and Revolutionary America 1760-2011* (Oxford, 2011), 4.

⁹⁵ R.J. Bennett, *The Voice of Liverpool Business: The First Chamber of Commerce and the Atlantic Economy 1774-c.1796* (Liverpool, 2010), 1-6.

history during this era.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, these characters remain of secondary importance in those texts. This dissertation places them squarely in the foreground. Indeed, it is arguable that more work needs to be done on political parties and individual MPs in the imperial policy-making process.⁹⁷ Nor does Bennett really look at the relationship between the merchants and local landed elite, such as the Earl of Derby. This is limiting because, as we saw earlier, the landed elite wielded considerable social, economic, and political influence. Consequently, this thesis expands the scope of Bennett's work by producing a more integrated analysis, linking local mercantile services with local landlords and MPs. This enables the integration of imperial, commercial, and elite networks in Georgian Liverpool into the gentlemanly capitalist paradigm.

The chronological period addressed in this thesis is the American Revolutionary era, from 1763 to 1783. These were the years between the end of the Seven Years War and the conclusion of the American Revolutionary War, which secured the independence of the United States. Both Haggerty and Bennett mentioned how the American Revolution impacted upon Liverpool's overseas trade and commercial networks. However, they do this more in the context of Atlantic and business history, and do not directly relate their analyses to the specialist historiography of British imperialism. Not even a recent study of Liverpool's role in the Empire provides a chapter dealing with the American Revolution.⁹⁸ Thus, this

⁹⁶ See J. Brewer, *Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III* (Cambridge, 1976) and F. O. Gorman, *The Rise of Party in England: The Rockingham Whigs 1760-82* (London, 1975).

⁹⁷ S. Stockwell, *The Business of Decolonization: British Business Strategies in the Gold Coast* (Oxford, 2000), 198. Although she considers a later period, Stockwell acknowledges that there is limited work on the role of business-government relations in imperial decision-making.

⁹⁸ Haggerty, 'Liverpool, the Slave Trade and the British-Atlantic Empire', 17-29.

study fills a gap in the secondary literature by specifically focusing upon Liverpool and the American Revolution, within a broader imperial context.

LIVERPOOL 1763-1783: PROTO-GENTLEMANLY CAPITALISM

Part One of the thesis deals with the question of gentlemanly capitalism in the late-eighteenth century. The first chapter initially reveals more about the relationship between mercantile services and manufacturers in Liverpool. The latter fashioned raw materials into finished goods, and included occupations such as anchor smiths, ironmongers, and ship-builders. It was previously noted that Liverpool merchants were involved in commerce, and offered financial services. However, it is worth stressing that there were other service sector occupations in Georgian Liverpool. This included the professions, whom Geoffrey Holmes noted were associated with lengthy periods of training that resulted in vocational qualifications. During the Early Modern Period, the professions were 'breeding up' by sending their sons to train for careers in the military, church, law, and medicine. By 1700 urbanisation generated greater demand for professional services.⁹⁹

To a certain extent, services in general, as well as finance and commerce specifically, complemented manufacturers in late-Hanoverian Liverpool. They frequented the same social clubs and were economically integrated. Thus, there are some grounds for supporting criticisms of Cain and Hopkins that industry cannot easily be separated from finance and commerce. Nevertheless, on balance, this dissertation supports the primacy of financial-commercial services over

⁹⁹ G. Holmes, *Augustan England: Professions, State and Society 1680-1730* (London, 1982), 3-12.

industry. Whilst manufacturing was not excluded from the local governing Corporation and lobbying organisations, services in their various guises held a distinct numerical advantage on these forums. Consequently, Liverpool services had more opportunities to shape local government and the lobbying agenda than manufacturers.

Furthermore, Cain and Hopkins correctly argued that the financial services interacted with the 'aristocracy'. An aristocrat could include the peerage, baronetcies of English, Scottish, and Irish decent, as well as Knights:

the English aristocracy was...a social estate...As such it stretched from the peerage assembled in the House of Lords through the titled non-peers, to the gentry landowners acting as justices of the peace. Within this range social distinctions were recognised, but all were part of a single indivisible whole.¹⁰⁰

Georgian aristocrats have sometimes been chided for not supporting business, obstructing infrastructure projects, and for being massively in debt. Yet, J.V. Becket argued that the social elite should receive more credit. For example, they sponsored agricultural shows and patronised engineering societies.¹⁰¹ Land and estates were the basis of aristocratic power, and therefore they governed and dictated social norms.¹⁰² One historian even went as far as describing the eighteenth century as the 'aristocratic century'. David Cannadine also argued that

¹⁰⁰ J.V. Becket, *The Aristocracy in England 1660-1914* (Oxford, 1986), 21.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 5-6 and Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism 1688-2000*, 66-7.

the years between the American Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the passing of the 1832 Reform Act, in particular, marked a significant period for the British aristocracy. During this time they became even more powerful. Elite inter-marriage, as well as the acquisition of lands, titles, and country homes, created super-rich aristocrats. Therefore, this group consolidated its influence in Parliament, electioneering, and in the armed forces – to name but a few examples. This elite also became more cosmopolitan and British in character.¹⁰³ Hence, Liverpool's mercantile service sector enjoyed contacts with landed and titled figures during the American Revolutionary era. This included three of the town's members of Parliament: Sir Ellis Cunliffe, Sir William Meredith (3rd Baronet Henbury), and Richard Pennant (later Lord Penrhyn). Liverpool merchants also had dealings with Earl of Derby in nearby Knowsley, and the Duke of Atholl on the Isle of Man. These connections were established through political representation in Westminster, community activities, and, crucially, the merchants servicing the bills of the landed elite.

Whilst accepting the general line of Cain and Hopkins, this dissertation does propose some modifications to their theory. Firstly, the interaction between the landed elite and commercial-financial services in Liverpool shows that this mingling occurred in the provinces too, not just the City of London. This fact suggests that the North was not exclusively orientated towards industry. Secondly, whilst there was interaction between mercantile services and the landed elite, the relationship was not as strong as Cain and Hopkins generally suggested. Owing to

¹⁰³ J. Carmon, *Aristocratic Century: The Peerage of Eighteenth Century England* (Cambridge, 1984). Also see D. Cannadine, *Aspects of Aristocracy: Grandeur and Decline in Modern Britain* (Yale, 1994), 9–36.

their diverse backgrounds, differences over issues, and squabbles amongst personalities, internal divisions plagued the mercantile services on Liverpool's Common Council. Nor did local merchants always cultivate positive relations with their landed superiors. There was limited inter-marriage between the local aristocracy and merchants during this period, and the elite were sometimes reluctant to act on behalf of local mercantile interests. Parliamentary elections in Liverpool during these years revealed splits between the two groups. Some evidence also suggests that the Liverpool business community was not sufficiently 'gentlemanly', as they allegedly focused too much on work over pleasure. Nevertheless, the authors of *British Imperialism* acknowledged that integration between the landed elite and commercial-financial services took time to reach maturity. This thesis refers to this gradual process of integration as 'proto-gentlemanly capitalism', which was evident in Liverpool during the late-eighteenth century. Networks between the local services and landed elite were of a social, economic, and political nature. But, for the reasons outlined above, they were still developing during the American Revolutionary era. Still, the potential for future closer gentlemanly capitalist networks was evident. Despite their differences, local merchants were ultimately bound together by business, family, and religious ties. This ensured that there were no irreparable fissures on the Corporation. In addition, the merchants sought to copy the gentlemanly lifestyles of the elite. The example of Banastre Tarleton, the son of a prominent Liverpool slaver, is instructive here. He rose to the attention of General Lord Cornwallis during the American War, demonstrating the potential to form closer gentlemanly capitalist ties between the financial-commercial services and the landed elite in the nineteenth century.

Chapters Two and Three continue to examine gentlemanly capitalism by ascertaining whether London held sway over imperial policy-making, or whether northern provincial towns could exercise an influence too. By 'influence' we mean being able to direct politicians and policy-makers into accepting one's arguments, and achieving positive outcomes - notably in the form of legislation. The second chapter considers the years between the end of the Seven Years War and the Boston Tea Party (1763-1773). Chapter Three follows with the period up to the granting of American Independence in 1783. Two broad arguments will be advanced. Firstly, that the Liverpool lobby utilised a variety of tools to promote their interests. This included writing and sending petitions to Westminster, as well as liaising with men on the spot in London, fellow members of parliament, and working with other provincial towns. Secondly, the outcome of lobbying was as Cain and Hopkins predicted. The provinces could make their voices heard in the metropolis, and did achieve some results - but they were often limited.

The relative inability of Liverpool to influence imperial policy-making during this period stemmed from a variety of factors. Firstly, as we have seen, the Liverpool merchants that dominated local government were split - so much so that by the mid-1770s they had formed separate lobbying forums. Secondly, the networks that these merchants cultivated with the local landed elite were still developing, and therefore only proto-gentlemanly capitalist. There was not, as yet, sufficient unity between the two to be able to assert a strong enough influence to affect policy in London in a meaningful way. Thirdly, the landed elite that represented Liverpool in Parliament were often out of favour with elite politicians. The local MPs were socially handicapped as their landed titles were not especially high. Cunliffe,

Pennant, and Meredith, were also often frustrated by events in their private lives, or perceived as being politically disloyal. Consequently, for most of the period 1763-1783, these parliamentarians either sat briefly on the Government benches or for lengthy stretches with the Opposition.

The fourth inhibition was that these landed MPs were often perceived as challenging the primarily London-based 'official mind'. Concentrating upon the late-nineteenth century, Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher sought to explain why Britain annexed sizable territories in Africa. A key factor was that the UK government feared troubles on the periphery of empire that endangered British interests. This often included European rivalry and the disruptive influence of indigenous proto-nationalism.¹⁰⁴ All of these factors 'played some part in the African drama. But it seems that they were only brought to the point of imperialist action by the idiosyncratic reactions of British statesmen to internal crises in Africa'.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, in Westminster, the Prime Minister, Cabinet, and advisors moulded policy. Significantly, these officials hailed from similar aristocratic backgrounds, and had often served political apprenticeships together. Therefore, they shared a common 'collective mind' based upon a mutual understanding of ideas, goals, and morals. These aristocrats thought of themselves as dutifully considering the interests of the nation as a whole, and therefore often ignored what they perceived as greedy businessmen and impractical philanthropists.¹⁰⁶ Still, the official mind was not always in control of the process of expansion.¹⁰⁷ Government ministers often had dealings with agents 'on the spot'. These were

¹⁰⁴ R. Robinson, J. Gallagher and A. Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism* (London, 1961), 465-8.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 466-7.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 19-23, 463.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

individuals on the periphery who supplied Westminster with information. They therefore strove to support the elite's established conceptions of world policy.¹⁰⁸ Because of the vast distances between London and the periphery, men on the spot could not wait for decisions from the UK. Henceforth, they often acted on their own initiative. Downing Street would either ratify or repudiate their decisions.¹⁰⁹ Clearly, whilst the official mind was important, it had to be taken alongside other elements in the imperial policy-making process.¹¹⁰

The official mind intersects with gentlemanly capitalism, as both theories argue that a group with similar socio-economic backgrounds and values moulded imperial policy.¹¹¹ Still, not all historians accept the notion that a tight-knit group devised policy. Dummett dismissed this idea, noting that associations often spoke with different voices.¹¹² But, as we saw earlier, Cain and Hopkins argued that whilst there was not always unanimity with the gentlemanly capitalist family, there was at least some unity.¹¹³

P.J. Marshall agreed that, like their Victorian successors, Georgian policy-makers shared notions of national interest and British supremacy. For them, the paramount concerns were the survival of the 1688 settlement, the Protestant succession, and a balanced constitution. The regulatory Navigation Acts also

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 19, 466.

¹⁰⁹ Webster, *Debate on the Rise of the British Empire*, 76.

¹¹⁰ Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 20.

¹¹¹ Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism 1688-2000*, 26-30.

¹¹² R.E. Dummett, 'Introduction: Exploring the Cain/Hopkins paradigm: issues for debate; critique and topics for new research', in R.E. Dummett, ed., *Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Imperialism: The New Debate on Empire* (London, 1999), 11.

¹¹³ Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism 1688-2000*, 43.

'provided the principles which governments followed.'¹¹⁴ Furthermore, with continued British territorial expansion after the 1750s, the idea of parliamentary sovereignty (control over the empire from London) gained in currency.¹¹⁵ Marshall accepted that during the eighteenth century British policy was shaped by several groups, including English provincial towns, professionals, merchants, and landed groups in Scotland and Ireland. However, policy also 'emerged from the calculations of the official mind' in London.¹¹⁶ This thesis accepts that a multiplicity of factors influenced imperial policy-making, but one of the most important proved to be the official mind as depicted by Marshall. Liverpool's MPs during the American Revolutionary era often accepted the 1688 settlement, and parliamentary sovereignty over the Empire. Nevertheless, there were occasions when their support seemed lukewarm, thus restricting Liverpool's lobbying ability.

The fifth and final reason that conscribed Liverpool's influence was weak lobbying ties with other provincial towns. There were occasions when Liverpool did successfully network with other commercial centres. But the ties with Bristol, in particular, were not always collegial. Disputes between Liverpool and the Yorkshire contingent of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal Company also suggest that regional (in this case northern) identities were transitory during the late-eighteenth century.¹¹⁷ However, it should be stressed that this work is not intended as a major investigation into regional identities.

¹¹⁴ P.J. Marshall, *The Making and Unmaking of Empires: Britain, India and America c.1750-1783* (Oxford, 2005), 9-11. Also see J. Carter, 'The Revolution and the Constitution', in G. Holmes, ed., *Britain after the Glorious Revolution 1688-1714* (London, 1969), 39-58.

¹¹⁵ P.J. Marshall, 'Empire and Authority in the later Eighteenth Century', *JCH*, 15, 2 (1987), 105-22.

¹¹⁶ Marshall, *Making and Unmaking of Empires*, 9-11.

¹¹⁷ J. Langton, 'The Industrial Revolution and the Regional Geography of England', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 9 (1984), 150-62.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY WARFARE AND THE AMERICAN CONFLICT

Part Two of the thesis, encompassing Chapters 4 and 5, looks at the impact of warfare upon British society and the economy (the empire at home). Before considering the Liverpool experience, this section provides an introduction to how warfare impacted upon Hanoverian Britain. Military conflict was integral to the imperial experience. As a formidable power, the UK developed multiple fighting capabilities. This included suppressing domestic revolts, prosecuting land struggles with the European powers, waging war on the high seas, and quelling unrest within the Empire.¹¹⁸ A.H. John argued that 'war in the first half of the eighteenth century exerted, on the whole, a beneficial influence' upon the British economy. It stimulated technological innovation, opened access to new supplies of raw materials, and war-induced investment increased demand. John was, however, more cautious about extolling the benefits of warfare in the latter decades of the century.¹¹⁹ In a clearer contrast, T.S. Ashton suggested that 'if England had enjoyed unbroken peace the Industrial Revolution might have come earlier.'¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ J. Black, *Britain as a Military Power 1688-1815* (London, 1999), 5-9. Also see D.G. Chandler and I. Beckell, eds, *The Oxford History of the British Army* (Oxford, 1994); D. French, *The British Way in Warfare 1688-2000* (London, 1990); J.R. Hill, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Royal Navy* (Oxford, 1995); and N.A.M. Rodger, *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* (London, 1986).

¹¹⁹ A.H. John, 'War and the English Economy, 1700-1763', *EHR*, 7, 3 (1955), 343-4.

¹²⁰ T.S. Ashton, *Economic Fluctuations in England 1700-1800* (Oxford, 1959), 83. Also see P. Deane and W.A. Cole, *British Economic Growth 1688-1959*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 1969); P. Deane, 'War and Industrialisation', in J.M. Winter, ed., *War and Economic Development: Essays in Memory of David Joslin* (Cambridge, 1975), 106-1; and R. Floud and D. McCloskey, eds, *The Economic History of Britain since 1700, Volume 1: 1700-1860*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 1994).

When reading through eighteenth century diaries, there are only intermittent references to how warfare affected everyday life. Therefore, military conflict conceivably had only a limited impact upon British society. Nonetheless, Bowen contended that troops *did* move around the countryside, and that British civilians did encounter foreign prisoners. Henceforth, warfare did affect British people.¹²¹ Brewer's fiscal-military state also affected the citizenry through the levying of higher wartime taxation.¹²² But the expansion of the central government had paradoxical social consequences. How could a society that cherished liberties develop state machinery that was expansionist abroad?¹²³ Brewer overcame this conundrum by suggesting that the British state was more powerful than originally thought. The UK shared characteristics with the ancien regime on mainland Europe, such as the Monarchy still being able to declare war and choose its ministers.¹²⁴ Yet, O'Gorman noted that there are limits in comparing Georgian Britain with its European neighbours, as there was no one single ancien regime.¹²⁵

The link between warfare and national identity has also been considered. Kathleen Wilson stated that 'identity' is a 'negotiation between individual conceptions of self and collectivity'. Identity depends upon several factors, including politics, economics, gender, race, and geography. Identities are therefore multiple and

¹²¹ H.V. Bowen, *War and British Society 1688-1815* (Cambridge, 1998), 41.

¹²² Brewer, *Sinews of Power*, 250-1.

¹²³ L. Stone, 'Introduction', in L. Stone, ed., *An Imperial State at War: Britain 1689 to 1815* (London, 1994), 6-9.

¹²⁴ J. Brewer, 'The Eighteenth Century British State: Contexts and Issues', in Stone, *An Imperial State at War*, 61-5.

¹²⁵ F. O'Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century: British Political and Social History 1688-1832* (London, 1997), 171-4; 195-6.

contingent.¹²⁶ A seminal work on national identity was Linda Colley's *Britons*. She postulated that Hanoverian conflicts were wars of religion, pitting Protestant Britain against Catholic France and Spain. These conflicts were also political struggles between the Hanoverian and Bourbon dynasties. Consequently, fighting the European 'Other' gave rise to a British identity, which stressed Protestantism, virtue, and elevated the monarchy to symbolise a nation unified in arms.¹²⁷ Some have countered Colley's thesis, noting that it took considerable time for a truly British national identity to emerge, and that it existed alongside English, Welsh, Irish, and Scottish identities.¹²⁸ Indeed, despite the 1707 Act of Union, Scottish Jacobitism remained the biggest internal threat to the Hanoverians up to the 1740s.¹²⁹ Historians have also noted that warfare divided British society at large. The historiography in this field is heavily weighted towards the French Wars, which lasted a generation.¹³⁰ The conflicts of 1793-1815 clearly polarised opinion, giving rise to calls for both radical reform and reactionary conservatism.¹³¹

The American War of 1775-1783 embodies all of these historiographical debates. Francis Cogliano categorised it as a revolutionary conflict against the established monarchical system, a civil war within the British Empire, and a war of conquest

¹²⁶ K. Wilson, 'Introduction: Histories, Empires, Modernities', in K. Wilson, ed., *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity in Britain and the Empire 1660-1840* (Cambridge, 2004), 5-6.

¹²⁷ L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven, 1992), 1-9.

¹²⁸ S.J. Connolly, 'Varieties of Britishness: Ireland, Scotland and Wales in the Hanoverian State', in A. Grant and K. Stinger, eds., *Uniting the Kingdom? The Making of British History* (London, 1995), 193.

¹²⁹ See B. Lenman, *The Jacobite Risings in Britain 1689-1746* (London, 1980); and T.C. Smout, 'The Road to Union', in Holmes, *Britain after the Glorious Revolution*, 176-96.

¹³⁰ See J.E. Cookson, *The British Armed Nation 1793-1815* (Oxford, 1997) and C. Emsley, *British Society and the French Wars 1793-1815* (London, 1979).

¹³¹ See J.E. Cookson, *The Friends of Peace: Anti-War Liberalism in England 1793-1815* (Cambridge, 1982), 6-25; H.T. Dickinson, *British Radicalism and the French Revolution 1789-1815* (Oxford, 1985), 1-42; and F. O'Gorman, 'Pitt and the Tory Reaction to the French Revolution', in H.T. Dickinson, ed., *Britain and the French Revolution* (Basingstoke, 1983), 21-38.

between the American colonists and native inhabitants.¹³² It was arguably a watershed too. Stephen Conway suggested these years constituted the 'first war of the new order.' True, it conformed to a traditional conflict in that the British officer corps was generally aristocratic, paupers served as soldiers, and foreign troops served in the ranks - even the Americans followed a broadly similar pattern. Yet, there were substantial differences from previous conflicts. The colonial militia contained men from all social backgrounds, and even some British commanders hailed from non-aristocratic backgrounds.¹³³

The domestic impact of the American War upon Britain has not been ignored. Historians often regard 'public opinion' as the 'last refuge of the politician without vision or the scholar without any better explanation'. The Georgian elite also believed that petitions and addresses could not accurately convey public sentiment. This was because not every county sent these documents to Westminster.¹³⁴ Nevertheless, James Bradley conducted an analysis of petitions and addresses sent by eleven English counties between 1775 and 1778. He found that the politically informed were concerned about the debate between the authority of the British government and the rights of the American colonists.¹³⁵ Wilson also referred to the 'intensity of the rifts in the nation' during the war. She found that, in provincial towns, a significant proportion of merchants and gentlemen were in favour of coercion, Dissenters were split, and the greatest anti-

¹³² F. D. Cogliano, *Revolutionary America 1763-1815: A Political History*, (London, 2000), 86-93.

¹³³ S. Conway, *The War of American Independence 1775-1783* (London, 1995), 23-42.

¹³⁴ J.A.W. Gurn, *Beyond Liberty and Property: The Process of Self Recognition in Eighteenth Century Political Thought* (Kingston, 1983), 260-314.

¹³⁵ J.E. Bradley, *Popular Politics and the American Revolution in England: Petitions, the Crown, and Public Opinion* (Macon, 1986), 1-16; 207-16.

war sentiment fermented amongst urban middling sorts and artisans.¹³⁶ H.T. Dickinson also wrote about British critics of the war. In Parliament they tended to be the Rockinghamites and Pittites, whilst outside of Westminster the 'Friends of America' included Dissenters and radicals.¹³⁷

Conway, in particular, has written about the impact of the Revolutionary War at home in Britain. He identified several detrimental consequences for the UK economy, not least a rising tax burden, higher levels of bankruptcy, and disruption in overseas trade. That said, there were some economic dividends too - the expansion of the armed forces increased demand for manufactured goods, for example. The war also had implications for British society. Civilians complained about soldiers roaming the countryside, local government was forced to support military widows, and women took over jobs that men left behind.¹³⁸ Conway's *British Isles and the War of American Independence* related this evidence more closely to the historiographical debates. Taking the issue of military-fiscalism, Conway found that, far from being omnipotent, central government had to negotiate with the localities. Whilst companies of volunteers were raised for national military service, these men were often motivated by local factors. However, the role of the State should not be ignored. It provided direction for the broader war effort, played a larger role in the economy through increased taxation and expenditure, and authorised press gangs to supply manpower. Conway also incorporated national identity into his analysis. There were certainly significant

¹³⁶ K. Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England 1715-1785* (Cambridge, 1998), 269-72.

¹³⁷ H.T. Dickinson, 'The Friends of America: British Sympathy with the American Revolution', in M.T. Davis, ed., *Radicalism and Revolution in Britain 1775-1848: Essays in Honour of Malcolm I. Thomis*, (Basingstoke, 2000), 1-29.

¹³⁸ Conway, *War of American Independence*, 187-211.

divisions within British opinion at this time. Government policy, religion, gender, and economic interests, served as key dividing lines. Yet, echoing Colley, Conway suggested that the entry of the Bourbon powers into the war after 1777 injected national patriotic sentiment into the conflict.¹³⁹

LIVERPOOL AND THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

How then did these themes play out in what was arguably the second city of empire? The coverage of Liverpool in the historiography of the American Revolution is patchy. Even Conway's histories rarely mention the town. Instead, case studies of the impact of the conflict in Britain have tended to focus upon southern locations.¹⁴⁰ Nonetheless, some aspects of the American War have been studied in the Liverpoolian context. Bradley and Wilson used the town to illustrate their work on public opinion. They found that, like other locations, Liverpoolians were split between advocates of conciliation and coercion with the colonists. Writing from the perspective of business and lobbying history, Bennett and Haggerty considered Liverpool during the American Revolution. Marriner also briefly commented on the economic impact of the war, painting a bleak picture of 'closed markets and cut off supplies of raw materials'.¹⁴¹

The maritime aspects of the Revolutionary War in Liverpool have been covered in greater detail. David J. Starkey defined privateering as 'a form of enterprise in

¹³⁹ S. Conway, *The British Isles and the War of American Independence* (Oxford, 2003), 348-55.

¹⁴⁰ J. Sainsbury, *Disaffected Patriots: London Supporters of Revolutionary America 1760-1782* (Kingsdon, 1987) and P. Marshall, *Bristol and the American War of Independence* (Bristol: Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, 1977). The obvious exception is P. Marshall, 'Manchester and the American Revolution', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, 62 (1979), 168-86.

¹⁴¹ S. Marriner, *Economic and Social Development of Merseyside* (London, 1982), 37-8.

which individuals might deploy their own resources to attack and seize the vessels and goods of foreign subjects, acquiring for themselves the rights to any property thereby appropriated'. These actions conformed to official sanction, and therefore privateers differed from pirates.¹⁴² There were different types of privateer. Amongst them were private men-of-war, which made prizes of enemy vessels, and often had no set destination. Conversely, ships operating under Letters of Marque were commercial vessels with privateer commissions. Starkey found that during the American War Liverpool was the leading prize-taking port on the British mainland.¹⁴³ His study complemented the nineteenth century *History of the Liverpool Privateers* by Gomer Williams, which, despite interesting anecdotes, was primarily a narrative.¹⁴⁴ Marriner went on to write that whilst Liverpool shipping 'occasionally fell as prizes to privateers...on balance the region gained far more prizes than it lost'.¹⁴⁵ This view was echoed by Conway, who noted that there were over 100 privateers operating out of the port in 1779.¹⁴⁶ Stewart-Brown's study of local ships during the eighteenth century casts light on the town's dockyards.¹⁴⁷ The Liverpool sailors' riot of 1775 has also been covered in several publications.¹⁴⁸ Other Liverpool-related aspects of this war include a biography of the notorious Banastre Tarleton, who served in the British Legion.¹⁴⁹ Abell also mentioned Georgian Liverpool in her history of foreign prisoners in the UK.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴² D.J. Starkey, *British Privateering Enterprise in the Eighteenth Century* (Exeter, 1990), 13.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 35-55, 232-3.

¹⁴⁴ G. Williams, *History of the Liverpool Privateers and Letters of Marque with an Account of the Liverpool Slave Trade 1744-1812*, 2nd edn (London, 2004), 179-302.

¹⁴⁵ Marriner, *Economic and Social Development of Merseyside*, 37-8.

¹⁴⁶ Conway, *War of American Independence*, 191.

¹⁴⁷ R. Stewart-Brown, *Liverpool Ships in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1932), 101-3.

¹⁴⁸ R. Brooke, *Liverpool as it was: 1775 to 1800*, 2nd edn (Liverpool, 2003), 326-47 and R.B. Rose, 'A Liverpool Sailors Strike in the Eighteenth Century', *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, 68 (1958), 85-92.

¹⁴⁹ R. D. Bass, *The Green Dragon: The Lives of Banastre Tarleton and Mary Robinson* (London, 1957).

¹⁵⁰ F. Abell, *Prisoners of War in Britain 1756 to 1815* (London, 1914), 186-91.

Whilst these works provide a useful starting point for further investigation, they mostly use Liverpool as an example to illustrate other issues. Furthermore, this body of work is fragmented and needs bringing together in a more coherent approach. Hence, this thesis synthesises such disparate literature into one study. It also draws upon previously untapped primary sources, and directly engages with the historiographical debates outlined above. In doing so, the first over-arching case study of Liverpool during the American War is produced, and this is related more broadly to the national picture.

Chapter Four provides a nuanced account of the economic impact of the War of Independence upon Liverpool. There were four broad phases to the town's overseas commercial experience. Initially, business broadly remained steady. Secondly, this was followed by a decline. The penultimate phase was marked by a sluggish improvement. Finally, it was not until the post-war years that a clearer recovery took place. The various branches of Liverpool's overseas commerce also declined at different times. Marriner and Conway stressed the role of privateering in bringing about an improvement in overseas activity. But taking enemy vessels was highly dangerous, and not always profitable. Henceforth, other factors, such as the provision of convoys, the business acumen of local merchants, and developments on the battlefield, contributed towards Liverpool's rebound. Yet, the most important factor was the restoration of peace by 1783, which proved conducive to a sustained post-war recovery. The conflict also had an effect upon the broader local economy. There were victims of wartime dislocation, and as a result the number of bankrupts increased. Alternatively, some areas of the local economy, namely shipbuilding, flourished from the multiplier effect of increased

national government expenditure. This, in turn, supports Morriss's argument that whilst the Royal Dockyards 'down south', with their various facilities and workforce, were important to eighteenth century war efforts, so too were the private yards – which included Liverpool.¹⁵¹ Local infrastructure projects enjoyed mixed fortunes during the war years. Whilst the amount of goods transported on the Leeds-Liverpool Canal expanded, construction of the main line of this waterway ceased. Thus, on the whole, the economic impact of the Revolutionary War upon Liverpool was mixed. There were winners and losers, and thus we combine both Ashton's and John's work.

Chapter Five considers the socio-cultural impact of the war upon Liverpool. It expands Bowen's argument on the impact of military conflict, which affected not just southern England but the northern provinces too. The militarisation of Liverpool was manifested in different ways, such as the housing of prisoners of war and the construction of defences. This led to increased interaction between local government and the central fiscal-military state. Building upon Part One of the thesis, this chapter argues that whilst the localities made their opinions felt in the corridors of power, the influence of central government during times of warfare was ever-present. The American War also divided opinion within the town. Like other locations, sentiments on the conflict in Liverpool were often based around socio-economic status. Gentlemen tended to favour coercion, whilst artisans wanted conciliation. Religion also influenced the way locals divided, with Anglicans generally in favour of coercion and Dissenters for conciliation. However, as Bradley pointed out, there were some differences between Liverpool and other

¹⁵¹ R. Morriss, *The Foundations of British Maritime Ascendancy: Resources, Logistics and the State 1755-1815* (Cambridge, 2011), 133-7. Also see P. MacDougall, *Royal Dockyards* (Newton Abbot, 1982), 8-15.

localities. Unlike their counterparts in Bristol, Liverpool merchants were generally more amenable towards conciliation. Nor were Liverpool Dissenters as opposed to the war as their counterparts in the South West.¹⁵²

Turning to cultural aspects of empire, this division of opinion within Liverpool represented a rupture within imperial ideology. Jack P. Greene argued that between 1688 and 1783 Britons saw themselves as living in a Protestant and constitutional empire. Liberty was enshrined, people and goods shipped across the seas, and colonies contributed towards the imperial economy and civilizing project.¹⁵³ However, Wilson observed that the American War led to a schism within this imperial ideology. It polarised an older libertarian attitude against the 'empire of authority' that took hold at mid-century.¹⁵⁴ Finally, the example of Liverpool during the American Revolution suggests that warfare was linked to the emergence of British national identity. There were, admittedly, other identities in the town during this period. Nevertheless, some Liverpudlians proudly proclaimed their virtues as Britons, and increasingly opposed 'the Other', which included the Bourbons and, eventually, the Americans.

METHODOLOGY

This thesis adopts an empirical approach. Whilst it uses secondary literature, there is extensive engagement with archival materials from over twenty repositories in the UK and US. This is because surviving evidence on this subject is fragmentary.

¹⁵² J.E. Bradley, *Religion, Revolution and English Radicalism: Non-Conformity in Eighteenth Century Politics and Society* (Cambridge, 1990), 391-2.

¹⁵³ J.P. Greene, 'Empire and Identity from the Glorious Revolution to the American Revolution', in Marshall, *CHBE Volume 2*, 208-30.

¹⁵⁴ Wilson, *Sense of the People*, 157.

Minutes from government papers do not always give clear or detailed outcomes. Nor is there a single collection of papers for Sir William Meredith MP, the most vocal element of the Liverpool lobby at this time. Short runs of statistical data also limit information on the volume of the town's overseas trade. Therefore, to reconstruct the general picture, a large number of repositories were used.

Several locations on Merseyside proved helpful. The Special Collections in the Sydney Jones Library at the University of Liverpool contain documents on the town during the eighteenth century, such as the local vestry and customs office records. These provided general background information. The library's regular holdings included edited volumes of primary sources, such as Fortescue's collection of the correspondence of George III, and Reddington's Calendar of Home Office papers. These shed light on Liverpool's strategies in the metropolis, as well as the outcome of lobbying. This was supplemented by records from the Liverpool Athenaeum club, such as the Minutes of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce and the Heywood papers. Both sources shed light on local mercantile business and lobbying capabilities. This library also holds the Liverpool poll books from the 1760s to the 1780s. They reveal the electoral history of the town, as well as the internal dynamics within the local elite. The archives at Merseyside Maritime Museum contain additional mercantile records, such as the Earle and Davenport manuscripts. These accounts and ledgers provide insights into the day-to-day activities of eighteenth century businesses, such as their structure, management, and indicators of performance. This enables the reconstruction of the economic effects of the American War.

The most useful local repository was Liverpool Record Office. Contemporary newspapers, such as *Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser*, reveal anecdotal information. The Liverpool Street directories show the composition of the local workforce, and therefore contribute to the debate over whether services or manufacturing predominated in the town. However, these directories must be treated with caution, as they do not encompass the whole population. The Tarleton Papers provided insights into the running of a particular firm, and the degree to which mercantile services held positions within the local community. Sources on Ye Ugly Face club and the Unanimous Society reveal much about sociability in the town, and therefore what constituted 'gentlemanly' activities. The records of Liverpool Corporation provide a window into the activities of local government, and what these officials did to make their case on a national level. However, this particular source is limited, as it does not say much about links between the Corporation, local MPs, and the landed elite. Henceforth, it was necessary to visit repositories further afield.

The Manx National Heritage Centre contains documents on Liverpool's ties to the Duke of Atholl, revealing much about the relationship between financial-commercial interests and the landed elite. The Sheffield Archives hold the Wentworth-Woodhouse papers, allowing further insights into the interaction between Sir William Meredith and the Rockinghamites in Parliament. The University of Nottingham Archives house the Duke of Portland's manuscripts. Portland was a fellow member of the Rockingham set. Whilst political manuscripts provide an insight into the inner-workings of a group associated with policy-making, they are obviously biased. Cheshire Record Office and the Lancashire

Archives contain numerous Liverpool wills and land grants. This enabled me to ascertain whether local manufacturers or services were more affluent, and what relationship the landed elite had with the town. The North Papers at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, contain accounts of how government money was spent during the American War, and therefore revealed national expenditure boosted Liverpool's dockyards. The records of the Society of Merchant Venturers in Bristol, as well as the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce in the Mitchell Library, identified Liverpool's lobbying networks with other provincial towns. The Barclay's Group Archive in Manchester contains manuscripts relating to the establishment of Heywood's bank in Liverpool. Indeed, banking services were a vital component of the gentlemanly capitalist thesis. Not all repositories were as helpful as others. Whilst the National Library of Wales contains the Clive Papers (the affairs of the EIC were a major concern to the Liverpool lobby), they revealed little on the acrimonious relationship between Clive and Meredith.

London was a rich source of materials. The Metropolitan Archives contained the records of Boodles and Brookes gentlemen's clubs, permitting the reconstruction of some of Liverpool's links to the elite in the metropolis. The Parliamentary Archives in Westminster held several petitions from Liverpool, which enabled me to identify what issues were important to the town's lobby. Manuscript collections at the British Library at St. Pancras, such as the Grenville and Jenkinson papers, revealed that Liverpool had access to key 'men on the spot' in Westminster. The British Library newspaper collection at Colindale was also useful because it supplied background information. Admiralty records at the Caird Library at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich revealed much about how the War of

Independence impacted upon Liverpool. These included information on the treatment of prisoners of war, and the activities of warships in the Mersey.

Lengthy periods of time were spent at the National Archives in Kew. I began with the State Papers of George III, which supplied miscellaneous information. Colonial Office, Exchequer, Home Office, Privy Council, and Treasury records were then consulted to shed light on the Liverpool lobby. What issues were they involved with? How did they go about achieving their goals? What were the outcomes? The answers to these questions informed my judgement on how influential provincial towns were in the metropolis. Furthermore, War Office records shed light on the militarisation of Liverpool between 1775 and 1783. Admiralty and High Court of Admiralty records yielded information on local dockyards and the prizes taken by Liverpool privateers. British Rail records contained documents on the construction of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal. All of this data was significant, enabling me to explore the relationship between services and manufacturers in Lancashire and Yorkshire, as well as the impact of the American War upon the home economy.

Whilst the focus of this dissertation has been to analyse the central imperial decision-making process and the impact of warfare upon Britain, it was also worth visiting US repositories. The Virginia Historical Society contained business correspondence between the Gildarts of Liverpool and George Washington at Mount Vernon. This shed light on the personal links between merchants and the landed elite overseas, thereby enabling me to extend the geographical boundaries of proto-gentlemanly capitalism. The South Carolina Historical Society holds the papers of Charles Garth, the former agent for that colony. They referred to links

with Sir William Meredith, thereby enabling me to assess the role played by colonial agents in formulating British policy. I chose to focus upon archives in the American South because Georgian Liverpool had extensive interests with that region, through the slave trade and exportation of tobacco and rice.¹⁵⁵

Online resources also bore fruit. The Burney Newspaper Collection and Eighteenth Century Collections Online are useful for general information. The House of Commons Parliamentary Papers contain accounts, reports, and transcripts of debates. This enabled me to analyse the behaviour of Liverpool MP's in the corridors of power. *Cobbett's Parliamentary History* is also available online, and allowed me to conduct similar investigations for the Lords. The Slave Voyages database proved invaluable. From this I extracted data on shipping tonnage, the number of voyages from Liverpool, and the price of slaves, to assess the economic impact of the American War.

¹⁵⁵ For more on the Northern colonies see J. Coughly, *The Notorious Triangle: Rhode Island and the African Slave Trade 1700-1807* (Philadelphia, 1981); T.M. Doanlingar, *A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise: Merchants and Economic Development in Revolutionary Philadelphia* (Chapel Hill, 1986); J.S. Tiedmann, *Reluctant Revolutionaries, New York City and the Road to Independence 1763-1776* (Ithaca, 1997), and J.W. Tyler, *Smugglers and Patriots: Boston Merchants and the Advent of the American Revolution* (Boston, 1986).

PART ONE: GENTLEMANLY CAPITALISM

CHAPTER ONE:
MANUFACTURERS, MERCANTILE SERVICES,
AND THE LANDED ELITE:
THE RISE OF PROTO-GENTLEMANLY
CAPITALISM IN LATE-GEORGIAN
LIVERPOOL

This chapter examines Georgian Liverpool in the context of the gentlemanly capitalist paradigm. The growth of the town gave rise to a diverse economy that contained manufacturing, services in general, and financial-commercial services in particular. These groups conducted business together, interacted at social clubs, and were involved in local politics and lobbying. Thus, there are some grounds for supporting criticisms of Cain and Hopkins that manufacturing and services cannot easily be separated from the other.¹

Nonetheless, on the whole, this chapter supports the general argument of Cain and Hopkins. Local merchants, who were indicative of finance and commerce, held a plurality (that is to say more members but not an outright majority) on the governing Corporation and lobbying Committee of Trade. In addition, they enjoyed a majority on the town's first Chamber of Commerce. Other services, such as the professions, were represented on these bodies too. Consequently, the tertiary sector consolidated its influence over local government and lobbying.

¹ Cannadine, 'Empire Strikes Back', 180-94 and Daunton, 'Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Industry', 156-8.

Manufacturers were not excluded from these forums, but were at a numerical disadvantage. In this prominent position, mercantile services did interact with titled officials, such as the local MPs and other members of the landed elite. The activities of these merchants and aristocrats complemented each other. Not only did local businessmen service the debts of the elite, but the landed interest leased their properties to merchants and represented them in Parliament. The coming together of merchant services and the landed elite in provincial towns broadly conforms to the gentlemanly capitalist model, in respect to the social groups that were involved.

Nonetheless, the analysis presented here modifies Cain and Hopkins in two key respects. Firstly, it shows that the coming together of landed and commercial interests was not exclusive to London and the South East – it could be provincially based – and therefore that the North was not always geared towards manufacturing. Secondly, whilst there were linkages between the services and landed elite, they were constrained in some respects. For example, there were squabbles amongst the merchants, and there were few, if any, familial ties between Liverpool merchants and aristocrats. Thus, only 'proto-gentlemanly capitalist' ties existed in Liverpool by the 1780s. Although Cain and Hopkins conceded that social integration was a gradual process, proto-gentlemanly capitalism is a new categorisation of their work.² Still, the example of Banastre Tarleton shows that there was potential to form closer gentlemanly capitalist relations in the future. Liverpool extended its mercantile and proto-gentlemanly

² Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism 1688-2000*, 73. They also refer to 'gentlemen in the making'. See *ibid.*, 308.

capitalist networks with the landed elite around the British Isles and beyond, re-enforcing Bowen's argument that trans-oceanic networks linked the Empire.³

THE RISE OF GEORGIAN LIVERPOOL

In 1773, the author William Enfield noted: 'The first observation which a stranger makes upon his arrival in Liverpool [sic] is generally...that the streets are much too narrow either for their convenience [or] ornament.' Liverpool 'labours under the inconveniences which arise from the want of a regular plan of building when it first began to flourish.'⁴ However, Enfield also highlighted the location's positive features. The climate was healthy because the hills screened severe easterly winds during the winter, and sea breezes relieved the summer heat. Liverpool's expansion in trade 'introduced a taste of ornament and splendour...particularly in its buildings both public and private'. Chief amongst them was the civic Exchange, 'a handsome edifice' built of stone, and proudly boasting Corinthian columns. The Theatre Royal in Williamson Square was noteworthy because its three passages ensured 'all the confusion and danger attending the admission into the London Theatres is avoided.'⁵ Amongst the principal walkways of the town were Castle Street, Dale Street, and Tithebarn Street. For the needy there were several sources of relief, including the Blue Coat Hospital on School Lane, the Poor House on Hanover Street, as well as the Sick and Lame Hospital on Shaw's Brow. The religiously observant could attend several houses of worship, namely St.

³ Bowen, *Elites, Enterprise and the Making of Overseas Empire*, 146.

⁴ W. Enfield, *History of Liverpool* (Warrington, 1773), 21.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 4-62.

Nicholas's on Chapel Street, the Quaker meeting-house on Hackins Hey, and a Catholic chapel on Lombard Street.⁶

There were several reasons why, during the early-eighteenth century, Liverpool became 'one of the wonders of Britain'.⁷ Firstly, its development coincided with the expansion of the Atlantic economy. Spain and Portugal had led the way during the fifteenth century by establishing colonial ties in Africa, the Americas, and Asia.⁸ In contrast, the English, despite one or two exceptions, initially proved reluctant to take advantage of this emerging market. It was not until the reign of Elizabeth I (1558-1603) that the English took a sustained interest in Atlantic enterprise. By 1607, England had successfully established its first permanent overseas settlement in Jamestown, Virginia.⁹ Through a process of conquest, the English (later British) expanded their influence around the globe.

Liverpool gradually became part of this overseas enterprise. Initially a remote fishing village, the town traded with Ireland and mainland Europe during the medieval period. By the 1680s, Liverpool was sending vessels to the West Indies to purchase sugar. The town's links to the broader Atlantic were transformed after 1709. At the behest of the town's MPs, Thomas Johnson and Richard Norris, construction began of the Old Dock. Its planning was initially overseen by George Sorroccold. Yet, his untimely death meant that Thomas Steers had to continue the

⁶ J. Longmore, 'Civic Liverpool: 1690-1800', in J. Belchem, ed., *Liverpool 800: Culture, Character and History* (Liverpool, 2006), 144.

⁷ D. Daloz, *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain* (Harmondsworth, 1979), 25.

⁸ See R. Davis, *The Rise of the Atlantic Economies* (Ithaca, 1973); J.H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic: Britain and Spain in America 1492-1630* (Yale, 2007); and G.V. Scammell, *The First Imperial Age: European Overseas Expansion 1400-1715* (London, 1989).

⁹ See K.R. Andrews, *Trade, Plunder, and Settlement: Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire 1480-1630* (Cambridge, 1984); N. Cammy, ed., *OHBE Volume 1: The Origins of Empire* (Oxford, 1998); and A. McFarlane, *The British in the Americas 1480-1815* (Harlow, 1994).

project. Although the dock wall was not completed until 1719, ships had found anchorage at this berth four years earlier. The local mercantile community were seemingly unwilling to invest their own capital into this project. Presumably, they were fully committed to other trading ventures. Instead, the Corporation borrowed £6,000 to build the wet dock. When this sum proved insufficient, the local authorities applied to Westminster for additional money-raising powers.¹⁰ If the financing of the Old Dock remains obscure, then its consequences are clear. The volume of shipping entering Liverpool increased significantly. In 1709, the figure stood at 14,600 tons. By 1751 it had risen to 29,200 tons. This increase in traffic required additional docking infrastructure. Thus, there were improvements in cargo handling, buoys positioned in the Mersey, and lighthouses constructed on the shoreline. Other docks were constructed, such as Salthouse by 1759 and St. George's by 1771.¹¹

Variations in geographical orientation and commodities strengthened Liverpool's economy, reducing the town's dependence upon any one line of commerce. Hence Liverpool was linked to several components of the Atlantic economy. Table 1 provides a snapshot of the town's diverse trading networks during the 1760s:

¹⁰ Longmore, 'Civic Liverpool', 122.

¹¹ Mannin, *Economic and Social Development of Merseyside*, 30-3.

TABLE 1 Number of vessels departing from Liverpool, 1762-1763

Destination	No. Departures	%
Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales)	828	49.9
Other British Isles (Ireland and Isle of Man)	511	30.8
America (North America and West Indies)	141	8.5
Europe (All destinations - includes Russia)	100	6
Africa (All Destinations)	74	4.5
North Atlantic (Greenland and North Fishery)	4	0.2
TOTAL	1658	99.9

Source: *Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser*, 22 February 1764

This encapsulation of Liverpool's overseas trade, albeit limited, illustrates the diverse nature of the town's developing interests. It had close ties with Africa and the West Indies. Indeed, Georgian Liverpool was intimately associated with the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Liverpool was a late entry into Atlantic commerce, and was therefore initially behind London and Bristol in slave trading.¹² But this changed during the 1740s, and between 1761 and 1770 Liverpool accounted for

¹² L.S. Walsh, 'Liverpool's Slave Trade to the Colonial Chesapeake: Slaving on the Periphery', in Richardson, Schwarz and Tibbles, *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery*, 98-117.

over half of British slaving voyages.¹³ These vessels sailed from Liverpool to several African destinations. Once there, British goods were sold and human cargoes loaded on board ship. Thereafter, the vessels embarked upon the Middle Passage for the plantations in the Americas. Amongst the most frequent island destinations were Jamaica, Dominica, Barbados, Grenada, Antigua, and St. Kitts. Having completed the sale of African cargoes in the Indies, Liverpool vessels returned home laden with colonial produce, such as coffee and sugar. As discussed in the introductory chapter, there has been intense debate over the profitability of Liverpool's trans-Atlantic slave trading. Most recently, Haggerty has argued that warfare, lack of supply and demand, as well as bad weather, made profits of four to five per cent more realistic. If a firm was to survive, it had to diversify into other areas.¹⁴ Therefore, the importance of Africa and the West Indies to Liverpool should not be exaggerated.

Nor should we overlook the economic links between Liverpool and the Thirteen Colonies in North America. Table 2 shows that Liverpool vessels also transported African slaves to the colonies:

¹³ Morgan, 'Liverpool's Dominance in the British Slave Trade', 14-15.

¹⁴ Haggerty, 'Liverpool, the Slave Trade and the British-Atlantic Empire', 28-9.

TABLE 2 Number of vessels departing Liverpool for Thirteen Colonies (via Africa) with total number of slaves disembarked at that location, 1763-1775

<u>Destination</u>	<u>No. Vessels Departing</u>	<u>No. Slaves Disembarked</u>
South Carolina	67	14,274
Virginia	13	2,501
Georgia	10	1,811
Maryland	1	315
Florida	1	286
North Carolina	1	131
TOTAL	93	19,318

Source: *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*, www.slavevoyages.org; accessed 13 June 2013.

In total, Liverpool vessels disembarked 214,873 slaves overseas between 1763 and 1775. Of these, 194,829 (over 90 per cent) went to the West Indies, whilst 19,318 were shipped to the Thirteen Colonies (a mere 9 per cent).¹⁵ This reinforces Walsh's argument that supplying slaves to British North America was a 'decidedly peripheral concern for most Liverpool merchants'.¹⁶ Still, the overall value of North American trade to Liverpool was significant. By mid-century,

¹⁵ *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*, www.slavevoyages.org; accessed 13 June 2013.

¹⁶ Walsh, 'Liverpool's Slave Trade to the Colonial Chesapeake', 98.

Liverpool was second only to London in terms of the size of its American market.¹⁷ Advertisements in the local press indicate that between 1763 and 1775, over 60 Liverpool businesses traded with North America. They included Benson & Postlethwaite, Rawlinson & Chorley, and William Wallace. Some, such as Brown & Birch and Dickson & Melling, concentrated upon one or two locations. However, others traded with multiple North American destinations. An inspection of advertisements in the Liverpool papers suggests that Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, the James and Rappahannock rivers, Charleston, Savannah, and Pensacola, were amongst the most frequented destinations. Consequently, these vessels returned to Liverpool with commodities such as New England timber, Pennsylvanian ore, Virginian tobacco, North Carolinian tar, and rice from South Carolina.¹⁸ Liverpool's link to these territories went beyond the exchange of commodities. The port facilitated the movement of free migrants to the Americas. However, Liverpool merchants were also contracted to transport convicts. Joseph Clegg and James Gildart shipped felons from nearby Chester to the American colonies, and this practice continued until the outbreak of hostilities in 1775.¹⁹

Liverpool was engaged in additional overseas trading ventures. Whaling served as a 'Nursery of the hardest and best Seamen'.²⁰ This activity was also of economic value, as there was growing demand for oil and bone in industrial areas. Thus, by the 1750s, whaling spread throughout the country at large for the first time. Whaling on the east coast grew in Newcastle, Hull, and Whitby, whilst in the West

¹⁷ Clemens, 'Rise of Liverpool', 216-7.

¹⁸ *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 10 June 1774.

¹⁹ CRO, Transport Bonds to America, 1731-1775, ZQRTB.

²⁰ R.G. Simmons and P.D.G. Thomas, eds., *PDBP, Volume 2* (London, 1982), 530.

it grew in Bristol and Liverpool.²¹ Local merchants, such as John Dobson and Thomas Staniforth, owned vessels that harvested whale blubber and sealskins.²² The first vessel to sail from Liverpool in this venture was *Golden Lion* in 1750, and by the last quarter of the eighteenth century 23 local ships were employed in this activity.²³

Continental Europe was not formally encompassed within the British Empire. Nevertheless, it was one of the 'lateral trades'. Europe received wheat exports from the mid-Atlantic and Chesapeake colonies. In return, the American colonists imported goods such as wine from the Mediterranean.²⁴ Foodstuffs were imported into Liverpool from the Mediterranean, tar from Archangel, and bar iron from Scandinavia. The coastal trade was important to Liverpool as well. T.S. Willan showed that vessels came to Liverpool from London, the north Welsh coast, and Scotland. They carried products including glass, leather, and nails. Ireland was another sizable outlet. Beef, linen, and tallow, came from Belfast and Dublin. Liverpool's coastal trade grew prodigiously during the eighteenth century. In 1709 592 tons of local shipping was employed in this activity. By 1751, the figure had risen to 2,030.²⁵ The various branches of Liverpool's overseas trade were also inter-connected as vessels could sail to several destinations on any given voyage.

²¹ G. Jackson, *The British Whaling Trade* (London, 1978), 62-4.

²² LA, Haywood Notebook.

²³ Brocke, *Liverpool as it Was*, 238-9.

²⁴ J.M. Price, 'The Imperial Economy', in Marshall, *OHE Volume 2*, 90.

²⁵ T.S. Willan, *The English Coasting Trade 1600-1750* (Manchester, 1938), 221.

Factors other than the diversity of trade contributed towards Liverpool's commercial rise. This included local culture, or a series of values and beliefs.²⁶ Casson identified imagination and foresight as necessary attributes for an entrepreneur.²⁷ The local MPs arguably demonstrated these characteristics when they conceived of the Old Dock. Indeed, this scheme was the first commercial dock in Britain.²⁸ There were also attempts at promoting skills by educating young men for a life in business. The prominent merchant Arthur Heywood served as treasurer to the nearby Warrington Academy. This establishment taught book-keeping, French, geometry, history, and mathematics.²⁹ In addition, Liverpool businesses used different methods to other commercial towns. Whereas London merchants employed a commission system for selling in America, Liverpool businessmen sent agents and factors to the colonies. They set up stores and accumulated cargoes for ships, thereby reducing turnaround times. London and Bristolian merchants also handled sugar and tobacco separately. Yet, in Liverpool, merchants dealt with both commodities together to improve efficiency.³⁰ However, as this chapter will show, Liverpool merchants were a diverse group. It is therefore difficult to argue that they all shared a common outlook.

Locational advantages assisted the rise of Liverpool. Initially, the Mersey estuary was subject to high tides and treacherous sandbanks. A curving inlet known as 'the Pool' made navigation treacherous. But these challenges were gradually overcome as the Mersey was charted with greater precision. Liverpool's relative

²⁶ M. Casson and A. Godley, *Cultural Factors in Economic Growth* (London, 2000), 36-7.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 36-7.

²⁸ Stewart-Brown, *Liverpool Ships*, 11.

²⁹ LA, Heywood Notebook, Report on the State of the Warrington Academy by the Trustees at the Annual General Meeting, 28 June 1770.

³⁰ J.A. Rawley and S.D. Bahrendt, *The Transatlantic Slave Trade: A History* (Lincoln, 2005), 167.

remoteness also rendered the town less susceptible, although by no means immune, to enemy privateers during times of war. This was in contrast with Bristol and London, which were more exposed to a French invasion. For years, Liverpool merchants benefitted from using the Isle of Man as a loophole to avoid paying customs duties.³¹ Indeed, smuggling on the island was valued up to £300,000 per annum.³² But circumstances changed in 1765 with the Act of Revestment. In an attempt to reduce smuggling, the ruling Atholls were deprived of suzerainty, and the Isle of Man restored to British Crown rule. Georgian Liverpool also benefited from the relative lack of competition in the area. Chester had been a major maritime centre during the Middle Ages. Yet, fortuitously for Liverpool, the silting of the River Dee stymied Chester's competitiveness. Other slaving ports in Lancashire, such as Whitehaven, were potential challengers to Liverpool. But their hinterlands were comparatively limited.³³

Historians have long debated whether foreign trade or domestic demand was the primary factor that spurred British economic development.³⁴ Given Liverpool's status as a port, one might assume that overseas trade was the catalyst for the town's growth. Yet Liverpool also benefited from its surrounding area, which was resource rich. Indeed, southern Lancashire and Cheshire contained prodigious amounts of coal and salt, respectively. Consequently, Liverpool served as a refining hub for these products. A network of internal communications facilitated trade with the town's hinterland. Traditionally, roads with poor drainage and

³¹ Morgan, 'Liverpool's Dominance in the British Slave Trade', 21-2.

³² H.S. Conran, *The Isle of Man* (Newton Abbot, 1977), 58.

³³ M. Elder, 'The Liverpool Slave Trade, Lancaster, and its Environs', in Richardson, Schwarz and Tibbles, *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery*, 118-37.

³⁴ For one side see K. Berrill, 'International Trade and the Rate of Economic Growth', *EHR*, 12 (1960), 351-9. For the other see J.A. Charles, *Internal Trade in England 1500-1700* (London, 1977) and R. Davis, *The Industrial Revolution and British Overseas Trade* (Leicester, 1979).

surfacing had impeded the transportation of bulky materials. But these challenges were partially overcome by the establishment of turnpike trusts, which raised tolls to fund maintenance. After 1726, overland communications between Liverpool and Prescott were improved. This was vital for the transportation of coal from southwest Lancashire. The road was subsequently extended to St. Helens and Warrington. As infrastructure improved, goods and passenger services became faster and more reliable.³⁵

The most celebrated innovations in local communications were in the field of water transportation. Earlier in the eighteenth century, legislation was passed to render the rivers Mersey, Irwell, and Weaver, more navigable. The flat terrain of the area also proved ideal for canal construction.³⁶ The Douglas Navigation facilitated the movement of coal from Wigan to the Ribble estuary. Once there, it was shipped along the coast towards Liverpool. The Sankey Brook Navigation followed in the 1750s. This established a triangular trade in salt and coal between the Cheshire salt fields, St. Helens, and Liverpool. Salt was refined in Liverpool, exported, and the town acquired coal for domestic consumption and manufacturing purposes. By 1771, some 90,000 tons of coal were annually shipped along the Sankey Navigation, of which 45,000 tons were bound for Liverpool. The Duke of Bridgewater's canal came the following decade, which connected the Duke's mines at Worsley to the Mersey estuary at Runcorn. The Trent-Mersey Canal was authorised in 1766, and had been partially inspired by Josiah Wedgewood to encourage the transportation of Liverpool-manufactured pots towards the

³⁵ Marriner, *Economic and Social Development on Merseyside*, 14-7.

³⁶ J.R. Harris, 'Early Liverpool Canal Controversies', in J.R. Harris, ed., *Liverpool and Merseyside: Essays in the Economic and Social History of the Port and its Hinterland* (London, 1969), 78.

Midlands.³⁷ The genesis of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal can be traced to Yorkshire, which sought to boost the supply of limestone to coal mines in Bradford and Bingley. Proprietors also wanted to sell their textiles over a wider area. Equally, Liverpool desired to increase its access to Lancashire's coalfields. After a public meeting in Bradford in July 1766, it was agreed that a subscription be raised for the purpose of building this waterway.³⁸ Although an Act of Parliament was obtained in 1770, it took over forty years to complete.³⁹ In the early 1770s, 10,000 tons of coal was transported down this waterway. By 1781 the figure had risen to 31,400 tons.⁴⁰ These canals also served a broader purpose of linking Liverpool's hinterland to overseas markets. Indeed, they facilitated the redistribution and exportation of goods. For example, Wigan's iron industry obtained supplies of ore from America via the Leeds-Liverpool Canal. Manufactured goods were subsequently transported from Wigan to the Americas by this canal and by Liverpool-owned shipping.⁴¹

A DIVERSE LOCAL ECONOMY

The rise of Liverpool stimulated the development of a broad-based economy within the town, which contained both manufacturing and services. As such, late-Hanoverian Liverpool is an ideal candidate to test gentlemanly capitalism.⁴² Attempting to analyse the occupational structure of a town is notoriously difficult.

³⁷ Marriner, *Economic and Social Development on Merseyside*, 17-22.

³⁸ M. Clarke, *The Leeds and Liverpool Canal* (Preston, 1994), 148.

³⁹ Marriner, 17-22. Also see C. Hadfield and G. Biddle, *The Canals of North West England Volume One* (Newton Abbot, 1970).

⁴⁰ Clarke, *Leeds and Liverpool Canal*, 148.

⁴¹ J. Langton, 'Liverpool and its Hinterland in the Late Eighteenth Century', in B.L. Anderson and P.J.M. Slonay, eds., *Commerce, Industry and Transport: Studies in Economic Change on Merseyside* (Liverpool, 1983), 11.

⁴² Granted, there was a 'gradual shift away from a diverse economic profile' in Liverpool by the 1810s – which is beyond the chronology of this study. See Longmore, 'Civic Liverpool', 135-6.

Penelope Corfield observed that several factors inhibit a precise definition of 'work'. They include cultural biases and the evolution of terminology. Furthermore, 'occupations' are not necessarily the same as 'employment'. Whereas the former implies permanency, the latter suggests temporary work.⁴³

Nevertheless, Ascott, Lewis, and Power used probate materials and parish records to quantify the structure of the Liverpool workforce c.1660-1750. Their findings indicated that late-Stuart and early-Hanoverian Liverpool was an unspecialised economy, with multiple interests.⁴⁴ This thesis analyses the occupational structure of Liverpool in the late-eighteenth century, to demonstrate the balance between services and manufacturing. Ascott, Lewis and Power's sources were limited in several respects. The self-conscious may have exaggerated their title on the records to enhance their status. Furthermore, these records often cite only one occupation, when inhabitants of Early Modern towns often held multiple jobs. Thus, the analysis presented here draws upon a different source, street directories, to uncover the occupational structure of Liverpool. Trade directories were first printed in London during the seventeenth century. By the following century, they had spread to other urban areas. These sources are not without limitation. The Liverpool directories were published by bookseller John Gore, who only included people whom he thought were worthy or wanted to be included.⁴⁵ The 1766 edition is used here to illustrate the occupational structure at the start of our period. However, residents could change their occupations. Thus, using any one street directory provides a glimpse into the occupational structure at

⁴³ P.J. Corfield, 'Defining urban work', in P.J. Corfield and D. Keene, eds, *Working in Towns 880-1850* (Leicester, 1990), 207-30.

⁴⁴ Ascott, Lewis and Power, *Liverpool 1660-1750*, 80-1.

⁴⁵ Haggerty, *British Atlantic Trading Community*, 254.

that particular time only. Henceforth, the 1781 directory is incorporated here to illustrate the occupational breakdown at the end of our period. The findings are presented below:

TABLE 3 Occupational structure of Liverpool, 1766 and 1781

OCCUPATION	1766		1781	
	NUMBER	(%)	NUMBER	(%)
Agriculture	1	(0.1)	37	(1)
Banking, Insurance and Brokers	14	(1.3)	83	(2.2)
Government and Civil Administration	39	(3.6)	98	(2.6)
Hospitality, Leisure and Entertainment	18	(1.7)	20	(0.5)
Merchants, Agents and Dealers	211	(19.4)	431	(11.4)
Professionals	63	(5.8)	208	(5.5)
Tradesmen, Crafts and Retail	475	(43.8)	1841	(48.7)
Titled	115	(10.6)	435	(11.5)
Transport and Communications	16	(1.5)	55	(1.5)
Other / Uncertain	133	(12.3)	575	(15.2)
TOTAL	1,085	(100.1)	3,783	(100.1)

Source: *The Liverpool Directory, 1766 and 1781*

Note: See Appendix for a breakdown of occupations.

Table 3 contains some surprising results. For example, there is a low figure (1 per cent) for transport. This stands in sharp contrast with Ascott, Lewis, and Power, who estimated that transport accounted for a third of the town's workforce.⁴⁶ This discrepancy can partially be accounted for because street directories were obviously land-based. Henceforth, they were unlikely to incorporate mariners away at sea. Nevertheless, the Liverpool street directories confirm the overall evidence of the probate and parish records. Liverpool between 1766 and 1781 was a diverse economy, where no one group enjoyed an outright numerical majority. Tradesmen, crafts, and retail, were significant in the 1781 directory. But they did not exceed over half of the recorded workforce. Even amongst this group, there were different occupations.⁴⁷

There were evidently manufacturing interests in Georgian Liverpool. Amongst the town's specialities was pot-making. Delftware had been produced in the town since the 1700s, and porcelain makers were located on Shaw's Brow and Brownlow Hill. James Okill, based at the mug works by Flint and Parliament Street, stocked cream wares. By 1756, John Sadler was printing on ceramics, and later developed links with Josiah Wedgwood.⁴⁸ It has been estimated that by 1761 there were over 100 potters in the town. This particular industry proved so valuable for Liverpool, that it was suggested the Common Council forbade foreigners from making pottery within the town without permission.⁴⁹ Another specialist enterprise was watch-making. The emergence of this trade in Lancashire during the seventeenth century has puzzled historians, as London was

⁴⁶ Ascott, Lewis and Power, *Liverpool 1660-1750*, 78-81.

⁴⁷ See Appendix.

⁴⁸ P. Hyland, *The Herculaneum Pottery Liverpool's Forgotten Glory* (Liverpool, 2005), 1-13.

⁴⁹ G. Chandler, *Liverpool* (London, 1957), 320-70.

the main market for these products. However, it is likely that migration and family ties spread this activity northwards.⁵⁰ By the end of the century, there were over 200 watch- and clock-makers in Liverpool.⁵¹

Other local manufacturers included shipbuilders such as Fearon & Webb, John Fisher, Peter Baker, and John Sutton. Vessels were built on sloping beaches, which sometimes caused obstructions in streets.⁵² Calking ships with pitch and tar was common in the early-eighteenth century, but by the later decades it became usual to copper sheath vessels to reduce drag on the water. The local populous were also employed in the preparation of foodstuffs. A confectioner was established in Everton in the early 1700s, and by 1790 there were over 40 local breweries. Grain was produced locally, but the number of windmills proved so great that many had to be demolished to make way for new businesses. Copper smelting was also present. In 1767, Charles Roe & Co of Macclesfield set up a works in Liverpool. The firm smelted Anglesey copper to produce brass goods. Glass-making had been present in the North West since the seventeenth century. Although St. Helens remained the focal point, by 1700 there were glasshouses in Liverpool. Soap boiling was another local speciality. By the dawn of the nineteenth century, Liverpool threatened to overtake London as the country's leading soap boiler.⁵³

⁵⁰ F.A. Bailey and T.C. Barker, 'The Seventeenth Century Origins of Watchmaking in South West Lancashire', in Harris, *Liverpool and Merseyside*, 5.

⁵¹ Chandler, *Liverpool*, 345.

⁵² Stewart-Brown, *Liverpool Ships*, 10, 89.

⁵³ Manniner, *Economic and Social Development on Merseyside*, 49-57.

Georgian Liverpool also had a diverse merchant community, with such businesses enjoying different remits. For example, John Tarleton had a diverse business portfolio, selling a wide range of colonial and manufactured goods in Britain and overseas.⁵⁴ In contrast, some businesses were more specialised, with William Abbott being listed in the street directories as only a timber merchant.⁵⁵ Given their diverse nature, it is hard to calculate the precise number of Liverpool merchants. Nevertheless, it has been proposed that by 1766 there were over 200 merchants. By 1805 the figure rose to 986 – although their numbers declined as a percentage of an ever-expanding population.⁵⁶ The social backgrounds of Liverpool merchants were varied too. Pope's survey of over 200 Liverpool slavers showed that their fathers had been employed in a wide range of occupations, including sailors, tradesmen, and professionals. The same study also revealed that under half of these merchants were Liverpool-born. Many came from other English counties, the Isle of Man, and Scotland.⁵⁷ Some were not even native to the British Isles. The surnames of Andrew Fuhrer and Benedict Wagner suggest a Germanic background, whilst the merchant Henry Zinck was listed as the Danish consul.⁵⁸

Entry into mercantile commerce depended upon several factors, not least a supply of capital. During the eighteenth century, between £1,500 and £10,000 was required to establish a business in overseas trade.⁵⁹ Several sources of finance

⁵⁴ LIVRO, Tarleton Papers, Annual Profit and Loss Accounts, 1749-1776, 920 TAR/2.

⁵⁵ *Liverpool Directory*, 1781.

⁵⁶ Haggarty, *British Atlantic Trading Community*, 76.

⁵⁷ D. Pope, 'The Wealth and Aspirations of Liverpool's Slave Merchants of the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century', in Richardson, Schwarz and Tibbles, *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery*, 176, 194-207.

⁵⁸ *Liverpool Directory*, 1777. For more on merchants from minority groups see P. Mathias, 'Risk, Credit and Kinship in Early Modern Enterprise', in J. McCusker and K. Morgan, eds, *The Early Modern Atlantic Economy* (Cambridge, 2000), 15-35.

⁵⁹ P. Hudson, 'Financing Firms', in Kirby and Rose, *Business Enterprise in Modern Britain*, 88-106.

were available to Liverpool merchants. The papers of the Earle family contain an article of partnership from 1766, which lists the signatures of merchants such as William Davenport and Thomas Hodgson.⁶⁰ This implies that friendships were important in setting up businesses. The same document also contains the signatures of Ralph and Thomas Earle - evidently families served as a basis for economic activities, supplying credit, labour, and materials.⁶¹ However, blood-ties were not strong in every business. Richard Watt, the owner of a local shipping company, frequently complained that his nephew, who helped run the firm, was idle.⁶² Religious networks were important as well. Indeed, the Rathbones corresponded with fellow Quaker businessmen around the British Isles and beyond.⁶³ Mercantile businesses were also comprised of different parts. For example, whilst William Davenport's company was based in Liverpool, he regularly corresponded with agents in the West Indies, insurers in London, and ship captains around the Atlantic.⁶⁴ Although Davenport could instruct these individuals, he ultimately had to rely upon their good judgement.

The outcome of merchanting in Liverpool was mixed. Success depended upon keeping up-to-date with news, expanding sources of credit, and building networks. David Tuohy was one such merchant. Of Irish descent, he amassed knowledge of the slaving business by captaining vessels during the 1760s. Tuohy later settled in Liverpool and married a local woman. Part of his success lay in his diverse portfolio. Tuohy imported tallow, beef, and butter, from Ireland. In return, he

⁶⁰ MMM, Earle Collection, Articles of Partnership, 5 April 1763, D/EARLE/4/1.

⁶¹ M.B. Rosa, 'The Family Firm in British Business, 1780-1914', in Kirby and Rose, *Business Enterprise in Modern Britain*, 63-76.

⁶² LIVRO, Wall family papers, letter and account book, Richard Wall, Kingston, to his nephew in Liverpool, 29 July 1781, 920 WAT 1/2/1.

⁶³ L. Nollingham, *Rathbone Brothers: From Merchant to Banker 1742-1992* (London, 1992), 6.

⁶⁴ MMM, Davenport Papers, Letter Books, 1763-1785, D/DAV/1/1.

exported salt, cheese, and beer, to his native land and the Americas. In the process, Tuohy co-owned vessels with fellow merchants, and expanded his business networks.⁶⁵ However, as Hancock pointed out, risk was ever present. Companies would unravel if partners squabbled amongst themselves, disappointed customers, and failed to innovate.⁶⁶ Insolvency, or problems with cash flow, was a major concern. Between 1761 and 1809, Liverpool comprised between 10-22 per cent of insolvent debtors in Lancashire. Local businesses could also fail to pay and become bankrupt, as the American specialists Halliday & Dunbar discovered in 1783.⁶⁷ The number of bankrupts increased in Liverpool during the late-eighteenth century. Yet, given that the number of bankrupts did not rise at the same pace as the number of businesses, the rate of bankruptcy in Liverpool actually declined between the 1770s and 1790s.⁶⁸

This local mercantile community provided various services. Merchants were obviously engaged in commerce, as well as the transportation and distribution of goods. To that end, firms such as Francis Ingram and the Earle brothers became ship-owners.⁶⁹ William Davenport also provided what Cain and Hopkins referred to as 'personal services'. Indeed, Davenport was an assignee to bankrupts.⁷⁰ To initiate such proceedings, creditors petitioned the Lord Chancellor to establish a committee of commissioners. These commissioners subsequently urged

⁶⁵ Haggerty, *British Atlantic Trading Community*, 227-30.

⁶⁶ D. Hancock, 'The Trouble with Networks: Managing the Scots Early Modern Madeira Trade', *BHR*, 79, 3 (2005), 489-91.

⁶⁷ Haggerty, *British Atlantic Trading Community*, 175-80.

⁶⁸ Hoppil, *Risk and Failure in English Business*, 35-7, 57, 82.

⁶⁹ LIVRO, Account book of the *Enterprize*, 1779-1780, 387 MD 45.

⁷⁰ MMM, Davenport Papers, William Davenport Letter Book, 3 January 1780, D/DAV/1/1 and MMM, Davenport Papers, correspondence regarding the estate of Thomas Wycliffe, 1777-1782, D/DAV/18/1-7.

bankrupts to surrender themselves. As creditors proved their debts before the commissioners, assignees collected, valued, and sold the bankrupt's estate.⁷¹

Crucially, Liverpool merchants were involved in banking. One of the best known examples was Heywood's Bank. Records are fragmentary, but it seems that the Heywood family had initially gained their money through slave trading.⁷² By 1774, Heywoods had gone into partnership with Joseph Denison of London to form a bank in Liverpool. Divided on equal terms, the contract between the Heywoods and Denison was initially signed on a temporary basis. The agreement was subsequently renewed, and by 1776 they exchanged cash for Bills or Notes, advanced money on negotiable security, and bought silver and gold. But they did not lend money on mortgage or bonds.⁷³ There were other banks operating in Liverpool during this period. The 1777 street directory mentions Charles Caldwell on Paradise Street and William Clarke on Castle Street (both men had originally been merchants). Still, one writer noted that it was peculiar how relatively few banks there were in Georgian Liverpool. After all, was not the town a leading commercial centre?⁷⁴ Pressnell explained this situation within the context of the financial revolution. After the 1690s, there were numerous unsuccessful ventures. Therefore, steps were taken to reduce the incidence of failure. In 1708 the Bank of England gained a monopoly in joint-stock banking. It was only after the 1750s that there was an appreciable growth in the number of provincial banks.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Hoppil, *Risk and Failure in English Business*, 35-7, 57, 82.

⁷² Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, 105-6.

⁷³ BBA, Agreement between Arthur and Richard Heywood with Joseph Denison, London, 18 February 1774, 199/60(1), and BBA, Agreement between Arthur and Richard Heywood with Joseph Denison, Liverpool, 26 August 1776, 199/60(2).

⁷⁴ J. Hughes, *Liverpool Banks and Bankers 1760-1837: A History of Circumstances which gave Rise to the Industry, and of the Men who Founded and Developed it* (Liverpool, 1906), vi.

⁷⁵ L.S. Pressnell, *Country Banking in the Industrial Revolution* (Oxford, 1956), 4-7.

Consequently, Liverpool did not enjoy the same status in banking as the City of London. The fact that Heywoods went into business with Denison of London is indicative of the capital's pre-eminence. Still, we can see that by the end of the century the provinces were expanding into this sector. In addition, other merchants went into banking in Liverpool after the period in question, including Staniforth, Ingram, Bold & Daltera in 1791, and John Aspinall in 1796.⁷⁶

COMPLEMENTARY MANUFACTURING AND MERCANTILE SERVICES?

Liverpool manufacturing and service sector interests were complementary in their business relationships. Most obviously, when vessels owned by merchants departed for Africa, they carried goods such as guns, knives, and shirts.⁷⁷ These manufactures were the standard items for barter on the African coast.⁷⁸ There were also examples of local manufacturers moving into financial-commercial services. The renowned watchmaker John Wyke briefly served as a banker. Little is known about this business, except that it had failed by 1773. Thereafter, Wyke continued to make watches up to his death in 1787.⁷⁹ The papers of John Coleman also suggest a link between manufacturing and services. Coleman began as an apprentice to his father, a local biscuit-maker. By 1765 the son had taken over the family business. He later came to the attention of the merchants Brown & Birch, and went into the wholesale trade of wheat. By 1778, Coleman held shares in two privateers, an activity often pursued by Liverpool merchants

⁷⁶ *The Liverpool Directory*, 1777.

⁷⁷ MMM, Davenport Papers, Cash Book, 1766-1780, DYDAW2/4.

⁷⁸ Rawley and Behrendt, *Transatlantic Slave Trade*, 232-42.

⁷⁹ Hughes, *Liverpool Banks and Bankers*, 49.

during eighteenth century wars. Finding his fortunes increased by 1780, Coleman purchased land for warehouses to store items for his bakery.⁸⁰ The most obvious example of these two sectors being economically compatible was the construction of waterways. *A Summary View of the Proposed Canal from Leeds to Liverpool* claimed that the canal would 'greatly advance the trades and manufactures carried on (it).' It also cited coal, limestone, and timber, as raw materials to be moved by water.⁸¹ These materials would be used for manufacturing purposes, and the process of transportation necessarily involved services.

Nonetheless, this was not an equal economic relationship, with services holding an advantage. Ward's analysis of the financing of canal construction suggested that whilst the Leeds-Liverpool Canal was funded from a variety of sources, services were in the ascendancy. By 1769, 36 per cent of these shares were owned by merchants, and 13 per cent by professionals. In contrast, tradesmen and manufacturers owned a modest 19 per cent and 5 per cent, respectively.⁸² Furthermore, in the immediate period after this thesis, Liverpool's manufacturing base was undermined. Contemporary sources suggest that by the 1790s local manufactures were at their peak. Thereafter, they went into decline, owing to the disruption caused by the French Wars, and increased competition from specialised regional rivals.⁸³

Manufacturing and services were also complementary in their social relationships. Many leading slave traders in Liverpool married women whose fathers had been

⁸⁰ LIVRO, Papers of John Coleman, Typescript of the Life of John Coleman, 920 COU3.

⁸¹ BL, *Summary View of the Proposed Canal from Leeds to Liverpool*, 1768, RB 23.A.5810.

⁸² J.R. Ward, *The Finance of Canal Building in Eighteenth Century England* (Oxford, 1974), 33-6.

⁸³ Langton, 'Liverpool and its Hinterland in the Late Eighteenth Century', in Anderson and Stoney, *Commerce, Industry and Transport*, 17-8.

blacksmiths, braziers, and cabinet-makers.⁸⁴ This reciprocity was evident in leisure activities too. There were several recreational opportunities in Georgian Liverpool, such as walking in squares and attending theatres.⁸⁵ Yet Clarke noted that social clubs were 'the most distinctive social institutions of the age.'⁸⁶ Sefton Mock Corporation was one such example. Its membership imitated a governing body, and elected mayors, aldermen, and MPs. Members of this club came from a variety of backgrounds, including manufacturers such as distillers and ironmongers, and services like merchants and ship's captains.⁸⁷

Yet we should not exaggerate the degree of social intermingling. There was segregation in some local clubs, which favoured services. Ye Ugly Face was established in 1743, and to qualify as a member one had to be a bachelor and contain 'something odd' about them. They would convene at 7pm every other Monday at a designated place. Whilst the society forbade gambling, members could drink beer and discuss topical issues. Surviving documentation contains a list of the society's membership in the 1740s and 1750s. Of the members with known occupations, they were associated entirely with services. This included merchants, captains, doctors, and architects.⁸⁸ Established a decade later, the Unanimous Society gained its name from the fact that new members could only be

⁸⁴ Pope, 'Wealth and Aspirations of Liverpools Slave Merchants', in Richardson, Schwarz and Tibbles, *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery*, 181.

⁸⁵ A.M. Wilson, 'Culture and Commerce: Liverpools Merchant Elite c.1790-1850' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Liverpool, 1996), 20-42.

⁸⁶ P. Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford, 2000), 2.

⁸⁷ LIVRO, Sefton Mock Corporation, membership list, 367 SEF.

⁸⁸ LIVRO, Ye Ugly Face Club records, 367 UGL.

admitted with the unanimous consent of existing members.⁸⁹ Table 4 details the composition of this club:

TABLE 4 Membership of Unanimous Society, 1753-1778

Occupation	Number	%
Merchant	8	34.8
Unclear	6	26.1
Titled	5	21.7
Professional	2	8.7
Government	1	4.3
Tanner	1	4.3
TOTAL	23	99.9

Source: LIVRO, Liverpool Unanimous Society, 367 UNA.

If merchants (who themselves were representative of services generally, and finance-commerce specifically) are combined with professionals and government officials, then services constituted 47 per cent of the membership. This figure may be higher, given that the occupation of over a quarter of the members is unclear. In contrast, manufacturers (a tanner in this case) were numerically insignificant, comprising a mere 4 per cent.

⁸⁹ LIVRO, Liverpool Unanimous Society, 367 UNA.

In the realm of electoral politics, the 1761 Liverpool poll book confirms that tradesmen accounted for a sizable 60 per cent of eligible voters.⁹⁰ According to O'Gorman, a similar proportion was evident in successive Liverpool polls into the early-nineteenth century.⁹¹ This is unsurprising given that Table 3 shows that manufacturers, tradesmen, and retailers, were numerous amongst the general population. If the Corporation was to maintain legitimacy, then it had to enfranchise these groups as Freemen.

However, services dominated the town's local governing and lobbying forums. Following the Glorious Revolution, the Liverpool charter of 1685 was revoked. Thereafter, a new document was introduced that outlined the structure of the local Corporation. The Common Council consisted of 41 men. From them would be two bailiffs, a Recorder schooled in the law, a Deputy Recorder, and a Mayor. The latter would be elected on the 18th of October every year. Mayors attended the town clerk's office at the Exchange every day between 12am and 2pm. From there, they conducted business with the council. Those who had previously held the position of Mayor became Aldermen. These individuals were entitled to sit on the Common Council for the rest of their lives, unless there was due cause to remove them.⁹² The Common Council was significant because it oversaw local government. It was responsible for poor relief, investment in the docks, maintaining law and order, advancing the status of the local Anglican Church, and

⁹⁰ LA, Liverpool Poll Book 1761.

⁹¹ F. O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, and Parties: The Unreformed Electoral System of Hanoverian England 1734-1832* (Oxford, 1991), 206.

⁹² First Charter of William III, in R. Muir, ed., *A History of Municipal Government in Liverpool* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1906), 247-54. Also see LIVRO, Liverpool Memorandum Book (1753), 920 MD 407.

civic reform.⁹³ Table 5 provides a breakdown of the backgrounds of those who served on the Common Council in the years 1766 and 1781:

TABLE 5 Occupational background of the Common Council 1766 and 1781

OCCUPATION	1766 NUMBER (%)	1781 NUMBER (%)
Merchant	13 (31.7)	14 (34.1)
Government	12 (29.3)	8 (19.5)
Tradesmen, Crafts and Retail	4 (9.8)	1 (2.4)
Titled	2 (4.9)	3 (7.3)
Professional	N/A	1 (2.4)
Vacancy	1 (2.4)	3 (7.3)
Other / Uncertain	9 (22)	11 (26.8)
TOTAL	41 (100.1)	41 (99.8)

Source: *Liverpool street directories 1766 and 1781*

Whilst tradesmen, crafts, and retail, were represented on this body, they were still a minority. Conversely, merchants held a plurality on the council. Mercantile

⁹³ M.J. Power, 'Growth of Liverpool', in Belchem, *Popular Politics, Riot and Labour*, 28-37.

representation on the Corporation may have been higher than the table indicates. Amongst 'others' were, potentially, several merchants. If the numbers of merchants, government officials, and professionals, are tallied together, then over half of the representatives on the Common Council were engaged in tertiary occupations. Table 6 organises the town's mayors between 1763 and 1783 by occupation:

TABLE 6 Mayors of Liverpool 1763-1783

Occupation	Number	%
Merchant	15	65.2
Timber Merchant	1	4.3
Draper	1	4.3
Ironmonger	1	4.3
Agent	1	4.3
Surgeon	1	4.3
Potter	1	4.3
Uncertain	2	8.7
TOTAL	23	99.7

Source: *LIVRO Fact Sheet*

Although some manufacturers served as mayor, they were clearly the exception. A similar pattern was evident on the town's lobbying forums too, which sent petitions and delegates to the national government to promote Liverpool's economic interests. The origins of the town's first Chamber of Commerce and the Corporation's Committee of Trade in 1774 are discussed later in this chapter. For now, it suffices to focus upon the occupational backgrounds of their members, which are illustrated in Tables 7 and 8. Regrettably, owing to a lack of surviving records, it is only possible to reconstruct the membership of these lobbying forums for certain years.

TABLE 7 Occupational background of Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, 1774

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Merchant	12	57.1
Unknown	8	38.1
Skilled Artisans and Retail	1	4.8
TOTAL	21	100

Source: *Liverpool Chamber of Commerce Minutes, 1774*

TABLE 8 Occupational Background of the Committee of Trade, 1775

<u>OCCUPATION</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>%</u>
Merchant	11	42.3
Titled (Esq; Gent)	4	15.4
Local Government	3	11.5
Manufacture	3	11.5
Professional	2	7.7
Agriculture	1	3.8
Other	1	3.8
Unknown	1	3.8
TOTAL	26	99.8

Source: *LIVRO, Board of Trade Committee Minute Book, 352 MIN COUL 2/1.*

Once again, mercantile services were in the ascendancy, as they constituted over half of the membership on the Chamber of Commerce. The figures for the Committee of Trade also show that if the numbers of merchants are combined with local government officials and professionals, service occupations enjoyed over 50

per cent representation. Whilst manufacturers were not excluded, their numbers were clearly limited.

Despite a broad-based local economy, why did merchants and services dominate the local government and lobbying forums? Evidently members of these organisations were carefully selected. In 1776 the Corporation noted that when any future mayor nominated a mayor's freeman, 'every such Mayor shall be confined to nominate a gentleman, or person not in trade'.⁹⁴ This would surely have discriminated against manufacturers. Cain and Hopkins argued that manufacturing was less socially acceptable to the elite, as industrialists were associated with work over pleasure. In essence, they were less gentlemanly. However, this was not necessarily the case in Liverpool during the 1760s and 1770s. As we have seen, local mercantile services were socially and economically linked to manufacturing. By implication, the latter must have been respectable to some degree. The landed elite also enjoyed ties to manufacturing. Indeed, the Earl of Derby held shares in the Leeds-Liverpool Canal, which transported raw materials for manufacturing.⁹⁵ Richard Pennant MP, the future Lord Penrhyn, was another landowner. He inherited land, property, and plantations in Jamaica from his forefathers.⁹⁶ Yet, through marriage, he acquired slate quarries on the Penrhyn

⁹⁴ J.A. Picton, *Municipal Archives and Records from AD 1700 to the Passing of the Municipal Reform Act of 1835* (Liverpool, 1886), 194.

⁹⁵ TNA, Leeds-Liverpool Canal Company records, minutes of Liverpool Committee and General Assembly, 2 April 1776, RAIL 846/42.

⁹⁶ J. Lindsay, 'The Pennants and Jamaica 1665-1808 Part 1: The Growth and Organisation of the Pennant Estates', *TCHS*, 43 (1982), 37-68.

estate in Wales.⁹⁷ Pennant leased this land, in part, for the purpose of extracting raw materials - which could be used for manufacturing.⁹⁸

A more compelling reason for the numerical weakness of manufacturing on these forums was that, on average, manufacturers were poorer than their mercantile counterparts, and therefore had less wealth to enjoy gentlemanly pleasures. That is not to say that all manufacturers were impoverished. The will of local ship-builder Roger Fisher, dated 1777, included a clause to leave £150 a year to his wife, and £1,000 to his granddaughters.⁹⁹ But an examination of over 200 Liverpool supra wills (valued at over £40) and infra wills (under £40) during the early-1780s shows that, on average, manufacturer's wills were worth £144. This was less than half of the £310 average for merchants. This exercise also revealed that services as a whole were not equal in stature. Professionals generally left a modest will of £117, and mariners (involved in transportation) were amongst the poorest members of Liverpool society, with their wills averaging just £66.¹⁰⁰ Clearly not all occupations were financially equal in stature. But, crucially, merchants (who offered commercial and financial services) were generally the wealthiest individuals in Liverpool. This evidence is broadly in line with Pope's research. He conducted an analysis of Liverpool-based slave traders. Whilst most of the individuals in his sample left an inheritance of under £10,000, there were examples of significant mercantile wealth.¹⁰¹ By the time of his death in 1773, the

⁹⁷ J. Lindsay, *A History of the North Wales Slate Industry* (Newlyn Abbot, 1974), 45-50.

⁹⁸ UBA, Penrhyn Castle Further Additional papers, Counterpart lease between Richard Pennant and John Dawes, 1775, PFA/1/308.

⁹⁹ Stewart-Brown, *Liverpool Ships*, 115.

¹⁰⁰ LANA, Archdeaconry of Chester probate act book, supra wills, 1780, 1783, Arch 2/1/22. Also

LANA, Archdeaconry of Chester probate act book infra wills, 1780, 1783, Arch 2/2/4.

¹⁰¹ Pope, 'Wealth and Aspirations of Liverpool's Slave Merchants', in Richardson, Schwarz and Tibbles, *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery*, 164-213.

merchant John Tarleton bequeathed an estate of over £70,000 to his family.¹⁰² Matthew Stronge, a fellow merchant, left his wife all of his titles and interests in Dublin and County Tyrone. In addition, Stronge's son inherited his father's warehouses near the North Dock.¹⁰³ Given their level of wealth, it is not surprising that both Tarleton and Stronge served on the Corporation. Once on the Corporation, it was difficult to remove these merchants. As one writer put it:

Members could be removed only by death, retirement or being voted out of office by their fellow councillors, in effect they were appointed for life. When a vacancy did occur, the council not infrequently selected a merchant whose economic and political interests were in close accord with the majority of councillors.¹⁰⁴

With the benefit of affluence, some merchants enjoyed comfortable 'gentlemanly' lifestyles. They patronised social clubs and theatres, and engaged in charitable activities. It also shaped where they lived. Earlier in the eighteenth century Liverpool was physically compact. But towards the latter decades there was increased physical separation. The area immediately north of the town became associated with slum dwellings. Consequently, the apex of Liverpool society moved eastwards towards Church Street, Duke Street, Hanover Street, and Rodney Street. By 1800, merchants such as Daniel Backhouse and William Pole had moved to outer suburbs in Everton and Wavertree. Several Liverpool

¹⁰² LIVRO, Tarleton Papers, Annual profit and loss accounts of John Tarleton, 1718-1773, 920 TAR/ 2.

¹⁰³ LANA, Will of Matthew Stronge, WCW.

¹⁰⁴ F.E. Sanderson, 'The Structure of Politics in Liverpool 1780-1807', in *THSLC*, 127 (1978), 65-89.

merchants also married women from similar backgrounds, and some of their sons attended Oxbridge.¹⁰⁵

INTER-MERCANTILE RELATIONS

Let us now say more on the relationship between the merchants themselves. This is significant, as it would influence the degree to which the Liverpool lobby enjoyed success in the metropole. As we saw earlier, Liverpool's merchants were a heterogeneous group. Therefore, it is unsurprising that they engaged in squabbles and disputes. The authors of the 1806 Liverpool poll book noted that the Aspinalls, Cases, and Gildarts united against the Drinkwaters and Tarletons, who in turn opposed the Boltons and Heywoods. Evidently, personalities and family ties were important dividing lines.¹⁰⁶ However, issues were significant too. The Corporation frequently differed over the financing of dockyard construction, and the admission of Freemen.¹⁰⁷

Disputes between the Liverpool merchants were especially prominent during the mid-1770s. On 15 February 1774, the Council received a draft petition rumoured to be sent by the merchants and traders of Liverpool to Parliament. It called for a bill to impose a tax upon goods imported at the port. Although the merchants denied this, the Corporation opposed the petition and established a committee to defeat it.¹⁰⁸ On 22 February, this committee reported that it was necessary to send delegates to London to oppose the measure. However, the voluntary 'Trade Duty'

¹⁰⁵ Pope, 'Wealth and Aspirations of Liverpool's Slave Merchants', 164-213.

¹⁰⁶ Sanderson, 'Structure of Politics in Liverpool', 71-2.

¹⁰⁷ Ascoli, Lewis and Power, *Liverpool 1660-1750*, 162-89.

¹⁰⁸ LIVRO, Liverpool Corporation Records, 15 February 1774, 352 MIN/COU 1.

used to support this activity had expired. Still, there were unspent funds, and it was proposed that a Committee of Commerce have oversight over the remnants. This body would consist of two parts: a number of merchant burgesses chosen by the Common Council, and representatives from a 'certain other committee'. This included the merchants Nicholas Ashton, Joseph Brooks the Younger, John Chorley, John Dobson, and John Sparling. It was ordered that the Corporation Recorder meet these merchants to discuss the proposal.¹⁰⁹ But, by 26 February, Dobson criticised the Corporation's 'Grand Council' for soliciting improper use of funds and for obstructing proceedings. Such methods maintained the 'unhappy Distinction of Party in the Town'. To remedy this situation, Dobson and his associates proposed alternative arrangements, which were rejected by Council.¹¹⁰

This rupture had a major impact upon the structure of the town's lobby. Firstly, it gave rise to Liverpool's first Chamber of Commerce. There were broader moves towards the establishment of chambers of commerce in Britain during this period. The first was founded in Jersey in 1768, and the second in Guernsey the following year. The turning point for Liverpool was the establishment of the Manchester Chamber in April 1774, as John Dobson (the first chair of the Liverpool Chamber) had links to Manchester.¹¹¹ *The Draft of an Article for Settling a Chamber of Commerce in Liverpool*, dated 21 April 1774, stated that to become a member one should pay an annual subscription of £1.1s for three years to the treasurer. Members had the right to vote and would meet on Mondays between 10 and 12 o'clock. The organisation was overseen by a committee of 21 annually elected

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 22 February 1774, 352 MIN/COU 1.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.15-26 February 1774, 352 MIN/COU 1.

¹¹¹ Bennell, *Voice of Liverpool Business*, 1-6.

officials. Accounts would be published yearly, and if subscribers fell ill then money could be spent to assist them.¹¹² Not to be outdone, the Common Council established the Committee of Trade, which met for the first time on 5 April 1775. On the first Wednesday of April, the Mayor, Bailiffs and Burgesses appointed seven common councilmen to this body. They were invested with powers to send witnesses to Parliament to protect Liverpool's commerce. A committee book was opened, and an annual sum of £250 established to cover expenses. Amongst its initial membership were Aldermen Blackburn, William Gregson, and Jonathan Crosbie.¹¹³

John and Sheryllynne Haggerty noted that splits in the mercantile community manifested themselves in social activities too. During the 1750s, Robert Armitage, Matthew Stronge, Richard Hughes, and John Parr, were all active on the town Council, Ye Ugly Face club, and Sefton Mock Corporation. However, by the 1760s, they had left the Mock Corporation. During the 1770s, cross-institutional membership between social clubs occurred, but to a lesser extent.¹¹⁴

It is worth stressing at this point that these mercantile differences would, in the short-term, limit the effectiveness of the town's lobby. But, despite their undoubted problems, business, family, and religious ties ultimately bound the merchants

¹¹² LA, Haywood Notebook, *Draft of an Article for Settling a Chamber of Commerce in Liverpool*, 21 April 1774.

¹¹³ LIVRO, *Liverpool Corporation Records*, 5 April 1775, 352 MIN/COU 1.

¹¹⁴ J. Haggerty and S. Haggerty, 'The Life Cycle of a Metropolitan Business Network: Liverpool 1750-1810', *Explorations in Economic History*, 48, 2 (2011), 189-206.

together.¹¹⁵ This prevented the complete breakdown of relations amongst this group.

MERCANTILE AND LANDED ELITE NETWORKS

In their premier position within the local government and lobbying forums, Liverpool merchants came into contact with the landed elite. Such was the case with the Derby family, who had long exerted an influence over Liverpool. Indeed, during the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, the eighth, ninth, and tenth earls had served as mayor of the town.¹¹⁶ For the period of this thesis, Liverpool dealt with Edward Stanley, the 11th Earl, and after 1776 Edward Smith-Stanley, the 12th Earl. The Derby family resided at Knowlsey Hall, on the outskirts of Liverpool. They owned properties on Merseyside, in areas such as Huyton, Kirkdale, and Liverpool town centre itself. The accounts of the eleventh and twelfth earls show that Liverpool merchants rented some of these dwellings. For example, in 1778 James Gildart hired Derby's 'parcle [sic] of ground fronting...the river Mersey'.¹¹⁷ Occasionally, the process worked the other way. In 1784, William Rathbone III demised land in Knowlsey to the 12th Earl (although this patch of land had originally belonged to a previous Earl of Derby).¹¹⁸ Liverpool merchants also rented land from the Molyneuxs. The town had enjoyed a long relationship with this family. After the 1660 Restoration, the Molyneuxs resumed the lordship of the town and constablenesship of Liverpool Castle.¹¹⁹ By the eighteenth century

¹¹⁵ Bennell, *Voice of Liverpool Business*, 101-16.

¹¹⁶ Ascoli, Lewis and Power, *Liverpool 1660-1750*, pp.165-6.

¹¹⁷ LANA, Derby Records, Survey of the Manors of Knowlsey, Huyton, Roby, Halewood, Rainford, Bickerstall and Liverpool, 1778, DDK/1770/16.

¹¹⁸ SJL, Rathbone Papers, Lease, 1 December 1784, by William Rathbone to Edward Smith Stanley, RP 12.5.

¹¹⁹ Ascoli, Lewis and Power, *Liverpool 1660-1750*, 165.

merchants Charles Goore, Felix Doran, and Ralph Earle, rented land from them in Crosby, Kirby, and Orrell.¹²⁰

Significantly, Liverpool merchants serviced the bills of the elite. John Tarleton worked for the 11th Earl of Derby on several occasions, and remitted him money up to the value of £600 (although it is not clear what these sums were for).¹²¹ A similar relationship was enjoyed with James, 2nd Duke of Atholl. Liverpool merchants knew the Atholls through trading with the Isle of Man. The Atholls had come to rule the isle through a complicated process. Originally belonging to the Derby family, after the Restoration the Isle of Man was returned to the 8th Earl. However, when the 10th Earl died in 1736, suzerainty passed to his second cousin, the 2nd Duke of Atholl.¹²² Although there seems to be no examples of Liverpool merchants renting land from Atholl, John Tarleton provided financial services to him. In February 1761, the merchant assured the Duke that 'the same care shall be taken as usual to...remit you any money that may have been rendered you'.¹²³

The landed and titled elite also represented the Liverpool merchants in Parliament. Between 1761 and 1780 Sir William Meredith represented Liverpool. Born in 1722 to Amos Meredith and Joanna Cholmondeley, Meredith's family owned property in Cumberland, Lincoln, and Northampton. However, they resided primarily at

¹²⁰ LANA, Molyneux, Earls of Sallon, Indenture between Molyneux and Goore, 25 December 1749, DDM45/102. LANA, Molyneux, Earls of Sallon, Indenture between Molyneux family and Felix Doran, 24 June 1761, DDM 35/224, and LANA, Molyneux, Earls of Sallon, Account Book, 1774, DDM1/15.

¹²¹ LANA, Stanley, Earls of Derby, Derby Letter Book, 25 August 1756, DDK2030.

¹²² J. Bagley, *The Earls of Derby 1485-1985* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1985), 134.

¹²³ MNHL, Atholl Papers, John Tarleton to the Duke of Atholl, Liverpool, 21 February 1761, MS 09707 X/26-17.

Henbury Hall in Macclesfield.¹²⁴ With the passing of his grandfather in 1752, Meredith inherited the estate and became Third Baronet of Henbury. Sir William would live at Henbury until 1779, when he sold the property to John Jodrell for £24,000.¹²⁵ Between 1767 and 1780 the other MP was Richard Pennant (Liverpool was a two-member constituency). He was landed through owning slate mines in North Wales, and Pennant's forefather, Gifford, had received land grants in Jamaica during the Restoration. By the time of his death in 1676, Gifford owned 7,000 acres. His heirs continued to acquire land and imported slaves to work plantations, and by the 1750s the family were essentially absentee landlords.¹²⁶ Richard was amongst the most substantial slave-owners in Jamaica, increasing his forefather's total of 610 Africans to 1,036 by 1775.¹²⁷

Liverpool merchants mixed with the elite through other channels too. By virtue of their wealth, some mercantile figures held prominent positions within the community. This included serving as trustees on charitable organisations. One such institution was the local infirmary. Of the 118 subscribers in 1749, 83 were merchants.¹²⁸ Furthermore, that same year, the Infirmary's Board of Directors included merchants and the 11th Earl of Derby.¹²⁹ Derby and Molyneux were also amongst the trustees of the Liverpool Blue Coat charity school, alongside

¹²⁴ LANA, Deeds, Will of Mary Meredith, 1724, DDX 174/76.

¹²⁵ P. Woodland, 'Meredith, Sir William, third baronet (bap. 1724, d. 1790)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18580>; accessed 25 January 2014.

¹²⁶ Lindsay, 'Pennants and Jamaica 1665-1808 Part 1', 37-68.

¹²⁷ T. Burnard, 'From Periphery to Periphery: The Pennants's Jamaican plantations and industrialisation in North Wales 1771-1812', in Bowen, *Wales and the British Overseas Empire*, 121-36.

¹²⁸ G. McLoughlin, *A Short History of the First Liverpool Infirmary 1749-1824* (London, 1978), 94-6.

¹²⁹ Enfield, *History of Liverpool*, 52.

prominent mercantile families such as the Blundells, Crosbys, and Earles.¹³⁰ It is also conceivable that Liverpool merchants provided legal services to the elite. In a letter to William Earle, Derby wrote that he would 'Accept the trust imposed on me by my late Dear Uncle's Will'.¹³¹ Presumably, Earle was facilitating this litigation. The coming together of the mercantile services and landed elite was one manifestation of the 'making of the English ruling class'.¹³² This helps explain why, amidst the threats of domestic subversion and foreign conflict, Britain avoided a social revolution during this period.¹³³

PROTO-GENTLEMANLY CAPITALISM

Liverpool merchants attempted to use these networks with the landed elite as leverage to extend their influence, but the elite did not always comply. In spring 1759, on behalf of the Corporation, John Tarleton tried to use his position as Atholl's banker to encourage the Duke to investigate why a vessel had been impounded on the Isle of Man. This ship was of great interest to the Liverpool merchants because it carried gunpowder destined for the African market. However, a letter from the Duke to Tarleton indicated that the former would not use his influence:

I should be very glad to be of any Service on this Occasion, but I am afraid it would be Looked upon as too Delicate a point for me to Interfere for, Besides, I am at a Loss to know to whom and in what Manner to make any

¹³⁰ LIVRO, Bluecoat Hospital and School, A Report on the State of the Bluecoat Hospital in Liverpool from 25 December 1777 to 25 December 1779, 377 BLU/12.

¹³¹ MMM, Earle Papers, Letter from the Earle of Derby to William Earle, 9 June 1781, EARLE/7/5.

¹³² W.A. Speck, *Stability and Strife: England 1714-1760* (London, 1977), 143-66.

¹³³ I.R. Christie, *Stress and Stability in Late Eighteenth Century Britain: Reflections on the British Avoidance of Revolution* (Oxford, 1984), 215-9.

Application At you can give me any hint concerning this I shall Let you know how fair it may be fitting for me to Interpose.¹³⁴

In addition to the Duke's claim that he did not know who to contact, the likely reasons for Atholl's hesitation was that he was the ruler of an island that the British customs angrily associated with smuggling. Furthermore, Atholl's forefather, Lord George Murray, had been a general for the failed Jacobite cause.¹³⁵ Liverpool's network with the 2nd Duke of Atholl, such as it was, did not last after the Duke's death in 1764. Thereafter, his son was fixated upon opposing the Act of Revestment. In addition, there is limited, if any, evidence of inter-marriage between the landed elite and local merchants during this period. It can therefore be argued that these networks were only at a proto-gentlemanly capitalist stage by the late-eighteenth century.

There are several potential explanations for these proto-gentlemanly capitalist relations. Firstly, there were historic differences between the local landed elite and merchant services. The Molyneux family had long leased land in Liverpool, but by the seventeenth century they were in dispute with the Corporation over rents and landownership. Similar misunderstandings were evident with the Derby family during the 1660s.¹³⁶ Secondly, an emergent Liverpool identity arguably frustrated the development of closer ties. It has been suggested that because Georgian Liverpool was proud of its status as an emerging commercial town, the urban elite developed a sense of its own self-importance, and therefore felt little need to

¹³⁴ MNHL, Atholl Papers, Duke of Atholl to John Taitton, April 1759, MS 09707 X/8-25.

¹³⁵ Murray G. H. Pittok, 'Murray, Lord George (1694-1760)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2006, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19605>; accessed 22 August 2014.

¹³⁶ Ascoli, Lewis and Power, *Liverpool 1660-1750*, 165-6.

interact with the Lancashire gentry. But Longmore has discounted this explanation, as the frequent movement of migrant workers prevented the development of a local Liverpool identity.¹³⁷

Conceivably, there were cultural differences between the supposedly decadent elites and virtuous 'middling sorts'. Defining social groups in the eighteenth century is highly problematic. As the population expanded, contemporaries developed new models of ranks, tiers, and classifications.¹³⁸ We have already defined the aristocracy. For Earle, the middling sorts were generally associated with profit and improvement. This definition therefore includes merchants, professionals, and traders.¹³⁹ Hall argued that the middling sorts developed an 'oppositional culture' to the landed establishment. Contrasting with aristocratic vice, the middle classes viewed the market place as an arena to promote morality.¹⁴⁰ But were the merchants in Liverpool 'virtuous', and the local aristocrats 'immoral'? Not necessarily so. Some Liverpool merchants evidently valued hard work. One local mercantile source noted: 'Regularity and Punctuality are the two great Virtues of a Man of Business'.¹⁴¹ But, as we have seen, some Liverpool merchants did fail in business and enjoyed vices at social clubs. In contrast, the 12th Earl of Derby was renowned for leisurely pursuits, such as horse racing and amateur dramatics.¹⁴² Even so, Chapter Three shows that Smith-Stanley was an active parliamentarian, especially vocal on the American War.

¹³⁷ Longmore, 'Civic Liverpool', 152-4.

¹³⁸ D. Cammidge, *Glass in Britain* (London, 2000), 28-9.

¹³⁹ P. Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class* (London, 1989), 327-8. Also see J. Barry, 'Introduction', in J. Barry, ed., *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England 1660-1800* (London, 1994), 2.

¹⁴⁰ L. Davidoff and C. Hall, eds, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1750-1850* (London, 1987), 20-6.

¹⁴¹ LIVRO, Liverpool Memorandum Book, 1753, 920 MD 407.

¹⁴² J. Bagley, *The Earls of Derby 1485-1985* (London, 1985), 145-8.

If there were any significant cultural differences, then it was likely that the Liverpool merchants were not regarded as being sufficiently gentlemanly. Indeed, although local businessmen attended social clubs, their enthusiasm for intellectual pursuits was modest. The Liverpool Philosophical and Literary society was inaugurated in 1779, but dissolved three years later. It was not until the 1800s that Liverpool developed longer-lived intellectual societies.¹⁴³ Some contemporaries were also critical of Liverpool's fixation upon business. One near-contemporary stated in the 1790s that: 'Arts and sciences are inimical to the spot...the only pursuit of the inhabitants is COMMERCE.'¹⁴⁴ It was therefore difficult to reconcile Liverpool's business ethos with 'polite society'.¹⁴⁵ However, for the period in question, there appears to be no direct references to the Derby, Molyneux or the Atholl families describing the Liverpool merchants as being less gentlemanly.

The potential for disputes was demonstrated most clearly in the raucous relationship between the merchant-dominated Corporation and the landed MP Sir William Meredith. First elected to represent the town in 1761, the manner in which Meredith came to office was not auspicious. He stood against the Corporation's preferred candidates, Sir Ellis Cunliffe and Charles Pole. Because Liverpool was a two-member constituency, the outcome was that Cunliffe and Meredith were elected. A nasty campaign, one voter described it as a 'paper-war'.¹⁴⁶ Regardless of the outcome, as one of the town's elected representatives, Meredith was

¹⁴³ Wilson, 'Culture and Commerce', 32-42.

¹⁴⁴ J. Wallace, *A General and Descriptive History of the Ancient and Present State of Liverpool* (Liverpool, 1797), 283-4.

¹⁴⁵ Longmore, 'Civic Liverpool 1680-1800' in Belchem, *Liverpool 800*, 140-6. Also see P. Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989).

¹⁴⁶ LA, Liverpool Poll Book, 1761, Friends of Sir Ellis Cunliffe and Charles Pole, 13 March 1761.

required to work alongside the Corporation, businessmen, and constituents.¹⁴⁷ He secured re-election in 1765, 1768, and 1774, and successfully manoeuvred Richard Pennant into the seat vacated by the death of Sir Ellis Cunliffe in 1767. Chapter Two shows that Meredith was a vocal critic of Lord Robert Clive during the debates over the EIC during the early-1770s. Henceforth, opponents of Meredith invited Clive to stand against Meredith in Liverpool in 1774.¹⁴⁸ Indeed, this offer was likely an attempt by Sir William's critics to acquire a candidate of national stature. In the event, Clive did not accept, and the Corporation's inability to find suitable candidates to rival Meredith contributed towards his political longevity. Regardless, tensions still lingered. A disgruntled source claimed that by the early-1770s Meredith had alienated even his own supporters. He acted with 'coolness, slight, and indifference to the Master Tradesmen and the lower Class of those who supported him'. Nor was Meredith regularly seen in his constituency.¹⁴⁹ By 1780, Sir William had retired due to ill health. However, if he had sought re-election, it is likely he would have lost. Chapters Two and Three detail how Meredith gradually alienated himself from both the Government and Opposition in Parliament. During that same election, Meredith's colleague, Pennant, was defeated by two pro-Corporation candidates, Bamber Gascoyne the Younger and Henry Rawlinson.

A range of factors influenced the Liverpool electorate from 1761 to 1780, and this reveals more about the splits in the commercial lobby itself, as well as the tensions

¹⁴⁷ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 43, May 1773.

¹⁴⁸ LIVRO, Tarkenton Papers, Decision of a meeting to support John Tarkenton in the stead of the late Sir Ellis Cunliffe, 20 October 1767, 920 TAR 3/6. Also BL, India Office Records, letter from A. Ligon to Robert Clive, summer 1773, MSS Eur G37/67/2.

¹⁴⁹ BL, India Office Records, Letter from A. Ligon to Robert Clive, summer 1773, MSS Eur G37/67/2.

between the Corporation and MPs. Lewis Namier famously argued that personality was of paramount importance in Hanoverian politics, and there is some evidence to support this claim in Liverpool.¹⁵⁰ During the 1761 poll, personality traits were repeatedly used in campaign literature. Cunliffe reminded electors that he 'was born, bred, and lives amongst you'. Pole, too, had 'spent a great part of his life amongst you; his knowledge and experience in trade, enables him to be of the greatest service'.¹⁵¹ In response, the Meredith camp asserted that their man was 'a gentleman by birth, by education, and from principle'.¹⁵² Similar considerations were echoed in the 1780 election. On 8 September the pseudonym 'Varro' surveyed the character traits of the Liverpool candidates. Bamber Gascoyne the Younger had a 'complete education' but was untried. Pennant also possessed 'most virtues of the head and heart...yet an unfortunate diffidence renders him destitute'.¹⁵³

Namier argued that the reason why personality was so important was due to the lack of formal parties by mid-century.¹⁵⁴ During the 1760s, Liverpool parliamentary candidates rarely used the terms 'Whig' and 'Tory' in public. However, Meredith did use both words in private.¹⁵⁵ Historians have long appreciated that a key dynamic in eighteenth century Liverpool elections was the axis between the Anglican Corporation and Dissenting Independents.¹⁵⁶ As a two-member constituency, Liverpool electors had two votes. Therefore, they could vote for both

¹⁵⁰ L. Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III* (Basingstoke, 1975), x-xi.

¹⁵¹ LA, Liverpool Poll Book 1761, The Friends of Sir Ellis Cunliffe, 23 February 1761.

¹⁵² LA, Liverpool Poll Book 1761, Letter by the friends of Sir William Meredith, to the Honest Independent Electors of Liverpool, 6 March 1761.

¹⁵³ LA, Liverpool Poll Book, 1781.

¹⁵⁴ Namier, *Structure of Politics*, x-xi.

¹⁵⁵ UNA, Portland Papers, Sir William Meredith to the Duke of Portland, 22 June 1767, PWF 6718.

¹⁵⁶ L. Namier and J. Brooke, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1754-1790 I: Introductory Survey, Constituencies, Appendices* (London, 1985), 317.

Corporation candidates, 'plump' by using only one vote, vote for the Independent opposition, or split the vote between one Corporation and the opposition candidate. Table 9 shows the voting patterns at the 1761 and 1780 Liverpool polls:

TABLE 9: Voting patterns at the 1761 and 1780 Liverpool polls (%)

	1761	1780
Corporation	46	16
Corporation plumps	4	44
Independent Opposition	43	16
Split	7	24
TOTAL	100	100

Source: *Liverpool Polls Books, 1761 and 1780*

In 1761, there was a sizable number of voters opting for both Corporation candidates (Cunliffe and Pole – 46 per cent) and voting for the single Independent (Meredith – 43 per cent). This demonstrates a partisan disposition, thus supporting Bradley's notion that 'party politics without party organizations' operated in Liverpool during this period.¹⁵⁷ Granted the vote was more evenly distributed in 1780, but if the analysis is extended to the 1784 election then up to 60 per cent of the electorate voted for the same candidate as they had four years previous.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ Bradley, *Religion, Revolution and English Radicalism*, 283.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 283-4.

What motivated this partisan behaviour? Challenging the Namierite emphasis upon personality, Dickinson argued that ideas were critical in Hanoverian politics.¹⁵⁹ Ideology in late-eighteenth century elections was not based upon vague principals – rather, it was grounded in harsh reality.¹⁶⁰ In Liverpool in 1761, one key issue was the defence of the town's overseas trade. The supporters of the incumbents argued that their men were best placed to secure this. Indeed, Pole stood for free access to the African market, and his residency in the metropolis made him 'more ready' to act.¹⁶¹ For Meredith, a key issue was the preservation of liberties by exercising the right to a free vote. He castigated those who used 'shameful methods...to destroy the independency inherent to every man's birth'.¹⁶² One source of this malfeasance was the local Corporation. Writing twenty years later, one elector reminisced that 1761 was the 'glorious year...whereby we loosed ourselves from the Shackles in which the Corporation had long kept us bound'.¹⁶³ Indeed, the slater William Clarke recounted how one of the Blundells' (several of whom were merchants in the Corporation's interest) canvassed him. Upon learning that Clarke intended to support Meredith, Bryan Blundell threatened to withdraw care from Clarke's sick wife in the infirmary.¹⁶⁴ It would seem that despite its rhetoric, the opposition also utilised corrupt practices. Although it is not clear if Meredith consented to such methods, his campaigners secured votes whereby

¹⁵⁹ H.T. Dickinson, *Liberty and Property: Political Ideology in Eighteenth Century Britain* (London, 1977), 1.

¹⁶⁰ J.A. Phillips, *Electoral Behaviour in Unreformed England* (Princeton, 1982), 309-10.

¹⁶¹ LIVRO, Liverpool Poll Book 1761, The Friends of Sir Ellis Cunliffe to the Free Burgesses of Liverpool, 7 February 1761.

¹⁶² LIVRO, Liverpool Poll Book, The Friends of Sir William Meredith, 3 February 1761.

¹⁶³ LA, Liverpool Poll Book, 1780, Investigator to the Independent Freemen of Liverpool.

¹⁶⁴ LA, Liverpool Poll Book, 1761, Friends of Sir William Meredith, 27 March 1761.

electors 'would Poll any way where money was offer'd'.¹⁶⁵ Chapter Five will also show that national issues affected the outcome of the 1780 Liverpool election.

Religion played an important role in national elections during the eighteenth century.¹⁶⁶ Bradley also found that most Anglicans in Liverpool supported the Corporation.¹⁶⁷ This is not surprising, given that the Corporation was charged with promoting the Faith. In contrast, Meredith courted the Dissenters. A Dissenting Minister once enquired if Sir William supported 'full and entire' toleration, to which Meredith responded in the affirmative.¹⁶⁸ The Liverpool MP also actively promoted religious toleration in Westminster. On 6 February 1772, Meredith unsuccessfully presented a petition from members of the Anglican Clergy and legal profession seeking relief from the 39 Articles, or doctrines of the Church of England.¹⁶⁹ Significantly, this measure failed partially because Dissenters opposed the petition, on the grounds that repeal of the Articles would result in heresy.¹⁷⁰ This substantiates Bradley's argument that Liverpoolian Dissenters were a less reliable voting bloc than Anglicans. Indeed, Benn's Garden Nonconformists had supplied reformist local politicians such as John Hardman MP, as well as the mayors Joseph Clegg and George Campbell. However, many local Presbyterians were slave traders, and therefore identified with the more conservative Corporation.¹⁷¹ Some Dissenters were also critical of Meredith. One suggested that, despite Meredith's protestations to the contrary, Sir William was no friend to religious

¹⁶⁵ LA, Liverpool Poll Book, 1761. Also BL, India Office records, A. Ligon to Robert Clive, summer 1773, MS Eur G37/67/2.

¹⁶⁶ Phillips, *Electoral Behaviour*, 309.

¹⁶⁷ Bradley, *Religion, Revolution and English Radicalism*, 286.

¹⁶⁸ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 43 (1773), 216-7.

¹⁶⁹ W. Cobbett, *PHE, Volume 17 1771-1774* (London, 1813), 245-96.

¹⁷⁰ Bradley, *Religion, Revolution, and English Radicalism*, 61.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 286-8.

liberty. The third Baronet had allegedly toasted 'Down with the Rump'. This was taken as criticism of the seventeenth century Rump Parliament, dominated of course by a Puritan minority.¹⁷²

O'Gorman found little evidence of serious socio-economic differences affecting national elections during the Georgian period.¹⁷³ Phillips also shared this view, noting that if there were such differences then they were only minor.¹⁷⁴ Table 10 outlines the voting pattern of certain socio-economic groups in Liverpool in 1761 and 1780:

TABLE 10 Voting patterns of certain socio-economic groups in Liverpool (%)

	1761			1780		
	Corp	Ind	Split	Corp	Ind	Split
Gentlemen	10.5	2.0	9.6	1.1	3.0	3.2
Merchants	6.2	9.9	20.5	2.3	11.9	9.6
Artisans	50.6	62.2	46.6	68.2	60.4	60.0
Other	32.7	25.9	23.3	28.4	24.7	27.2
	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Bradley, *Religion, Revolution and English Radicalism*, 288-89.

Key: Corp (Corporation); Ind (Independent); Split

Note: These are percentages of the overall vote per group. They are not the actual numbers of votes.

¹⁷² LA, Liverpool Poll Book 1761, The Friends of Sir Ellis Cunliffe and Charles Poles, March 1761.

¹⁷³ O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, and Parties*, 390.

¹⁷⁴ Phillips, *Electoral Behaviour*, 308.

1761 shows clear evidence of voting by socio-economic interest. Wealthy gentlemen favoured the Corporation heavily over the independent opposition (10.5 to 2.0 per cent). Conversely, artisans constituted a larger percentage of Meredith's vote than the Corporation's (62.2 to 50.6 per cent). This divergence in voting may help explain why manufacturers were less prominent on the Common Council – they did not vote the same way as the upper echelons of Liverpoolian society. However, the results for 1780 weaken the basis of the socio-economic argument. Surprisingly, gentlemen made a larger share of the Pennant interest than amongst the Corporation vote (3.0 to 1.1 per cent). Likewise, artisans comprised a larger percentage of the Corporation interest than the independents (68.2 to 60.4 per cent). Regarding the mercantile vote, it seems they preferred Independents to the Corporation in both 1761 and 1780. This is initially surprising, as merchants generally dominated the Corporation. But, as we have seen, the merchants were not homogenous, and quarrelled amongst themselves. Chapter Five and Table 21 will demonstrate that a plurality of merchants favoured conciliation with the Americans during the war, and therefore voted for Pennant – a critic of the war – in 1780.

However, for all of these differences, there was potential for the landed elite and mercantile services to come together to form closer gentlemanly capitalist bonds in the future. As noted above, they shared common socio-economic interests, constituting the English ruling order. Also, a significant example is the upward social trajectory of Banastre Tarleton. Born in August 1754, he was the son of the leading Liverpool merchant John Tarleton. By 1771 Banastre had enrolled at University College. Four years later he purchased the rank of Cornet in the British

cavalry, and on 24 July he joined the 1st Dragoon Guards. In December 1776 Tarleton played an important role in capturing American general Charles Lee. The following year he was involved in the campaign to take Philadelphia, and by 1778 became a Lieutenant-Colonel in the British Legion.¹⁷⁵ In this capacity Tarleton became notorious. At Monck's Corner, South Carolina, in 1780 several of Tarleton's men attacked local women. For this the soldiers were flogged. The 'Waxhaws Massacre' of 29 May 1780 also saw Tarleton's men defeat 350 Virginian regulars, with the victors allegedly killing over 100 surrendering troops. Tarleton later rebutted this, claiming that the Americans were treated with 'equal humanity'.¹⁷⁶ Regardless, these incidents cemented Tarleton's reputation as 'Bloody Ban'.

Even so, Tarleton's landed superiors acknowledged his military achievements. For his contribution to the British victory at Camden in 1780, General Lord Cornwallis praised Tarleton for his 'usual activity and military address'.¹⁷⁷ Cornwallis even praised Banastre in letters to the British commander-in-chief, Sir Henry Clinton, and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, George Germain.¹⁷⁸ Evidently, the relationship between Cornwallis and Tarleton was sufficiently close that, in the wake of his aunt's death, Banastre requested that Cornwallis be a signatory in legal documents.¹⁷⁹ This relationship later soured with the publication of Tarleton's 1787 *History of the Campaigns*, in which the author attempted to exonerate

¹⁷⁵ Bass, *Green Dragoon*, 11–72.

¹⁷⁶ B. Tarleton, *A History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781 in the Southern Provinces of North America* (London, 1787), 30–2.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 128–35.

¹⁷⁸ Cornwallis to Clinton, Wynnaborough, 3 December 1780, in C. Ross, ed., *Correspondence of Charles, First Marquis Cornwallis, Volume 1* (London: Murray, 1899), 513; and Cornwallis to Lord George Germain, Guildford 17 March 1781, in *ibid.*, 523.

¹⁷⁹ LIVRO, Tarleton Papers, Letter by Banastre Tarleton, Winsbro, South Carolina, 18 December 1780, 920 TAR/4/2.

himself from the defeat at Yorktown. Cornwallis was prompted to repudiate Tarleton's 'malicious and false attack'.¹⁸⁰ Nevertheless, the career of Banastre Tarleton demonstrates the ability of sons of Liverpool merchants to interact with and, for a time, gain the praise of the top echelons of British society – indicating potential for future gentlemanly capitalism.

WEAK MERCANTILE AND PROTO-GENTLEMANLY CAPITALIST

NETWORKS BEYOND LIVERPOOL

Returning to the pre-1783 period, Liverpool's merchants nurtured links with mercantile services beyond the North West region, as well as overseas. This reinforces Bowen's argument that trans-oceanic ties bound the Empire. However, whilst these networks rarely broke down completely (even with North America after 1775) they were often strained. There is also some evidence that whilst Liverpool merchants cultivated ties with the landed elite overseas, these linkages were fragile and therefore only proto-gentlemanly capitalist. Combined, these factors had a negative impact upon Liverpool's lobbying capabilities.

As we saw earlier, Liverpool manufacturing and services had connections to Yorkshire through the construction of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal. Liverpool merchants, including William Davenport, Ralph Earle, and Alexander Nottingham,

¹⁸⁰ Cornwallis, Calcutta, to the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, 12 December 1787, in Ross, *Correspondence of Charles, First Marquis Cornwallis, Volume 1*, 315–6. Also Bass, *Green Dragoon*, 256–8.

supported this scheme.¹⁸¹ Other studies have shown that prominent Yorkshire merchants backed the canal too.¹⁸² Consequently, the first public meeting for this project took place in Bradford in July 1766. Thereafter, John Longbotham surveyed a route, which was outlined the following January. However, despite shared interests, the relationship between Liverpool- and Yorkshire-based services was compromised. By summer 1769, Liverpool merchants were concerned that Longbotham's route crossed the Douglas Navigation without plans for a junction. This frustrated Liverpool's goal of acquiring cheaper Lancastrian coal. Thus, the Liverpool branch called upon John Eyes and Richard Melling to survey another route.¹⁸³ The Yorkshire members rejected the new line because it extended the length of the canal, rendering passage 'tedious and expensive'.¹⁸⁴ Liverpool responded by calling upon P.P. Burdette to undertake yet another survey.¹⁸⁵ Following a period of adjudication by noted engineer James Brindley, the Yorkshire committee endorsed Longbotham's plan.¹⁸⁶ In response, Liverpool withdrew its subscriptions from the project, generating considerable acrimony. One source even claimed that the Liverpool merchants 'expected to destroy [the existing plan]; and be left at Liberty to pursue their favourite lucrative Scheme.'¹⁸⁷ This partnership did not break down entirely as Leeds and Bradford realised that Liverpool's exit created a shortfall in subscriptions.¹⁸⁸ Yorkshire interests thus

¹⁸¹ TNA, Leeds-Liverpool Canal Company, Liverpool Committee, 9 December 1768, RAIL 846/1.

¹⁸² R.G. Wilson, *Gentlemen Merchants: The Merchant Community in Leeds 1700-1830* (Manchester, 1971), 139.

¹⁸³ Clarke, *Leeds and Liverpool Canal*, 56-68.

¹⁸⁴ TNA, Leeds-Liverpool Canal Company, meeting at Bradford, 24 July 1769, RAIL 846/1.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, meeting at Liverpool, 24 July 1769, RAIL 846/1.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, General Meeting at the Black Bull, Burnley, 11 December 1769, RAIL 846/1.

¹⁸⁷ LIVRO, Miscellaneous documents, anonymous, 'Reasons against an intended application', 1772, MD 58.2.

¹⁸⁸ TNA, Leeds-Liverpool Canal records, general meeting at the Black Bull, Burnley, 11 December 1769, NA, RAIL 846/1.

maintained a correspondence with Liverpool.¹⁸⁹ By 1770 both sides had reached an understanding, and Royal Assent for the canal was obtained. The waterway intersected with Dean Lock on the River Douglas, which expanded Liverpool's access to the Wigan coalfields.¹⁹⁰ But this dispute shows that services were not always unified, and that, despite economic integration, there was arguably little coherent regional, or 'Northern', identity during the late-eighteenth century.¹⁹¹

Liverpool had links to prominent mercantile centres around Britain, such as Bristol. Indeed, this south-western port had long played a role in the exploration, colonisation, and trade of the New World. But it was during the eighteenth century that Bristol truly became a gateway to the Atlantic. Oceanic enterprise developed the town's wealth, and stimulated investment in banking and industrial enterprise. As the century progressed, however, Bristol's position gradually declined. In 1700 it was the second largest port in England. A century later it had slipped to ninth place, as Glasgow and Liverpool outstripped it in the tobacco and slave trades. Various explanations for this downturn have been proposed, such as limited business acumen in Bristol and a lack of industrial development in the town's hinterland.¹⁹² Regardless, Liverpool merchants came into contact with their Bristolian counterparts on the African Company of Merchants. Established by an Act of Parliament in the 1750s, this body aimed to improve trading relationships between Britain and Africa. It contained three representatives each from the chief

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, meeting at Sign of the Black Horse, Skipton, 16 December 1769, RAIL 846/1.

¹⁹⁰ Clarke, *Leeds and Liverpool Canal*, 65-76.

¹⁹¹ Langton, 'Industrial Revolution and the Regional Geography', 150-62.

¹⁹² K. Morgan, *Bristol and the Atlantic Trade in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1993), 1-4.

slaving ports of London, Bristol, and Liverpool. Records show that the membership was predominantly mercantile.¹⁹³

Yet, as with Yorkshire, Liverpool's ties to Bristol were often subject to fluctuations. Correspondences often sounded a cautionary tone. For example, on 31 December 1765 the Liverpool merchants wrote to William Reeve, merchant of Bristol, protesting the Stamp Act. Indicating that they were not sure of Bristol's response, Liverpool hoped that 'if [Bristol] approve the measures we [Liverpool] have taken', then they would transmit a memorial so that both can be 'as uniform as possible'.¹⁹⁴ Subsequently, in March 1775, the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce received a letter from Bristol concerning the plundering of shipwrecks. Liverpool responded, but several months passed before Bristol brought the matter before Parliament. This debate also took place without Bristol 'taking any further notice of this application, for concurrence and support from hence [Liverpool]'.¹⁹⁵ Indeed, both Liverpool and Bristol were commercial rivals, and subsequent chapters will show that the town's MPs did not always sit on the same parliamentary benches.

Liverpool forged ties with Scotland too. In the early-eighteenth century, Glasgow served as an intermediary between the pastoral Highlands and arable Lowlands. But by the 1780s Strathclyde was a key player on the world stage. Glasgow was closely associated with the tobacco market, which linked it to the Americas,

¹⁹³ LIVRO, Committee Book of the African Company of Merchants Trading from Liverpool, 352 MDV1.

¹⁹⁴ BRO, Society of Merchant Venturers, letter from the African Committee, Liverpool, to William Reeve, Merchant in Bristol, 31 December 1765, SMV2/4/2/107.

¹⁹⁵ LA, An Abstract of the Proceedings and Resolutions of the Several Committees of the Chamber of Commerce for the Port of Liverpool (1778), Athenaeum Misc Pamphlets 65 (828 PAM).

mainland Europe, and Russia.¹⁹⁶ The quicker northern route from America to Britain made the transportation of tobacco to Scotland cheaper.¹⁹⁷ Fragmented evidence suggests that ties between Liverpool and Glasgow were lukewarm earlier in the century. Indeed, there had been unrest in Liverpool following the 1745 Jacobite uprising.¹⁹⁸ Two decades later, writing from north of the border, Sir William Meredith criticised a 'brutal Scottish manner'. Nevertheless, Meredith also praised Scotland because 'it is rare to find a man of that nation of any rank, but the very lowest of all, without...learning'.¹⁹⁹

The relationship between Liverpool and Glasgow strengthened as time progressed. Pope showed that some Liverpool merchants were descended from Scottish backgrounds.²⁰⁰ Liverpoolian writer William Roscoe also had Glaswegian pen-friends.²⁰¹ Further consolidation took place when a Chamber of Commerce was established on Clydeside in 1783, as both Liverpool and Glasgow chambers corresponded on various matters.²⁰² We can also infer that this was a warm relationship. On 7 March 1783 the Glasgow Chamber complained that, because of independence, the Americans could trade iron goods with whomever they wished, and on the cheapest terms. Thus, the Scots called upon Bristol and Liverpool to help them put the iron trade 'upon the same footing with Neighbouring Nations'.²⁰³ Liverpool responded by stating their willingness 'to give every assistance in their

¹⁹⁶ T.M. Devine, 'The Golden Age of Tobacco', in T. Devine and G. Jackson, eds, *Glasgow: Volume 1: Beginnings to 1830* (Manchester, 1995), 139-40.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 145-6.

¹⁹⁸ Longmore, 'Civic Liverpool: 1680-1800', 144.

¹⁹⁹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 36 (1766), 166-9.

²⁰⁰ Pope, 'Wealth and Aspirations of Liverpool's Slave Merchants', 164-226.

²⁰¹ LIVRO, Roscoe Papers, F. Holden, Glasgow, to Wm Roscoe, 2 May 1772, 920 ROS/2053.

²⁰² ML, Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, Minute Book Volume 1 1783-1789, 30 March 1782, 17 March 1783, TD 1670/1/1.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 7 March 1783, TD 1670/1/1.

power'. It was also a two-way process, as on the same occasion the Liverpool merchants requested that Glasgow 'take the state of the Tobacco trade into their Considerations'.²⁰⁴ Regardless, because the Glasgow Chamber was established towards the end of the American War, Liverpool's links with Glasgow bore limited fruit when lobbying over this particular conflict.

Not surprisingly, Liverpool networked with overseas services. Between 1768 and 1772 the Caribbean islands provided 17.7 per cent of the total of Britain's extra-European trade, compared with 16.6 per cent for North America.²⁰⁵ Not even the disruption in mainland North America between 1775 and 1783 severed the links between Britain and its West Indian possessions. Indeed, the Indies had gained from the protection of the Royal Navy, the sugar revolution rendered the islands dependent upon metropolitan markets, and a large number of West Indian planters resided in Britain.²⁰⁶ Therefore, several Liverpool companies, such as John Tarleton and Case & Shuttleworth, traded with the islands. Both locations were so close that they aided each other when in distress. For instance, on 13 January 1770 Liverpool Corporation paid £100 to alleviate the suffering of fire victims on Antigua.²⁰⁷ The Watt Family Papers demonstrate the close personal ties that bound Liverpool to Jamaica during the Revolutionary War. Richard Watt originally hailed from Wigan, but, by the 1770s, he had established a shipping company in Liverpool and resided in Kingston.²⁰⁸ In a letter during the conflict, Watt re-stated his determination to trade with Britain. Should Jamaica fall to the Spanish, he

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 8 April 1783, TD 1670/1/1.

²⁰⁵ McFarlane, *British in the Americas*, 227.

²⁰⁶ A.J. O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia, 2000), xv-i.

²⁰⁷ LIVRO, Liverpool Corporation Records, 13 January 1770, 352 MIN/COU 1.

²⁰⁸ LIVRO, Watt family papers, Richard Watt, Kingston, to Nephew, 29 July 1781, in Lellar and Account Book of Richard Watt, 920 WAT 1/2/1.

vowed that he would return to the UK. He was also expressed dismay that the prominent Liverpool merchant John Dobson had gone bankrupt.²⁰⁹ Nevertheless, the relationship between Liverpool and the West Indies was not always smooth. Chapter Three shows how the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce complained on several occasions about the decisions of the Jamaican Assembly to levy import duties upon slaves. Therefore, in order to seek redress, the Chamber took its case to imperial authorities in London.

British exports to North America rose from an estimated £256,000 in 1700-1701 to £2,649,000 in 1772-1773.²¹⁰ As a result, Liverpool merchants had links to fellow services in the Thirteen Colonies. John Tarleton, John Knight, and John Blackburne Junior, maintained correspondence with Henry Laurens, a South Carolina merchant, planter, and politician, during the 1760s. These items often referred to Bills of Exchange, and the state of markets.²¹¹ There were also more personal networks. John Backhouse maintained a dialogue with John Baylor of Newmarket, Virginia. Following his father's death in 1772, Baylor confided in Backhouse that there were 'few Instances of a Man in this Cuntry [sic] bring up the family that my Father has done, with so much Credit.'²¹² Charles Goore also corresponded with the Bland family in Virginia. The relationship was so close that the Blands entrusted Goore as the guardian of their son, who was studying in

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 17 June 1778, Lellar and Account Book of Richard Watt, 920 WAT 1/2/1.

²¹⁰ K. Morgan, 'Business Networks in the British Export Trade to North America, 1750-1800', in J. McCusker and K. Morgan, eds, *The Early Modern Atlantic Economy* (Cambridge, 2000), 36-64.

²¹¹ G. Rogers, ed., *The Papers of Henry Laurens: Volume 4 1763-1765* (Columbia, 1974), 157, 274-5, 544-5.

²¹² VHS, Baylor records, J. Baylor, Virginia, to John Backhouse, Liverpool, 14 July 1772, MSS2B3445A1.

Edinburgh.²¹³ Colonial merchants also visited Liverpool. Jabez Maud Fisher spent three years in the British Isles and Europe between 1775 and 1779, representing one of the wealthiest Quaker merchant houses in Philadelphia.²¹⁴ He believed that the port of Liverpool was 'by far the most convenient...in Great Britain and there is perhaps none superior to it elsewhere'.²¹⁵ Fisher also praised fellow Quaker merchants in Liverpool. One, William Rathbone, was also 'as good a Correspondent as can be had'.²¹⁶ P.J. Marshall has also shown that, notwithstanding mutual distrust and suspicion, many Anglo-American links were quickly restored after 1783. The United States continued to draw large numbers of migrants from the British Isles, and Britain remained America's dominant trading partner.²¹⁷ Indeed, there are several examples of Liverpool retaining its link with the former colonies after independence. Thomas Blount, from a prominent North Carolina firm, visited several British destinations in 1787, including Liverpool.²¹⁸ By 1801 Liverpool had established an American Chamber of Commerce, and William Roscoe subsequently corresponded with US President Thomas Jefferson.²¹⁹

However, this should not detract from the short- and mid-term problems between Britain and the Thirteen Colonies. Whilst the War of Independence did not completely stop trade between Liverpool and North America, Chapter Four shows

²¹³ VHS, Bland family papers, Charles Goove, Liverpool, to Bland, Virginia, 10 September 1758, MSS1B6168A14-17.

²¹⁴ K. Morgan, ed., *An American Quaker in the British Isles: The Travel Journals of Jabez Maud Fisher 1775-1779* (Oxford, 1992), 1-4.

²¹⁵ Journal C, 26 October 1775, in Morgan, *American Quaker in the British Isles*, 81.

²¹⁶ Instructions from Joshua Fisher and Son to Jabez Maud Fisher, Philadelphia, 4 September 1775, in Morgan, *American Quaker in the British Isles*, 322.

²¹⁷ P.J. Marshall, *Remaking the British Atlantic: The United States and the British Empire after American Independence* (Oxford, 2012), 313-4.

²¹⁸ Thomas Blount, Liverpool, to John Gray Blount and Thomas Blount Merchants, North Carolina, 25 August 1785, in A.B. Keith, ed., *John Gray Blount Papers Volume 1* (Raleigh, 1952), 209.

²¹⁹ Hyde, *Liverpool and the Mersey*, 41-2. Also letter by Thomas Jefferson, Monticello, Virginia, 20 December 1820, to William Roscoe, Liverpool, Thomas Jefferson Exhibition, Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/jefferson75.html>; accessed 13 May 2013.

that it was severely curtailed. There is also tentative evidence that whilst Liverpool merchants cultivated contacts with the landed and titled elite in America, this was of a proto-gentlemanly nature. During the 1760s the Gildarts traded in tobacco and hemp with future President of the United States, George Washington.²²⁰ Cogliano pointed out there were no true aristocrats in colonial North America. However, those who were employed in the military and politics 'were the closest eighteenth-century America would produce to fit the term'.²²¹ Washington fulfilled these criteria by living as a planter at Mount Vernon, serving as a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses, and later becoming Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army. Because the relationship between Washington and the Gildarts seems to have ended during the 1770s, one might speculate that it was limited and only proto-gentlemanly capitalist.

CONCLUSIONS

By the 1760s Liverpool and its hinterland contained manufacturing, as well as services in general and financial-commercial interests in particular. They conducted business together, interacted at social clubs, and were involved in local politics and lobbying. Thus, there are some grounds for supporting the criticisms of Cain and Hopkins that services and industry cannot easily be separated. Nonetheless, this chapter generally supported the concept of gentlemanly capitalism (albeit in a northern provincial town). Merchants held a plurality on the governing Corporation and lobbying Committee of Trade. They also enjoyed a majority on the town's Chamber of Commerce. Crucially, merchants were involved

²²⁰ VHS, Curtis family papers, James Gildart, Liverpool, to George Washington, Potomac River, 12 April 1768, MSS1C9698A260.

²²¹ Cogliano, *Revolutionary America*, 16.

in services through transport, commerce, personal services, and, to a lesser degree, banking. Manufacturers were not excluded from these gatherings, but they were at a numerical disadvantage. At best, manufacturing enjoyed only an indirect influence over local decision-making. In their pre-eminent position, mercantile services encountered the titled and landed elite. The latter included local MPs, as well as aristocrats in Knowsley Hall and on the Isle of Man. Whilst merchants provided financial services to the gentry, the landed classes represented the merchants in Parliament.

Although accepting the general framing of Cain and Hopkins's argument, this chapter modifies aspects of their work. Firstly, the coming together of landed and mercantile services in Liverpool suggests that this process was not confined to London and the South East, and therefore the northern provinces were not always predominantly manufacturing-based. Secondly, these networks were, at this time, constrained in several respects. There was limited inter-marriage between Liverpool merchants and the local aristocracy, and divisions between the two groups were exposed during election periods. Henceforth, this inter-connectivity was only at a proto-gentlemanly stage of development. This reiterates Lawrence Stone's argument that although there was cultural cohesion between the elite and middling sorts (that is to say merchants, traders, and professionals), it was not an open elite. Merchants may have served the landed elite and aped the gentlemanly lifestyle, but only a handful succeeded in buying their way into the aristocracy.²²² Regardless, because of the shared family, business, and religious ties amongst Liverpool merchants, and because local merchants imitated the upper-class lifestyle, the notion of proto-gentlemanly capitalism does not preclude the

²²² L. Stone, *An Open Elite? England 1540-1880* (Oxford, 1984), 402-21.

possibility of closer gentlemanly capitalist ties developing in the nineteenth century. Indeed, the example of Liverpool-born Banastre Tarleton and Lord Cornwallis during the American War highlighted the potential for future integration.

Furthermore, this chapter used examples to illustrate that Liverpool extended its mercantile networks throughout the British Isles and Atlantic World. This underscores Bowen's argument that the Empire, and its former imperial possessions after 1783, was bound together by trans-oceanic ties. Yet, these commercial networks were not always politically strong, and Liverpool's mercantile links to the landed elite overseas were flaky and proto-gentlemanly capitalist. This combination of factors ensured that whilst the second city of empire could raise its profile in the metropolis, it could achieve few concrete results in shaping imperial policy. This theme will now be explored in the following two chapters.

CHAPTER TWO:

1763-1773: LIVERPOOL IN LONDON

DURING A PERIOD OF COLONIAL UNREST

Chapter Two explores how Liverpool's elected and lobbying representatives worked in London, and covers a period of imperial unrest between 1763 and 1773.¹ Following the conclusion of the Seven Years War, the EIC faced an uncertain financial future. Thus, the British state took steps to stabilise the Company, such as the 1773 Regulating Act. Equally, this was a decisive decade in the history of the Thirteen Colonies. By mid-century most of them had achieved stable social and political institutions. However, after 1763 Britain introduced more imperial controls over its American possessions. This included the revenue-raising Stamp Act and Townshend duties. Tensions culminated with colonial boycotts of British goods, the Boston Massacre of 1770, and the Boston Tea Party of 1773.² This dissertation asks to what extent an English provincial town could influence the imperial decision-making apparatus in London. Although the thesis's primary focus is upon the American Revolution, the international issues of whaling, European, African and Caribbean trade, as well as the Royal Navy, are also considered in this chapter, given Liverpool's role in the wider interconnected Atlantic. The future of colonial trading relationships, and imperial matters generally, also brought Liverpool into debates about Indian reform. This demonstrated that the town and its political representatives in London could not ignore the increasing interconnectedness of the eastern and western halves of the Empire.

¹ See I.R. Christie, *Wars and Revolutions: Britain 1760-1815* (London, 1982).

² Cogliano, *Revolutionary America*, 25-6.

Two general observations are made about Liverpool's role in the imperial policy-making process during this period. Firstly, the town's lobby utilised various techniques to achieve their goals. Liverpool merchants and the Corporation corresponded with mercantile counterparts in other provincial towns, and sent delegates with petitions to Whitehall. These merchants also sat on lobbying forums such as the African Company of Merchants, and established networks with 'men on the spot' in the capital. Liverpool's landed MPs were the chief component of the town's lobby. Indeed, the House of Commons 'was becoming the centre of the political state, with the King's government dependent on its goodwill for the passage of business'.³ Whilst the town's landed MPs collaborated, where possible, with their mercantile colleagues, the elected members sometimes pursued their own agendas as well. This involved working alongside political groupings in Parliament, and with those whom they had family ties. Whilst Liverpool MPs also followed the lead of others, they were pro-active in initiating debates. All of this evidence reinforces Cain and Hopkins's argument that up to the 1850s, the landed elite were the backbone of gentlemanly capitalism.⁴

The second observation relates to the effectiveness of Liverpool in shaping policy, by overturning or seeing through legislation. Merseyside's effectiveness is an issue that even contemporaries disagreed over. A Londoner once painted a rosy picture in the *Liverpool General Advertiser*. The inhabitants of Liverpool 'were not more distinguished for the extent and flourishing state of [their] Commerce, than for the Public-spiritedness of [their] Conduct.' As such they treaded 'upon the

³ P.D.G. Thomas, *The House of Commons in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1971), 5-6.

⁴ Cain and Hopkins, 'Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Expansion Overseas 1', 510.

heels of our great Metropolis.⁵ But another Londoner, presumably a merchant, was less sanguine:

What do You Politicians at Liverpool think of, or rather dream of...dream you certainly must in Comparison with us who draw all our Political knowledge at the Fountain Head who can see the King as often as we please, who hear the profound orations of those who perhaps once in their Life time have seen the Prime Minister and who can boast the Honour and Happiness of the acquaintance of Peter Paragraph – the putter-together-of-News. These are advantages which you must own with Sorrow, you can never hope for, who are so far removed from the Centre of all Business and who must be content with what Knowledge of the political Machine we are pleased to send you.⁶

Indeed, Cain and Hopkins stressed the in-effectiveness of provincial lobbies. Whilst northern towns could make 'an immense amount of noise', their substantive influence over policy-making was modest.⁷ Liverpool enjoyed only limited accomplishments in the corridors of power. There were several reasons for this. The above quotation suggested that Liverpool was geographically remote from the capital. Yet, Liverpool-related interests were often present in London, which was made possible through regular coach services. 'Flying Machines' set out for London every Sunday morning and weekday noon.⁸ The Liverpool lobby was therefore actively engaged on several subjects. The Liverpool Memorandum Book

⁵ *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 15 November 1771.

⁶ LIVRO, Gregson Papers, David Samwell, London, to M. Gregson, Liverpool, 1774, 920 GRE 2/17/6.

⁷ Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism 1688-2000*, 53.

⁸ *The Liverpool Directory* (1774).

of 1753 also contained the addresses of government offices, which enabled the lobby to plan their moves in advance.⁹ As such, there were other reasons why Liverpool achieved only moderate policy-making success up to 1773. Amongst these considerations were uncertain ties with other provincial towns, tensions within the Liverpool mercantile community, proto-gentlemanly capitalist relations between the landed MPs and the mercantile services, the Liverpool MPs being out of political favour, and being out of ideological sync with the official mind.

HIGH POLITICS AND LIVERPOOL MPs, 1763-1773

Given the complex nature of late-eighteenth century politics and factionalism, this analysis first provides context on how the Liverpool MPs fitted into the High Politics of the age. According to O'Gorman, the accession of George III in October 1760 'did not disappoint those who expected great changes'.¹⁰ Smarting from his political isolation at the hands of the Whig grandees, the young monarch sought to end the proscription of the Tories. He therefore helped bring about the end of the Pitt-Newcastle administration, which had 'won' the Seven Years War, and installed his trusted advisor John Stuart, 3rd Earl of Bute, as the King's principal minister. The structure of politics was also much altered during the 1760s. Plenty has been written about the 'rage of party' during the late-Stuart and early-Hanoverian periods, as well as its subsequent return at the end of the eighteenth century.¹¹ But, by the 1760s, the old Whig-Tory polarity had shattered. Politics became more factionalised, and power resided in the hands of leaders such as Bute, Grenville,

⁹ LIVRO, Liverpool Memorandum Book 1753, 920 MD 407.

¹⁰ O'Gorman, *Long Eighteenth Century*, 201.

¹¹ See T. Harris, *Politics under the Later Stuarts: Party Conflict in a Divided Society 1660-1715* (London, 1993) and F. O'Gorman, *The Emergence of the British Two-Party System 1760-1832* (London, 1982).

and Pitt. In 1765 the Duke of Newcastle allowed the leadership of his group to transfer to the Marquis of Rockingham.¹²

The early years of George III's reign were characterised by ministerial instability. Bute resigned in 1763, and was succeeded by George Grenville. The latter grappled with contentious issues, such as the arrest of John Wilkes MP for alleged libel against the King, and the Stamp Act crisis. By 1765 King George had lost confidence in Grenville, and Charles Watson-Wentworth (2nd Marquis of Rockingham) came to power. The Rockinghams successfully repealed the Stamp Act in 1766. But, fearing for the long-term survival of his administration, Watson-Wentworth resigned after one year in the post.¹³ Pitt the Elder, now 1st Earl of Chatham, took over the reins of office. From 1767 Chatham suffered from nervous exhaustion, and the government lost direction. The Duke of Grafton was therefore left in charge of the administration. Yet, he was drained by public outrage against the Government's decision to seat Wilkes's defeated opponent at the 1769 Middlesex election in Parliament. The following year Lord North became prime minister, heralding a return to ministerial stability for the next twelve years.¹⁴ Crucially for this thesis, these politicians were the apex of British society. For example, Rockingham had attended the elite Westminster School, and, upon assuming his title, became one of the wealthiest peers in Britain. Rockingham also owned extensive properties in Northamptonshire, as well as the family's palatial

¹² I.R. Christie, 'The Changing Nature of Parliamentary Politics 1742-1789', in J. Black, ed., *British Politics and Society from Walpole to Pitt 1742-1789* (Basingstoke, 1990), 101-22.

¹³ See R.J.S. Hollman, *The Marquis: A Study of Lord Rockingham 1730-1782* (New York, 1973); P. Langford, *The First Rockingham Administration 1765-1766* (Oxford, 1973); and F. O'Gorman, *The Rise of Party in England: The Rockingham Whigs 1760-82* (London, 1975).

¹⁴ O'Gorman, *Long Eighteenth Century*, 201-10. For more on the individual groupings see J. Brocks, *The Chatham Administration 1766-1768* (London, 1956), 248-94.

home at Wentworth House.¹⁵ Frederick North, too, was another privileged figure. Having attended Eton College and Trinity College, Oxford, he was the son of the 1st Earl of Guilford, and later became 2nd Earl in 1790.¹⁶

Liverpool's MPs had to navigate these shifting political sands, and to intermingle with these ultra-elite politicians. Such ties were not robust for several reasons. Whilst 'No man ever stood better with his constituents', Sir Ellis Cunliffe is arguably the least well known of the three Liverpool MPs during this period. The son of a prosperous local merchant, several documents tie Sir Ellis to the Duke of Newcastle's interest. However, his political impact seems to have been fairly negligible. Whilst Cunliffe brought in a bill for building a new dock at Liverpool in March 1762, there is only one recorded speech made by him. This was likely due to Cunliffe's failing health, and he died in October 1767.¹⁷ Although Sir Ellis received a baronetcy in 1759, this rank was not highly valued as it was merely 'the first rung of the social ladder'.¹⁸ Indeed, he and his fellow Liverpool MPs did not enjoy the same lofty titles as Rockingham.

The victor in the 1767 by-election, Richard Pennant, was the son of a wealthy family with land in the Caribbean and Wales. However, his ability to influence policy was constrained for several reasons. Firstly, his status amongst the

¹⁵ S. M. Farrell, 'Wentworth, Charles Watson-, second marquess of Rockingham (1730-1782)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004: online edn, Jan 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28878>; accessed 10 April 2014.

¹⁶ P.D.G. Thomas, 'North, Frederick, second earl of Guilford [Lord North] (1732-1792)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004: online edn, Jan 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/20304>; accessed 10 April 2014.

¹⁷ L. Namier and J. Brooke, *HP: The House of Commons 1754-1790 II: Members A-J* (London, 1985), 285.

¹⁸ Namier and Brooke, *HP: The House of Commons 1754-1790 I: Survey, Constituencies, Appendices* (London, 1985), 102.

parliamentary factions was uncertain. His initial election was attributable to Sir William Meredith and the Rockinghams. Indeed, the Rockinghamite Duke of Portland wrote of Pennant: '[he is] everything I can wish in a colleague'.¹⁹ Thus, there are some grounds for labelling Pennant as a Rockinghamite.²⁰ If so, this was an unfortunate allegiance, as Wentworth-Woodhouse was not in office between 1766 and 1782. However, during the 1780 election, a Liverpool elector re-affirmed Pennant's independence: he 'has never enlisted under the banners of any party'.²¹ This was apparently confirmed by Portland himself, who observed of Pennant: 'as a party man, he is not quite to my mind'.²² Even one historian did not include Pennant amongst the list of Rockinghamites.²³ If this holds sway, then Pennant was a 'country gentleman', or a floating voter who owned land and had no personal ambitions or close political affiliations.²⁴ This vagueness of allegiance surely contributed towards Pennant's inability to substantially mould policy.

There were other reasons for Pennant's lack of clout. During the 1780 election, a Liverpool elector claimed Richard's personality was inhibiting. Although affable, charitable, and sincere, Pennant's 'one defect in this excellent character...[was]...an apparent indolence'.²⁵ Granted, when Pennant represented Liverpool between 1784 and 1790 he was an outspoken proponent of the slave trade. However, between 1767 and 1780 he was not the most frequent speaker in

¹⁹ Richard Pennant, in History of Parliament Online, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1754-1790/member/pennant-richard-1736-1808>; accessed 8 April 2014.

²⁰ J. Lindsay, 'Pennants and Jamaica 1665-1808 Part 1', 63.

²¹ LA, Vano, 8 September 1780, in Liverpool Poll Book 1780.

²² Richard Pennant, in History of Parliament Online, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1754-1790/member/pennant-richard-1736-1808>; accessed 8 April 2014.

²³ W.M. Ekison, *The Rockingham Connection and the Second Founding of the Whig Party 1768-1773* (Kingsdon, 1996), 195-8.

²⁴ Namier and Brooke, *History of Parliament: The House of Commons I*, 146.

²⁵ LA, Vano, 8 September 1780, in Liverpool Poll Book 1780.

parliamentary debates. This relative silence was probably due to his being distracted by family concerns. Indeed, Pennant played a sizable role in maintaining his family's interests in North Wales and the West Indies. Whilst these ventures were generally profitable, financial returns fluctuated annually, which required constant attention.²⁶

Sir William Meredith was by far the most active of the three Liverpool MPs in the decade after 1763, and there are several examples of his oratorical bravado. In the House of Commons in February 1770, Meredith claimed that the Speaker had 'used him ill' over a procedural issue. The Speaker responded by saying that he was not making any reflection upon Meredith's character, and therefore did not need to apologise to the Liverpool MP. This resulted in a great hubbub in the chamber.²⁷ Sir William was also known on the other side of the Atlantic. Future President of the US John Adams recalled in 1776 that his barber had known Meredith.²⁸ Despite his vocal parliamentary career, Meredith was often in a weak political position. One reason was that his baronetcy provided limited social capital. Furthermore, Sir William's shifting allegiances alienated him from the elite factions. Originally a supporter of George Grenville, Sir William later became a critic of this premier. Meredith disliked the manner in which the ministry handled the Wilkes affair. Perhaps more importantly, Meredith was disappointed by Grenville's

²⁶ T. Burnard, 'From Periphery to Periphery: The Pennants's Jamaican plantations and industrialisation in North Wales 1771-1812', in H.V. Bowen, ed., *Wales and the British Overseas Empire: Interactions and Influences 1650-1830* (Manchester, 2011), 121-36.

²⁷ J. Almon, *The Debates and Proceedings of the British House of Commons Volume 21: 1768-1770* (London, 1772), 232-7.

²⁸ John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 23 April 1776, in F. Sullivan, ed., *The Letters of John and Abigail Adams* (London, 2004), 163.

ambiguous response towards filling a vacancy at Liverpool Customs House.²⁹ This was particularly galling for the local MP, because the Customs House was a source of considerable patronage.

Thus, by 1764, Meredith had shifted towards the Rockinghamite camp. This transition was not accomplished smoothly, for there were accusations that Meredith was a secret Jacobite – something he most strenuously denied.³⁰ The Duke of Newcastle was therefore initially reluctant to welcome Sir William into his circle.³¹ But by May 1764 Newcastle had accepted Meredith as a friend.³² This u-turn was partially brought about by Sir William's social connections. Although he resided at Henbury Hall, Macclesfield, the 3rd Baronet held an additional property in Chelsea.³³ During his time in London Sir William attended social events, such as the Lord Mayor's party in Mansion House, and met notable politicians.³⁴ Meredith also patronised London's gentlemen's clubs, including Boodles, located on St. James Street.³⁵ At Wildman's Club Meredith was introduced to the Duke of Portland. There were subsequent meetings between Meredith and other Rockinghams at the latter's seat in Yorkshire, and at Henbury Hall.³⁶ The practice of gift giving was commonplace. Meredith once offered Portland 'an exceedingly

²⁹ Sir William Meredith to Charles Jenkinson, Henbury, 5 November 1763, in N.S. Jucker, ed., *The Jenkinson Papers 1760-1766* (London, 1949), 215-6.

³⁰ LANA, Kanyon Family Papers, Sir William Meredith's Dying Speech, Chester, 2 January 1761, DDKE HMC 1255.

³¹ Sir William Meredith to Charles Jenkinson, Henbury, 5 November 1763, in Jucker, *Jenkinson Papers*, 214-6.

³² Namier and Brooke, *HP: The House of Commons 1754-1790 III: Members K-Y* (London, 1985), 130.

³³ *Middlesex Journal*, 24 February 1770.

³⁴ *London Evening Post*, 14 April 1770.

³⁵ J. Timbs, *Clubs and Club Life in London: With anecdotes of its famous coffeehouses, hostilities, and taverns, from the seventeenth century to the present time* (London, 1905), 103-4. Also LMA, Boodles Club Book, 1762-1770, LMA/4572/A/01/001.

³⁶ Letter from Marquis of Rockingham to Edmund Burke, 15 May 1769, in T. Copeland, ed., *The Correspondence of Edmund Burke, Volume 2: July 1768-June 1774* (Cambridge, 1958), 25. Also UONA, Portland Papers, letter from Lord Grey to Portland, 30 July 1767, PWF 4435.

fine turtle', and on a visit to Dublin Sir William purchased linen for Lady Rockingham.³⁷

The *History of Parliament* argued that Meredith was only a minor member of the Rockingham clique.³⁸ Certainly, he is less well known than another prominent Rockinghamite, Edmund Burke.³⁹ Furthermore, Meredith was not with the Rockinghams for the full duration of his political career. Nonetheless, Sir William still made a significant contribution towards this group in the realm of domestic politics, especially during the mid-1760s. One reason why Meredith was so appealing to the Rockinghams was because he was a keen electioneer. As a member for Wigan between 1754 and 1761, Meredith's advice was sought by Portland, who was attempting to secure his interest there.⁴⁰ Another reason why the Rockinghams noticed Meredith was because he was a pamphleteer who articulated their political creed. Indeed, Wentworth-Woodhouse and his followers believed that there was a Tory threat to the Constitution, which manifested itself through Court corruption. It was therefore up to the Rockinghams to eradicate this menace.⁴¹ These fears seemed justified during the Wilkes fiasco. The rise of reform politics during the reign of George III has been covered elsewhere.⁴² However, for clarity, it is appropriate to briefly re-tell the story of John Wilkes. This MP for Aylesbury famously founded *North Briton*, a publication that in April 1763

³⁷ UONA, Portland Papers, Sir William Meredith, Liverpool, 24 September 1764, to Portland, PWF 6705. Also see SRO, Rockingham Papers, Sir William Meredith, Dublin, 29 June 1765, to the Marquis of Rockingham, R1 454.

³⁸ Namier and Brooke, *History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1754-1790 III*, 131.

³⁹ C. B. Macpherson, *Burke* (Oxford, 1980), 23. Also see F. O'Gorman, *Edmund Burke: His Political Philosophy* (London, 1973).

⁴⁰ UONA, Portland Papers, Sir William Meredith to Duke of Portland, 22 July 1767, PWF 6718.

⁴¹ O'Gorman, *Emergence of the British Two-Party System*, 6-7.

⁴² H.T. Dickinson, 'Radicals and Reformers in the Age of Wilkes and Wyvill', in Black, *British Politics and Society from Walpole to Pitt*, 123-32, and J. Brewer, 'English Radicalism in the Age of George III', in J.G.A. Pocock, ed., *Three British Revolutions: 1688, 1689 and 1776* (Princeton, 1980), 331.

attacked the ministry and person of the King. Grenville issued a general warrant for Wilkes's arrest, but this proved a contentious act, as the warrant did not specify the name of the person - only the crime. Wilkes was confined to the Tower of London, but was subsequently released on grounds that these actions had violated his parliamentary privilege. By January 1764 Wilkes had been expelled from the Commons, and fled overseas. Four years later he returned to the UK, and contested the parliamentary election at Middlesex in 1769. Wilkes's victory led to his re-imprisonment, and another vote was called for. Although Wilkes continued to poll more than his rival, Colonel Luttrell, Parliament voted to seat his opponent at Westminster.⁴³

Meredith proved active on the Wilkes case. In February 1764 he made several attempts in Parliament to discuss the matter further, and unsuccessfully moved that 'a general warrant for apprehending and seizing the authors, printers, and publishers of a seditious libel, together with their papers, is not warranted by law.'⁴⁴ By this time the Liverpool MP did not enjoy Grenville's support, and therefore Meredith went outside of Westminster to make his case. He wrote a rebuttal to *A Defence of the Majority in the House of Commons, On the Question relating to General Warrants*, which had attacked the Opposition for serving 'the Purposes of Party'.⁴⁵ Meredith's *Reply to the Defence of the Majority* did not label Wilkes as 'a patriot', but decried the power of the Court for interfering in political

⁴³ O'Gorman, *Long Eighteenth Century*, 221-8.

⁴⁴ Cobbett, *PHE Volume 15*, 1397-8. Also see P.D.G. Thomas, *John Wilkes: A Friend of Liberty* (Oxford, 1996), 52.

⁴⁵ C. Lloyd, *A Defence of the Majority in the House of Commons on the Question relating to General Warrants* (London, 1764), 10.

issues.⁴⁶ Meredith's 1769 pamphlet (*The Question Stated, Whether the Freeholders of Middlesex Lost their Right, by Voting for Mr Wilkes at the Last Election?*) did not question the ability of the Commons to expel Wilkes, but mooted the idea that it had 'annihilated' the votes of freemen.⁴⁷ This pamphlet clearly articulated the views of the Rockinghams, referring to 'odious...Effects' and 'Factions...[who] are the best Instruments of Service and Preservation to a bad Government'.⁴⁸ This was a direct reference to that staple of Rockingham thought, the 'secret influence' of the Court.

Meredith's actions had several consequences. Brewer argued that because of the quarrels between King, Parliament, and the public during the 1760s, individuals articulated 'the assumptions that they entertained about political behaviour, and the aspirations that they held for the political order'.⁴⁹ Meredith was clearly part of this process. In some respects, however, this was of little consequence. The Liverpool MP's motions on Wilkes in Parliament made little headway, and a subsequent resolution declaring general warrants illegal in April 1766 was 'purely symbolic'.⁵⁰ But Meredith did begin to move in Rockingham's circles. On *The Question Stated*, the Marquis wrote: 'I like it most exceedingly and wish it soon published'.⁵¹ This association eventually paid off when Rockingham came to

⁴⁶ W. Meredith, *A Reply to the Defence of the Majority, on the Question relating to General Warrants* (London, 1764), 6-8.

⁴⁷ W. Meredith, *The Question Stated, Whether the Freeholders of Middlesex lost their Right, by voting for Mr Wilkes at the last Election* (London, 1769), 18.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 68-9. Also Sir William Meredith to Charles Jenkinson, Hanbury, 5 November 1763, in Jucker, *Jenkinson Papers*, 214-6.

⁴⁹ J. Brewer, *Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III* (Cambridge, 1976), 267.

⁵⁰ P. Woodland, 'Meredith, Sir William, third baronet (bap. 1724, d. 1790)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18590>; accessed 21 May 2013.

⁵¹ UONA, Portland Papers, Rockingham to Portland, 17 December 1769, PWF 9024.

power in 1765, and Meredith served at the Admiralty. Despite the fall of the Rockingham ministry in 1766, Sir William initially retained his position at the Admiralty. However, when Pitt began removing other Rockinghams from government, Meredith resigned in protest. This brought about the end of a short period in office.

By the early-1770s Meredith's political loyalties shifted once again, as he moved away from the Rockinghams. On 14 November 1770 Chathamite MP John Calcraft reported to Pitt that Meredith was 'impatient to see your Lordship, and adopt your plans'.⁵² The Rockinghams had their suspicions confirmed on 7 March 1771, when Meredith spoke against William Dowdeswell's Jury Bill. Indeed, Dowdeswell had been Chancellor of the Exchequer under Wentworth Woodhouse. In due course, the Rockinghams were glad to be rid of Meredith's group or 'click'.⁵³ Sir William subsequently drifted into Lord North's camp. On 21 March 1771, the Baronet rescued the prime minister from the clutches of the London mob.⁵⁴ Thereafter, North thanked Meredith for saving his life, and Sir William's family enjoyed several promotions. Even Meredith's younger brother, the Reverend Theophilus, was elevated from Rector of Linton to the more lucrative benefice of Ross-on-Wye.⁵⁵ Sir William continued to be loosely associated with North into the early stages of the War of Independence.

⁵² Namier and Brooke, *History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1754-1790 III*, 131.

⁵³ SRO, Rockingham Papers, Duke of Richmond to Rockingham, 15 March 1772, R1-1397.

⁵⁴ P. Woodland, 'Meredith, Sir William, third baronet (bap. 1724, d. 1790)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18580>; accessed 21 May 2013.

⁵⁵ *General Evening Post*, 22 June 1771.

In summary, whilst the Liverpool MPs owned land and titles, and made attempts at networking with the political elite, these ties proved weak. Generally, Liverpool's elected representatives held lowly landed titles. Cunliffe was handicapped by illness, and Pennant distracted by family businesses. For his part, Meredith transferred his loyalties amongst several parliamentary groupings. This, in particular, limited his scope for influencing policy. In the words of one political historian: 'lost sheep never returned...to the fold; such inconsistency could not be forgiven.'⁵⁶ With the high turnover of ministries during the 1760s, Liverpool's members had the misfortune of being in power for only a brief time, or were consigned to Opposition benches for lengthy periods. Consequently, whilst the town could raise its profile in Parliament, it could only achieve limited results. This is illustrated by the international and imperial issues discussed below.

NORTH AMERICAN TRADE

As Chapter One revealed, America accounted for up to 9 per cent of Liverpool's overseas commerce during the early-1760s. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the town was vocal on North American commerce.⁵⁷ An early example from this period was when Cunliffe presented a memorial to Whitehall from the Liverpool merchants, complaining about the 'ill effects' of large quantities of paper bills in Virginia in 1763.⁵⁸ The following year, in a relatively rare example of petitions from Liverpool manufacturers, those employed in making hats from beaver skins

⁵⁶ Brooke, *Chatham Administration*, 281.

⁵⁷ *Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser*, 22 February 1764.

⁵⁸ *Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations from January 1759 to 1763* (London, 1935), 330-4.

(presumably from North America) asked Parliament to repeal drawbacks (duty) on this commodity.⁵⁹

However, it was the Stamp Act crisis that proved the most significant challenge to Liverpool's business interests in the Thirteen Colonies between 1763 and 1773. There were several reasons why Grenville introduced the measure. The most important was to fill the budget deficit at the end of the Seven Years War, which stood at £137 million.⁶⁰ Grenville believed that residents of the British Isles were already heavily taxed, and the American colonists should pay their fair share towards imperial defence. Several measures were introduced to raise revenue in these territories, such as the 1764 Sugar Act. However it was the Stamp Act, which imposed duties on all printed goods, that generated the most controversy.⁶¹

One of the earliest critics of the stamp duties was Sir William Meredith. Speaking in Parliament on 5 February 1765, he declared: 'We ought...to be extremely delicate in imposing a burden upon others which we...not share ourselves.'⁶² At the second reading of the bill on 15 February, Sir William continued to voice his opposition to the measure by invoking the issue of taxation without representation. This particular incident is noteworthy because Meredith presented a petition by Edward Montagu, the agent for Virginia, thereby demonstrating Liverpool's wider links to the trans-Atlantic community.⁶³ During the Stamp Act fiasco, Meredith was

⁵⁹ Simmons and Thomas, *PDBP*, Volume 1, 459-508.

⁶⁰ J. Bullion, *A Great and Necessary Measure: George Grenville and the Genesis of the Stamp Act 1763-1775* (London, 1982), 2. Also see E.H. Gould, 'The Nation Abroad: The Atlantic Debate over Colonial Taxation', in D. Brunsman and D.J. Silverman, eds, *The American Revolution Reader* (London, 2014), 23-49.

⁶¹ Cogliano, *Revolutionary America*, 27.

⁶² Simmons and Thomas, *PDBP* Volume 2, 13.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 26-7.

also counted amongst the most 'zealous and indefatigable friends' of Benjamin Franklin, the agent for Pennsylvania.⁶⁴ Whilst in the metropole, these colonial agents networked with government officials and politicians.⁶⁵ Despite their lively protests, MPs such as Meredith and the colonial agents were unable to prevent the passage of the Stamp Act, which received the Royal Assent on 22 March 1765. They failed to stop its passage partially because their arguments challenged the notion of parliamentary sovereignty, which was ingrained on the official mind. To challenge this weakened Meredith's position. Another reason for Meredith's failure was that the Liverpool MP had weak links with the colonial agents. Regardless of Franklin's assertion, there were few references to Meredith in the papers of these colonial messengers. Of these, most were made only in passing. Furthermore, by spring 1765, Sir William had no ministerial patronage to support him. The Liverpool MP disagreed with George Grenville over the appointment of personnel at the local Customs House, and with the handling of the Wilkes affair. Meanwhile, Meredith's associates amongst the Rockinghams were not yet in power.

Upon its introduction, the Stamp Act proved highly detrimental to trans-Atlantic commerce. Whilst the American colonists did not object to Parliament's right to regulate trade and levy customs duties, they opposed stamp duties because they were a direct tax levied by a body in which they were not physically represented. Mob violence engulfed Boston, the Stamp Act Congress convened in New York, and colonial businesses refused to import British manufactures.⁶⁶ This unleashed

⁶⁴ Benjamin Franklin, London, to David Hall, 1766, in L.W. Labaree, ed., *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin: Volume 13: January 1 through December 31 1766* (New Haven, 1969), 1667-70.

⁶⁵ J.M. Sosin, *Agents and Merchants: British Colonial Policy and the Origins of the American Revolution 1763-1775* (Lincoln, 1965), ix-xvi.

⁶⁶ See E.S. Morgan, *The Stamp Act Crisis: Prologue to Revolution*, 3rd edn (Chapel Hill, 1995).

a plethora of lobbying activities by commercial towns in Britain. On 13 February 1766, Liverpool merchant William Halliday testified before the House of Commons American Committee that the value of Liverpool's trade to North America was typically £240,000 per annum. But, as a result of the crisis, most of Liverpool's American orders had been cancelled. These circumstances had other adverse consequences. Liverpool lost a tenth of its African trade, and the quantity of Manchester-manufactured goods exported through the port was reduced. Halliday stressed that the way to alleviate these ills was to repeal the Stamp Act.⁶⁷ To support their goal, the Liverpool mercantile community formed two lobbying committees. One dealt with North America, whilst the other was concerned with the West Indies. The former drafted a petition calling for 'speedy and effectual Redress' of current events. Liverpool merchants also attempted to enlist the support of the Bristol Society of Merchant Venturers, to ensure that they were 'as uniform as possible'. However, the uncertain tone of this correspondence implies that Liverpool could not take Bristol for granted: 'We shall hope, if you approve the measures we have taken, for your Concurrence therein, and request that you will be pledged to transmit us a Copy of any Memorial or Petition You mean to present'.⁶⁸

Despite the antagonisms between Meredith and the merchant-dominated Corporation, on this occasion both parties found common cause in seeking the repeal of the troublesome duties. At the start of 1766, they met at a Liverpool coffee house to discuss the situation, where Sir William delivered 'a most elegant

⁶⁷ Simmons and Thomas, *PDBP*, Volume 2, 219-20.

⁶⁸ BRO, Society of Merchant Venturers, American Committee, Liverpool, to William Reeve Merchant, Bristol, 31 December 1765, SMV/2/4/2/10/7.

and pathetic [emotional] speech on the present posture of affairs in America'.⁶⁹ Meredith continued to make the case for repeal through other channels. He worked alongside noted merchant Barlow Trecothick, who had spent his formative years in the Americas. By the time he moved to London in the 1750s, Trecothick had become a partner in a North American firm. He was also a gentleman, purchasing over 5,000 acres of land by 1768.⁷⁰ Barlow was pro-Rockingham, and during the Stamp Act crisis served as chair of a general meeting of London merchants. In this capacity, he sent circular letters to commercial towns calling for unified action, and it was Meredith who presented this letter to the Liverpool merchants.⁷¹ The relationship between Sir William and Trecothick developed further after the Stamp Act debacle. On 9 June 1770 Meredith's sister, Anne, married Barlow. As we shall see, this familial tie proved useful for Meredith until Trecothick's passing in 1775.

Liverpool's mercantile community and their MP were pleased with the repeal of the Stamp Act on 18 March 1766. Both had clearly worked hard to secure this outcome. Nonetheless, it would be incorrect to attribute repeal solely to their efforts. The damage done to overseas trade was sizable and required rectification. Henceforth, several British towns and the American colonists had worked for repeal. The replacement of Grenville, the architect of the Stamp Act, by Rockingham in July 1765, made withdrawal of these duties more likely. Meredith was a member of the Rockingham ministry, but there is little direct evidence that

⁶⁹ *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 3 January 1766.

⁷⁰ Barlow Trecothick, History of Parliament Online: <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1754-1790/member/trecothick-barlow-1718-75>; accessed 14 April 2014.

⁷¹ P.D.G. Thomas, *British Politics and the Stamp Act Crisis: The First Phase of the American Revolution 1763-1767* (Oxford, 1975), 146-53.

this proved significant in bringing about repeal. Taken as a whole, the example of Liverpool during the Stamp Act shows that provincial towns engaged with powerful political networks. But, whilst they successfully raised their profile, it is debatable how much influence they wielded on their own. As an endnote to the Stamp Act, in 1766 the Rockinghams (opponents of the Stamp Act) passed the Declaratory Act, which codified Parliament's right to make laws and statutes for the colonies 'in all cases whatsoever'.⁷² This demonstrates an overarching unity to elite political thinking. Regardless of political faction, the official mind was always at the forefront, stressing parliamentary sovereignty. This piece of legislation subsequently caused Meredith embarrassment. He later claimed that he did not consent to the Declaratory Act, as the colonists were not directly represented in Westminster. But others refuted this assertion, recalling how Sir William had initially cast an affirmative vote for the Act.⁷³ Surely these contradictions and inconsistencies did not endear Meredith to elite politicians.

Liverpool-related interests continued to be active on American affairs. By 1766-1767 the Townshend programme, so named after the Chancellor of the Exchequer, introduced legislation to tighten imperial control and raise revenue from the colonists. An American Board of Customs was to be established and duties imposed upon wine, china, glass, paint, and tea. Townshend did not live to see his programme implemented, and it was left to Grafton to collect these duties. Once again, these actions incurred the wrath of the colonists. By 1769 the Cabinet decided to repeal the programme. With Grafton's resignation, it was up to Lord

⁷² Declaratory Act, 1766, in F.D. Cogliano and K. Phinister, eds, *Revolutionary America: 1763-1815: A Sourcebook* (London, 2011), 61-2.

⁷³ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 45 (1775), pp.259-61.

North to implement this policy.⁷⁴ On 5 March 1770, coincidentally the same day as the Boston Massacre, London merchants called for repeal of the tea duty. North believed that repeal of the Townshend duties was necessary, except for the levy upon tea. Indeed, he did not wish to undermine Parliament's right to tax the colonists. Meredith was amongst those who followed the merchants, and called for total repeal. No doubt influenced by Trecothick, Sir William believed that it made no sense to maintain one duty whilst revoking the others. The Liverpool MP was in the minority when the Commons rejected the London petition.⁷⁵ This example shows that whilst Liverpool-related interests did not always take the lead in debates (in this case they followed London), they could still contribute. But in desiring total repeal, Sir William went against Westminster's desire to protect parliamentary sovereignty. Another reason why Meredith could not win over colleagues on this vote was because his association with the Rockinghams was waning, and he had not yet gone over to North.

AFRICA AND THE WEST INDIES

The Liverpool mercantile community used different methods to safeguard this branch of trade. Sometimes local slave traders petitioned higher authorities on their own personal initiative. For example, in 1767 Miles Barber complained to the Earl of Shelburne, Secretary of State for the Southern Department, that the Governor of Fort James in the River Gambia was obstructing his agents.⁷⁶ Alternatively, some Liverpool slavers used collective action to support their goals. In August 1765, they presented a memorial to the Treasury noting that the contract

⁷⁴ Cogliano, *Revolutionary America*, 44-5.

⁷⁵ Almon, *Debates and Proceedings of the British House of Commons, Volume 21*, 244.

⁷⁶ *Journal Commissioners Trade and Plantations January 1764 to December 1767* (1936), 370.

for slaves at Havanah had been 'annulled by order of the Court of Spain'. The signatories included prominent merchants such as Robert Armitage and the Heywood brothers, and they desired a return to the status quo.⁷⁷

Another method was for the Liverpool merchants to work alongside their landed MPs. In the aftermath of the Seven Years War, Meredith sent a petition on their behalf to the Treasury. It stated that since the British had captured Guadeloupe in 1759, 43 vessels had sailed from Liverpool to that island with over 12,000 slaves. Business had become so lucrative that the merchants urged the Crown to remember this during peace negotiations.⁷⁸ Given the undoubted differences between Meredith and the Corporation, this co-operation might seem surprising. Yet Sir William was still one of the town's elected representatives. In the event, the pleas of the Liverpool merchants were overruled, and Guadeloupe returned to France. This reinforced Liverpool's relative lack of clout in the metropolis. Instead, policy-makers were more concerned about Quebec. The Board of Trade reported that possession of Canada allowed greater fishing rights on the St. Lawrence River, the extension of the fur trade, and achievement of strategic superiority over the Bourbons. Thus, this territory was not returned to France.⁷⁹

Meredith probably sent this petition to the Treasury because he knew a man on the spot. Charles Jenkinson, the future 1st Earl of Liverpool, became a Secretary to the Treasury in 1763 under Grenville. Both Meredith and Jenkinson hailed from landed backgrounds (Jenkinson was the son of Oxfordshire gentry), and both were

⁷⁷ TNA, Treasury Records, Memorial of the Liverpool Merchants, August 1765, T1/443/47.

⁷⁸ BL, Liverpool Papers, Sir William Meredith to First Earl of Liverpool, 19 October 1763, 38200.147.

⁷⁹ TNA, Colonial Office Records, Report of the Board of Trade Relating to the New Acquisitions in America, 8 June 1763, CO 325/1.

associated with Grenville for a while, and both eventually cooled towards the prime minister. Indeed, Jenkinson disliked Grenville's suspicion of him, which was based upon his prior support for Bute. Nonetheless, the relationship between Meredith and Jenkinson was limited. It apparently did not survive beyond 1764. The future Earl of Liverpool was critical of the Rockinghams, whilst Meredith actively courted them.⁸⁰ There are noticeably fewer surviving letters between Jenkinson and Meredith from 1764 – around the time that Meredith entered Wentworth-Woodhouse's circle.⁸¹ Evidently political loyalties affected the longevity of political networks.

Another vehicle the merchants used to promote Liverpool's interests was the African Company of Merchants. This organisation enjoyed some prestige, as the Board of Trade often asked it to forward information regarding the African market.⁸² As members of this company, Liverpool merchants played a role in supplying this data. The Liverpool merchants also solicited the involvement of their MPs with the African Company. In May 1772 Sir William presented their petition to the Commons, which complained about mismanagement within the Company. It alleged that there were flaws in the franchise that elected the organisation's governors. A bill for regulating the elections of committeemen of the African Company was subsequently introduced.⁸³ But, whilst receiving its third reading on 20 May, the bill ran into sizable opposition. Edmund Burke, the MP for Wendover and loyal supporter of Rockingham, argued this law subverted the current

⁸⁰ N. Gash, 'Jenkinson, Robert Banks, second earl of Liverpool (1770–1828)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004: online edn, Jan 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14740>: accessed 23 April 2014.

⁸¹ Jucker, *Jenkinson Papers*, 189–216.

⁸² TNA, Colonial Office Records, J. Pownall, Permanent Secretary of the Board of Trade, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, CO 389/21.

⁸³ Cobbett, *PHE*, Volume 17, 504–7.

franchise. Meredith countered this by stressing that he favoured a new law to clarify circumstances, but the bill was eventually defeated.⁸⁴ Meredith lost because, as we shall see in the case of the EIC, eighteenth century governments were reluctant to meddle in the affairs of private companies. Another contributory factor for the Liverpool MP's defeat was, once again, that he did not cultivate sustainable networks. By 1772 Meredith had moved out of the Rockinghamite circle, and was now openly opposed by Burke. The latter had been Wentworth-Woodhouse's private secretary, and his persistence and concentration made him a formidable parliamentary debater.⁸⁵

Liverpool's other MP, Richard Pennant, held longstanding interests in the West Indies, and was therefore involved in this lobby too. In 1773 Liverpool merchants sent a petition to Lord North requesting the extension of free ports in Jamaica and Dominica. These facilities had successfully allowed the free importation and exportation of merchandise.⁸⁶ The following year Pennant confirmed from a parliamentary committee that this scheme had indeed been successful, and the matter progressed further in the House.⁸⁷ Given his links to the Caribbean, one might have expected more from Pennant on this matter in Westminster. But this relative lack of activity was probably due to his pre-occupation with the family business.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 507-12.

⁸⁵ Edmund Burke, *History of Parliament Online*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1754-1790/member/burke-edmund-1729-97>; accessed 21 April 2014.

⁸⁶ TNA, Treasury Records, Petition of Liverpool Merchants to Lord North, 10 March 1773, T1/498.

⁸⁷ Simmons and Thomas, *PDBP*, Volume 4, 15-6.

EUROPEAN TRADE

Records from 1763 highlight a particular challenge to Liverpool's European trading interests. That summer it became known that an additional duty was to be levied upon rock salt in the Austrian Netherlands. A letter from the Earl of Halifax, Secretary of State for the Northern Department, noted a 50 per cent duty would threaten the sale of colonial tobacco in Europe, as well as the exportation of salt from Liverpool.⁸⁸ The secretary of the Commissioners of Trade was therefore ordered to transmit Halifax's letter to the Mayor of Liverpool.⁸⁹ Established in 1696, the Commissioners of Trade were a precursor to the Board of Trade. During the eighteenth century this body remained a 'potent factor' in determining policy.⁹⁰ By October 1763 the Mayor of Liverpool had responded to the Commissioner's request, and the merchants sent a memorial to London.⁹¹ At the behest of central government, Liverpool sent delegates to Westminster to provide testimony on the European salt trade.⁹² To further their goals, the Liverpool merchants also sent a formal petition to the Commissioners, but this was later rejected. Indeed, the document did not specify whether 'trade should remain upon its present foot' or if a monopoly should be granted.⁹³ By 5 March 1764 Meredith attended the commission, and presented another memorial from the Liverpool businessmen.⁹⁴ It is not clear if the Liverpool lobby successfully opposed the rock salt duty. However,

⁸⁸ Letter from the Earl of Halifax to the Lords of Trade, 15 July 1763, in J. Redington, ed., *Calendar of Home Office Papers of the Reign of George III 1760-1765* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1878), 294.

⁸⁹ *Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations from January 1759 to December 1763* (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office 1935), 375-6.

⁹⁰ A.H. Basye, *The Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations: Commonly Known as the Board of Trade 1748-1782* (New Haven, 1925), 172. Also see I.K. Steele, *Politics of Colonial Policy: The Board of Trade in Colonial Administration 1696-1720* (Oxford, 1968).

⁹¹ *Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations from January 1759 to December 1763*, 387.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 6-23.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

the directing nature of the metropolis over the provinces is clearly demonstrated. After all, it was London that informed Liverpool of the situation in Europe.

It should also be added that the Liverpool merchants had a man on the spot amongst the Commissioners of Trade. Bamber Gascoyne hailed from the service sector, being a lawyer by trade and entering Parliament as the representative for Maldon in 1761. By April 1763 he had commenced his role as Lord Commissioner. Gascoyne had several links to Liverpool. On 24 January 1757 he married Mary, the daughter and coheir of Isaac Green of Childwall Abbey.⁹⁵ His ties to Liverpool also proved enduring, as his son was the town's MP from 1780 to 1796. Evidently the Corporation of Liverpool thought very highly of the Elder Gascoyne. In 1778 it thanked him for 'his many great important and eminent Services done this Town'.⁹⁶ However, we should not exaggerate Bamber's support for Liverpoolian interests. There is little evidence from the Journal of the Commissioners that Gascoyne used his position to disproportionately help Liverpool in the case of rock salt, or in general. Bamber also involved himself in local politics, which alarmed Meredith. Indeed, the latter once noted: 'Gascoyne [sic] is making interest at Liverpool whe [sic] he is sure to be joined by a great part of the Corporation'.⁹⁷ Gascoyne's meddling in Liverpool politics is further evidence of the split between the mercantile Corporation and Meredith, which weakened the town's lobbying capacity.

⁹⁵ E. A. Smith, 'Gascoyne, Bamber (bap. 1725, d. 1791)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10429>; accessed 22 May 2013.

⁹⁶ LIVRO, Liverpool Corporation Records, 7 October 1778, 352 MIN / COU 1.

⁹⁷ Sir William Meredith to Charles Jenkinson, Hanbury, 12 October 1763, in Jucker, *Jenkinson Papers*, 208-9.

GREENLAND AND WHALING

On 19 January 1768 the Liverpool merchants sent a petition to Westminster concerning Whaling. With the conclusion of the Seven Years War, and the offering of a bounty of 40 shillings to sailors, it was claimed that the British whaling industry was growing. Nevertheless, this financial incentive was due to expire in the near future, and the Liverpool merchants petitioned Parliament to grant them additional relief.⁹⁸ To add weight to their application, Liverpool merchant George Campbell delivered a testimony in Parliament.⁹⁹ Richard Pennant also sat on the committee that considered the whale fishery, and it was he who presented its findings to Parliament in February 1768.¹⁰⁰ After reviewing documents from provincial towns, such as Liverpool and Edinburgh, the Commons decided to extend the bounty until late 1770. Pennant and Meredith were amongst those who introduced this legislation.¹⁰¹ Regardless of this outcome, whaling continued to be a headache for Liverpool. The British did not as yet fully master whaling techniques, and Arctic working conditions did not help. As a result, British whaling was in the doldrums for several years, as men lost heart and withdrew their ships. For a time, even Whitby and Hull abandoned this business altogether. In contrast, Liverpool stayed with it, but required help.¹⁰² In February 1769 local manufacturers, such as tanners and shoemakers, as well as service sector dealers, complained that the whale fishery was becoming untenable. Hence, to make business more competitive, they called

⁹⁸ Simmons and Thomas, *PDBP*, Volume 2, 530.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 547.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 545.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 555.

¹⁰² Jackson, *British Whaling*, 62-4.

for the Excise on sealskins to be reduced.¹⁰³ The Excise Office in London, which advised the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, supported this Liverpool petition. They concluded that a reduction in this duty would prove advantageous to the leather trade, 'and may possibly prove beneficial to the Revenue'.¹⁰⁴

Overall, Liverpool's record on the Greenland fishery during the late-1760s indicates that the town was active in Parliament. If Liverpool worked alongside other provincial towns, then it could achieve some positive results in its favour. However, much still depended upon the acquiescence of the metropole. Even in 1753 London constituted just over half of British whaling interests. 'It was indisputably the centre of whaling, and was to remain so for a long time'.¹⁰⁵

THE ROYAL NAVY

Liverpool was not a Royal Dockyard, but as a major port it enjoyed some input over naval affairs. Between July 1765 and December 1766, Meredith served on the Board of Admiralty. This was the highest level of the Navy's civil administration, and typically comprised of MPs. Such an appointment was immediately beneficial for Meredith. Not only did the seat provide a salary, but it elevated his social standing through serving the Crown.¹⁰⁶ It also consolidated Meredith's position in Liverpool. He was never popular with the Corporation, and since it was standard practice for an MP to seek re-election if he entered government, here was an opportunity for the Council to unseat him. But, in the eventuality, Meredith secured

¹⁰³ TNA, Treasury Records, Excise Office to Right Honourable Lords Commissioners, 3 February 1769, T1/479, 303-6.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 15 February 1769, T1/479, 353-4.

¹⁰⁵ Jackson, *British Whaling*, 58.

¹⁰⁶ C. Wilkinson, *The British Navy and the State in the Eighteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 2004), 12.

re-election. Constituents 'expressed...their approbation of his conduct in Parliament...and at his being made one of the Lords of the Admiralty'.¹⁰⁷

Even so, this posting did not substantially enhance Liverpool's lobbying capabilities. The Board of Admiralty only dealt with routine naval matters. For example, in the summer of 1765, Meredith and his colleagues ordered that the chaplain of HMS *Panther* be paid, and that the sloop *Wasp* be fitted out for Channel duty.¹⁰⁸ The Board of Admiralty was not an executive decision-making body. Instead, the real power resided within the Navy Board, which oversaw warship construction and maintenance. It was also comprised of naval experts. This was in sharp contrast to the Board of Admiralty, which often met on an informal basis. Nor was full attendance required, as only three out of the seven commissioners were necessary to be quorate.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, Meredith did not attend the Board regularly. In addition, Sir William was on the Board of Admiralty for a limited time only. When Pitt came to power in July 1766, Meredith stayed on. But the removal of Lord Edgecumbe, a prominent Rockinghamite, from government prompted Meredith's resignation after only seventeen months.¹¹⁰

THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

One of the most contentious issues of the age was the management of the EIC. Originally conceived as a monopolistic trading organisation in the seventeenth century, a hundred years later the Company had become a fiscal-military state in

¹⁰⁷ *London Evening Post*, 13 August 1765.

¹⁰⁸ NMM, Navy Board Records, In-Letters, 1765, ADM/A2574.

¹⁰⁹ Wilkinson, *British Navy and the State*, 16.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 141.

its own right.¹¹¹ International warfare and the directives of Robert Clive led to territorial acquisitions on the Indian subcontinent. By 1765 the Company had effectively taken control of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, and was trading with imperial China. These developments sparked questions of a constitutional and economic nature back home. The EIC faced grave financial problems, and was distracted by factional infighting in East India House. It was feared that company servants (nabobs) were returning to the UK with ill-gotten riches, and corrupting the political system.¹¹² These circumstances invited a series of responses from London. In 1767 it was agreed that the Company would retain its commercial and territorial privileges, on the condition that it restricted speculative investments, and paid £400,000 per annum to the Exchequer. This arrangement failed because of the EIC's sizable debts, the great Bengal famine of 1769-1770, and because of a European credit crunch. Most importantly, the Regulating Act of 1773 restructured India's government.¹¹³

The British provinces were not divorced from these events. By 1767 merchants in Bristol, Glasgow, and Dublin were preparing to petition Parliament for the opening of trade to India.¹¹⁴ Liverpool merchants were also active on this issue, and hoped that East India Chambers would be established around the country.¹¹⁵ Eventually such initiatives came to nothing. Bristol MP Matthew Brickdale recalled in 1768 that the House received the petitions of Liverpool and Somerset with alarm. They considered it 'a very extraordinary Step to have Petitions offer'd to open a Trade

¹¹¹ P. Lawson, *The East India Company: A History* (Harlow, 1993), 42-64.

¹¹² H.V. Bowen, 'British India, 1765-1813: The Metropolitan Context', in Marshall, *OHBE*, Volume 2, 531.

¹¹³ O'Gorman, *Long Eighteenth Century*, 206-7, 213.

¹¹⁴ *Liverpool Advertiser*, January 1767.

¹¹⁵ *Manchester Mercury*, 16 February 1768.

established in a Company, by a Charter, under an Act of Parliament.'¹¹⁶ These were standard objections towards reform of the Company, and helps explain why these petitions failed. Indeed, the Liverpool mercantile community was challenging the contemporary consensus, which guaranteed the chartered rights of companies. Brickdale therefore urged the Bristol lobby not to waste any more time on Indian reform. This instruction also implies that the Liverpool and Bristol lobbies were not working together on this issue.

However, Liverpool-related interests did not give up on Indian reform. On 13 April 1772, MP for Preston Colonel John Burgoyne was frustrated with the slow progress on East Indian matters. He successfully moved in Parliament for a Select Committee to enquire into the 'nature, state, and condition of the East India Company'. Meredith seconded this proposal, and hoped the committee would shed light on the 'millions of people under distress as a result of the company'. On 16 April over 30 members from a wide spectrum of opinion were chosen to sit on this body. It included critics of the EIC such as Burgoyne and Meredith, as well as Robert Clive himself and the ministry's Solicitor- and Attorney- Generals.¹¹⁷ The Select Committee had the power to call witnesses and review the accounts of the EIC.¹¹⁸ In the words of the writer Horace Walpole, Meredith and Burgoyne were 'hot on the pursuit' of Clive.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ BRO, Merchant Venturers Records, Matthew Brickdale to Samuel Muncley, Bristol, 16 December 1766, SMV/2/4/2/13/8.

¹¹⁷ Cobbett, *PHE*, Volume 17, 453-63.

¹¹⁸ BL, India Office Records, Minutes of the Court of Directors, Peter Michell to General Burgoyne, 4 March 1773, B/258. Also see H.V. Bowen, *Revenue and Reform: The India Problem in British Politics 1767-1773* (Cambridge, 1991), 134-5.

¹¹⁹ F. Skaunil, ed., *The Last Journals of Horace Walpole during the Reign of George III from 1771-1783 Volume 1* (London, 1910), 230.

On 10 May 1773 Burgoyne resolved that money had illegally been appropriated from Indian rulers. Once again, Sir William seconded such motions. Meredith also used this as an opportunity to express his own views, arguing that there were two possible courses of action. Firstly, Parliament could legislate the affairs of the EIC – but he was reluctant to do this because the great distance between Britain and India made this impractical. Secondly, the committee could make an example of somebody. Although Sir William personally disliked this option, he believed it was necessary to prevent eastern avarice from spreading westwards. Meredith was subsequently criticised by Solicitor-General Wedderburn for offering ‘odious insinuations’. Clive also attacked Meredith on similar grounds.¹²⁰ Indeed, Clive no doubt included the Liverpool MP as one of those ‘envious and resentful individuals...[who] turned the whole Attack against me’.¹²¹ By 21 May 1773, the report of the committee was taken into final consideration. This paved the way for an epic parliamentary battle, which lasted into the early hours of the morning. Meredith seconded Burgoyne’s resolution that Clive had acquired excessive loot in India, and had ‘abused the powers with which he was intrusted’. Various amendments were proposed which neutralised the original motion. In the end, Wedderburn successfully resolved that Clive did ‘at the same time, render great and, meritorious service to this country’.¹²² Unable to obtain a censure of Clive, Burgoyne (and evidently Meredith) did not press for additional charges.

Thus, whilst Meredith undoubtedly raised his profile, his effective input on EIC affairs was limited. Sir William did not attend every session of the Select

¹²⁰ Cobbett, *PHE*, Volume 17, 855–71.

¹²¹ National Library of Wales, Clive Papers, Robert Clive, Berkeley Square, to Warren Hastings, 25 March 1773, CR6/2.

¹²² Cobbett, *PHE*, Volume 17, 880–2.

Committee.¹²³ Furthermore, Burgoyne’s committee was not the only body scrutinising the Company. In November 1772, North moved for a Secret Committee to secure the ‘speedy and effective relief’ of the EIC. Ultimately, the Secret Committee was quicker than the Select Committee, and paved the way for ‘restraining’ the organisation from sending commissioners to Bengal. Meredith and Pennant were not represented on this forum.¹²⁴ Nor did the Liverpool MPs make any lengthy interventions in other areas of Indian reform. Meredith spoke once on the restraining issue on 18 December 1772.¹²⁵ According to Cobbett’s *History*, Meredith only spoke briefly on North’s regulating Bill, on 3 and 10 June 1773.¹²⁶ This evidence confirms that whilst the provinces were vocal, they rarely converted this energy into substantive policy changes.

There were several reasons for Meredith’s lack of success. Parliamentary management certainly played a role. Despite rumours that Clive bought people’s votes, Wedderburn’s forceful defences of Clive thwarted the Opposition.¹²⁷ Meredith’s fragile parliamentary alliances played a role too. Because he had moved away from the Rockinghams, Sir William could not enlist their support. Even if he had, their input would have been negligible. The Rockinghams were numerically small by the early-1770s, and were split over the EIC. Whilst some stressed the sanctity of chartered rights, others shifted positions as new facts emerged.¹²⁸ Meredith could have attempted to enlist the support of North, but the prime minister had other goals in mind. Whilst North needed to appease

¹²³ Bowen, *Revenue and Reform*, 134–5.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 148–9, 158.

¹²⁵ Cobbett, *PHE* Volume 17, 674.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 887–904.

¹²⁷ Bowen, *Revenue and Reform*, 174.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 140–1.

colleagues who wanted action on the Company, he could not sacrifice Clive who was broadly supportive of the ministry. Thus, it would be left to Burgoyne to defeat Clive - which he failed to accomplish.¹²⁹ Meanwhile, Meredith could not take family relations for granted. His other sister, Mary, had married Lord Frederick Campbell on 28 March 1769. A young lawyer elected as Member for Glasgow Burghs between 1761 and 1780, Campbell aligned himself to Bute and the Bedfords, and often voted with the ministry. He therefore disagreed with Meredith by criticising repeal of the Stamp Act, and on 21 May 1773 opposed Burgoyne's resolutions.¹³⁰

Meredith also failed because his position in Liverpool was not safe. One source wrote to Lord Clive in 1773 that Meredith's 'conduct to you is generally condemned by a many' in the constituency.¹³¹ Schemes were therefore hatched to parachute Clive into Liverpool at the next general election, but these ultimately proved fruitless.¹³² This is evidence of the strained relationship between the Corporation and some MPs. Combined, this evidence shows the limits of Liverpool's influence in the metropolis on matters imperial.

CONCLUSIONS

Liverpool's lobby in the decade after 1763, comprising chiefly of merchants and landed elite, utilised different methods to get their message across. This included correspondence with other provincial towns, sending delegates with petitions to

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 169.

¹³⁰ Frederick Campbell, *History of Parliament Online*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1754-1790/member/campbell-frederick-1729-1816>; accessed 22 April 2014.

¹³¹ BL, India Office Records, A. Ligon to Clive, summer 1773, MSS Eur G37/67/2.

¹³² *Ibid.*, J. Phillips to Clive, 2 August 73, G37/67/2.

Westminster, working at forums such as the African Company of Merchants, developing links with other MPs, and men on the spot in London. Despite this activity, however, the analysis presented here supports the argument of Cain and Hopkins that the provinces did not enjoy significant influence in the corridors of power.

Liverpool's lack of input was due to several reasons. The vague tone of correspondence with Bristol during the Stamp Act crisis, and attempts to open the Asian market in 1767, reveal weak networks amongst provincial towns (although this was less the case with Edinburgh over whaling). Whilst there were occasions when the local landed interest did co-operate with the merchants, such as the Stamp Act crisis, this was not always so. Indeed, Sir William Meredith was concerned about the Corporation's relationship with Bamber Gascoyne the Elder. Evidently the ties that bound the Liverpool MPs to the Corporation were frequently strained, or proto-gentlemanly capitalist. Liverpool's elected representative were also often out of favour with incumbent administrations. They owed this, in part, to their relatively lowly landed titles. In addition, Cunliffe was handicapped by illness, Pennant was hindered by administering his family's business interests, and Meredith frequently transferred his political loyalties, rendering him suspect to the different parliamentary factions. Nor could Meredith always rely upon family ties. Whereas Barlow Trecothick assisted Sir William during the Stamp Act debacle, Frederick Campbell looked the other way during reform of the EIC. The high turnover of ministries during the 1760s meant that Liverpool's members had the misfortune of being in power for only brief periods, or being consigned to the Opposition benches for lengthy durations. Some of Liverpool's demands were

seemingly too radical for the official mind to stomach. Evidently calling for the opening of the Eastern trade challenged the established chartered rights of companies.

Events in the Thirteen Colonies had concerned British commercial lobbies up to 1773. However, even as late as the general election the following year, America was hardly a key campaign issue in many constituencies.¹³³ Yet, thereafter, the colonies would prove a major headache for British imperial authorities. The next chapter considers Liverpool's influence over the policy-making process in London during the War of Independence.

¹³³ Namier and Brooke, *HP: The House of Commons 1754-1790 Volume 1*, 75

CHAPTER THREE: **1774-1783: LIVERPOOL IN LONDON** **DURING A PERIOD OF** **REVOLUTION AND WARFARE**

This chapter moves the analysis from a period of colonial unrest to a decade of warfare and revolution. In 1774 the British responded to the Boston Tea Party by passing the so-called 'Coercive Acts'. By April 1775 fighting had erupted between British troops and colonial minutemen in Massachusetts. The colonists besieged Boston, and the British were later forced to evacuate the town. As the US Congress mobilised resources, the conflict spread throughout the American colonies. British defeat at Saratoga in 1777 eventually spawned an international war. Thereafter, France openly sided with the Americans, with Spain and the Netherlands (Holland) commencing hostilities against Britain in 1779 and 1780, respectively. Power struggles were now waged on a global scale in European waters, the West Indies, Africa, and India.¹ Besides its enormous geographical scale, this conflict was significant because it was a revolutionary war. In 1776 the colonists declared Independence from Britain, and adopted republicanism over monarchism.² The conflict in America effectively came to an end in 1781 when British troops were surrounded by Allied forces at Yorktown, Virginia. Two years later the Treaty of Paris recognised US independence.

¹ Conway, *War of American Independence*, 73-160.

² Cogliano, *Revolutionary America*, 47-93.

In this decade of conflict, the structure of the Liverpool lobby remained proto-gentlemanly capitalist. Manufacturing was present, but still overshadowed by mercantile and landed interests. But there were some changes in the lobby after 1774. Local mercantile organisation became more formalised with the establishment of a Chamber of Commerce and a Committee of Trade. There was also a turnover in the town's MPs after the 1780 election, and the Earl of Derby became more politically active. Commerce remained the chief item on the agenda of the lobby (although manufacturing was not ignored). Finally, whilst the Liverpool lobby raised its profile and achieved some policy successes, most of the results were qualified. The reasons for this were in line with the political impediments faced in the 1763-1773 period: weak lobbying ties to certain other urban areas, squabbles amongst the merchants, proto-gentlemanly capitalist links between the merchant-dominated Corporation and landed MPs, and these MPs were often out of favour with incumbent administrations, sometimes because they appeared too radical for the official mind.

HIGH POLITICS, 1774-1783

To understand the relative lack of success of the Liverpool lobby during these years, we need to contextualise the Westminster politics of the era. North's ministry lasted from 1770 to 1782, and was therefore responsible for prosecuting the American War. Absorbing members of the Opposition, and being approved of by George III, this government was initially strong.³ But, by 1780, it had lost much of its vitality. North was physically exhausted and faced an uncertain outcome in

³ B. Donoghue, *British Politics and the American Revolution: The Path to War 1773-75* (London, 1964), 280-90, and K. Parry, *British Politics and the American Revolution* (Basingstoke, 1990), 70-1.

an international war. Attempts to stabilise the ministry by negotiating with the Opposition failed. However, British victory at Camden in August 1780 suggested that triumph in America was still possible. Thus, in a bid to out-manoeuvre the Opposition, an election was called in late 1780 – a year earlier than expected. North continued as prime minister for two more years.⁴ His government finally unravelled after Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown in autumn 1781. Although Britain retained key bridgeheads in America, such as New York and Charleston, defeat in Virginia 'convinced a majority that victory was impossible and sealed North's fate'. The political will to continue the war evaporated, Parliament voted to end military operations in America, and North resigned in March 1782.⁵

A key reason why the North ministry survived as long as it did was the weakness of its opponents, which were split amongst two key groups. The first were the supporters of Wentworth-Woodhouse (the Marquis of Rockingham). The second were the Chathamites, or followers of the Elder Pitt. Neither of these factions formed a close working relationship. The Rockinghams advocated the concept of party, something that the independent Chatham did not. Conversely, Pitt was notoriously difficult to work with. The American War presented significant stumbling blocks for North's critics. Even members of the Opposition supported parliamentary sovereignty over the colonies. Therefore, how could they criticise the Government for enforcing this policy? British defeat at Saratoga in 1777 temporarily relieved the Opposition from these shackles, and it was briefly able to argue that GB could not win the war. But Bourbon intervention cast these critics in an unpatriotic light. The Rockinghams and Chathamites were also split over the

⁴ Namier and Brooke, *HP: The House of Commons 1754-1790 Volume 1*, 80-7.

⁵ Perry, *British Politics*, 90-5.

principle of American independence. The former were prepared to accept it, whilst the latter were not. Pitt had been celebrated as the architect of British victory in the Seven Years War, and was not going to accept dismemberment of empire. Chatham died in 1778, and leadership of his group fell to William Petty, 2nd Earl of Shelburne.⁶

The Rockinghamites and Chathamites finally returned to power in 1782. However, their time in office was brief and chaotic. Wentworth-Woodhouse died after only a few months as prime minister, and was replaced by the aloof Shelburne.⁷ The Rockinghamite Charles Fox was especially critical of the new premier. Whereas Fox was prepared to grant immediate independence to the colonists, to disrupt the Franco-American alliance, Shelburne wanted concessions from Congress. Thus, when Shelburne became First Lord of the Treasury several key Rockinghams resigned, including Fox, Portland, and Burke. Shelburne was especially vulnerable since Lord North believed the ministry's peace preliminaries were too lenient. Thus, in an unlikely alliance, Fox and the Northites combined to defeat Shelburne's peace programme in February 1783.⁸ The latter resigned, and was replaced by the Fox-North coalition (with the Duke of Portland as its nominal head). The alliance between Fox and North, two men who had attacked each other during the American War, was seen as unprincipled. Their ministry had come into existence against the King's wishes. This placed the Commons at loggerheads with the sovereign, who still wielded considerable patronage.⁹ The coalition was in office

⁶ *Ibid.*, 96-108.

⁷ J. Cannon, 'Petty, William, second earl of Shelburne and first marquess of Lansdowne (1737-1805)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Sept 2013, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22070>; accessed 9 June 2014.

⁸ Perry, *British Politics*, 112-7.

⁹ J. Cannon, *The Fox-North Coalition: Crisis of the Constitution 1782-4* (Cambridge, 1969), ix.

between April and December 1783, and therefore signed of the Treaty of Paris that formally brought the American War to an end. However, the King exacted revenge that December. Fox's India Bill would have extended parliamentary oversight of the EIC, thereby restricting the influence of the Crown. Although the Commons voted in favour of this legislation, George successfully encouraged the Lords to reject it. This resulted in the dismissal of the ministry, and Pitt the Younger was appointed First Lord of the Treasury.¹⁰ Thus was the national political environment that the Liverpool lobby had to contend with. As we shall see, the town's parliamentary links to the North government gradually eroded between 1777 and 1780. Thereafter, the new MPs sided with North, but this was a faltering administration. Both of these developments curtailed Liverpool's ability to influence Westminster.

THE LIVERPOOL LOBBY 1774-1783: STRUCTURE AND EFFICACY

There were some manufacturing interests amongst the Liverpool lobby during this period. In March 1777 local hatters and felt makers complained to Parliament against a bill regulating prices and hours of work.¹¹ Three years earlier the Corporation had also sent a petition to Westminster protesting a bill preventing the movement of stones from the Caernarvon seashore. This disturbed local manufacturing because these stones were used for paving Liverpool's streets and

¹⁰ O'Gorman, *Long Eighteenth Century*, 214-6.

¹¹ Journals of the House of Commons, 21 March 1777, House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, 307,

constructing turnpikes.¹² However, whilst this example supports the notion of Liverpool being involved in manufacturing, it also reinforces the importance of services. Indeed, the petition referred to turnpikes and roads (Cain and Hopkins associated transport with services).

Generally, the town's lobby remained dominated by the merchants and landed elite. The latter continued to be the bedrock of Liverpool's parliamentary representation. Yet Richard Pennant's quasi-aristocratic credentials, as a substantial landowner in Wales and the West Indies, continued to hold little sway in Westminster. The reasons for his lack of success between 1774 and 1783 mirrored those of 1767-1773. He had an uncertain relationship with the Opposition, and was distracted by the family business. The latter took up even more of his time during the early-1780s, as his father became ill.¹³ Pennant lost his bid for re-election in 1780, but was returned to Liverpool four years later as Baron Penrhyn. Although this is after the period covered by this thesis, it is worth briefly considering because it reveals the only partial entrée of Liverpool interests into high society. As a Baron, Pennant became a peer – something that eluded Cunliffe and Meredith, who were merely baronets. But Pennant acquired an Irish peerage, which was relatively low key by the standards of the day.¹⁴ This suggests a lack of social capital on Richard's part.

¹² PA, Records of the House of Lords, Petition of the Mayor, Aldermen, Bailiffs and Burgesses of the Borough and Corporation of Liverpool to the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, 20 April 1774, HU/PO/JO/10/3/265/39.

¹³ Burnard, 'From Periphery to Periphery', in Bowen, *Wales and the British Overseas Empire*, 121-36 and Lindsay, 'The Pennants and Jamaica 1665-1808', 37-68.

¹⁴ Namier and Brooke, *HP: House of Commons 1754-1790 Volume 1*, 101-2.

For Sir William Meredith, the same reasons for his ineffectiveness in Westminster during the years 1763-1773 remained. Chief was his tendency to flirt with different parliamentary groups. During the early-1770s he had been moving away from Wentworth-Woodhouse, and gravitating towards North. The Liverpool MP's association with North reached its peak in 1774, when he attained office as Comptroller of the Household. For a time, Meredith seemed to be an influential figure. He came into contact with George III, serving as a link between the monarch and legislature.¹⁵ Meredith also had access to other members of the Royal Family. The *Felix Farley* newspaper recorded: 'It is talked that the Right Hon. Sir William Meredith will soon be appointed Governor to the Princes William-Henry and Edward, 3d and 4th sons to their Majestys [sic].'¹⁶ There is also evidence that Meredith had access to diplomatic channels. In July 1777 Sir William passed shipping news onto Viscount Weymouth, Secretary of State for the Southern Department, who in turn transmitted it to the French ambassador.¹⁷

However, we should not over-state the importance of Meredith's new position. Whilst it was cloaked with symbolism, such as a white staff of office, financial remuneration, and lodgings, the Comptroller of the Household was a sinecure.¹⁸ Furthermore, having been promoted under North, Meredith faced political attacks from his former colleagues in the Opposition. In a debate on religious policy on 5 May 1774, Edmund Burke sarcastically noted the Comptroller's 'uniformity of conduct', and disingenuously asserted that Meredith was 'an

¹⁵ See *Public Advertiser*, 22 April 1775 and 19 May 1775; Simmons and Thomas, *PDBP*, Volume 4, 259; and Simmons and Thomas, *PDBP*, Volume 5 (London, 1982), 431-2.

¹⁶ *Felix Farley*, 1 October 1774.

¹⁷ TNA, State Papers, Viscount Weymouth to Viscount Stormont, St James's Palace, 18 July 1777, SP 78/303.

¹⁸ British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=43845>; accessed 27 June 2013.

unblemished...Senator'. The result was continued laughter in the chamber, and the Liverpool MP declined moving a vote.¹⁹ There were also signs that Meredith was not trusted by the administration. The lack of references to Sir William in North's manuscripts suggests that the Comptroller was not amongst the prime minister's inner circle. This was likely due to Meredith's previous association with Rockingham. The *Middlesex Journal* also hinted that the ministry deliberately failed to satisfy Sir William because he became so forward in signaling [sic] himself.²⁰ Henceforth, Meredith's influence was curtailed.

Meredith's loyalties swung again in December 1777, when he resigned as Comptroller. Quite why he chose to do this is debatable. Perhaps the Liverpool MP had endured enough attacks from the Opposition, or felt ministers were manipulating him. However, it could also have been due to principle. Regardless, his decision to resign had consequences. In Parliament on 10 December 1777, Wilkes proposed repealing every act on America since 1763. This led to a heated discussion in the chamber, to which Sir William contributed. However, there were accusations that Meredith had deserted ministers 'in their hour of dismay', after Burgoyne's defeat at Saratoga.²¹ This incident demonstrates Meredith's declining reputation, which was further eroded when he returned to the Opposition. Although Meredith sent a letter to Rockingham thanking him for passing on his best wishes during illness, the damage was done.²² Meredith was 'treated by both sides with

¹⁹ Edmund Burke, Speech on Clerical Subscription, 5 May 1774, in P. Langford, ed., *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke Volume II: Party, Parliament, and the American Crisis 1766-1774* (Oxford, 1981), 467-8. Also see *London Evening Post*, 7 May 1774 and *London Chronicle*, 7 May 1774.

²⁰ *Middlesex Journal*, 24 February 1774.

²¹ Cobbett, *PHE* Volume 19, 587-8.

²² SRO, Rockingham Papers, Sir William Meredith to Marquis of Rockingham, 3 February 1780, R1 1880.

equal contempt'.²³ Sir William's ability to get things done in Parliament was further eroded by the decay in his family's relations. This was particularly evident with his three brother-in-laws. Frederick Vane did not stand during the 1774 election, Barlow Trecothick died in May 1775, and Meredith continued to have differences with Frederick Campbell.

However, there were significant personnel changes in the Liverpool parliamentary lobby after 1780. The general election that year returned Frederick North to office. This did not bode well for Meredith and Pennant, who were, to varying degrees, associated with the Opposition. Consequently, the former retired due to ill-health (although his declining stature was probably the deciding factor). Pennant was later defeated at the poll. These events demonstrated the weak ties between the mercantile Corporation and the previous landed MPs. Two new individuals were brought into office. Although they were not titled, they can be seen as having potentially gentlemanly capitalist credentials. Bamber Gascoyne the Younger hailed from the landed classes and service sector. His mother's family owned Childwall Hall and his father, the Elder Gascoyne, served on the Board of Trade. The younger Gascoyne attended Magdalen College and had undertaken the Grand Tour befitting a young gentleman during the 1770s. In a repeating pattern for Liverpool's MP's, however, his ability to influence policy was questionable. The *History of Parliament* noted Bamber generally voted with North's government after 1780, but this fell two years later.²⁴ The other member for Liverpool was the merchant Henry Rawlinson, who had a brief and lacklustre political career. Indeed,

²³ Stewart, ed., *The Last Journals of Horace Walpole during the Reign of George III from 1771-1783 Volume 1* (London, 1910), 81.

²⁴ Namier and Brooke, *HP: The House of Commons 1754-1790 Volume II*, 492.

he did not stand for re-election in 1784, and died two years later.²⁵ The Younger Gascoyne and Rawlinson enjoyed closer relations with the Corporation than either Meredith or Pennant. Hence, it can be argued that their ties and credentials were more gentlemanly capitalist than Meredith's or Pennant's. Nevertheless, proto-gentlemanly ties were more evident during this period as a whole, as Meredith and Pennant were the chief parliamentary representatives.

A peripheral figure in the Liverpool parliamentary lobby was Edward Smith-Stanley, a scion of the house of Derby. Elected to represent Lancashire in the House of Commons in 1774, he moved to the Lords when he became the 12th Earl in 1776. However, political ties between the 12th Earl of Derby and the Liverpool's MPs were limited. There appears to be only one example of Lord Stanley working alongside Sir William. Indeed, on 28 January 1775 both men presented petitions from Manchester and Liverpool regarding the poor state of American trade.²⁶

Smith-Stanley's ability to exercise major influence in Westminster was diminished by several factors. He 'preferred to occupy himself in the duties of social life rather than the troublesome arena of politics'. He was also distracted by events in his private life. In 1779, Derby's wife left him for the Duke of Dorset. Smith-Stanley's refusal to divorce her, and to grant access to their children, added to the scandal.²⁷ It was not until the following year that both partners strove to settle.²⁸ Most

²⁵ Namier and Brooke, *HP: The House of Commons 1754-1790 Volume III*, 349.

²⁶ *Morning Chronicle*, 28 January 1775.

²⁷ A.G. Crosby, 'Stanley, Edward Smith, twelfth earl of Derby (1752-1834)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/47080>; accessed 22 May 2014.

²⁸ LANA, Stanley Papers, Deed of Separation between the Earl and Countess of Derby, 28 February 1780, DOK 25/5.

importantly, when Derby finally became vocal on the American War after 1777, he became a critic of the North ministry – which was to remain in office for most of this period. The 12th Earl had initially supported coercion against the colonists, stressing the legislative 'omnipotence' of parliament.²⁹ But Smith-Stanley's conversion took place amidst the background of his uncle's defeat at Saratoga. General Burgoyne had proposed crushing the American rebellion by splitting the colonies in half by marching through upstate New York. This was a difficult task, as it required traversing forested wilderness. Eventually that October the British capitulated at Saratoga, often seen as a watershed moment encouraging France to openly side with the colonists. However, these events were significant for Smith-Stanley too. The vanquished Burgoyne returned home, but as MP for Preston he believed there were attempts to silence him in Parliament.³⁰ Because of these events, Burgoyne and Derby gravitated towards the Opposition. Burgoyne later wrote that he was glad to see his nephew 'take the lead in the House of Lords' on the American business. But, even if Derby was vocal, he was unlikely to achieve results. The Opposition returned to power in 1782, at a very late stage in the conflict. Furthermore, Derby was associated with the 'wrong' component of the Rockingham-Shelburne ministry. In a letter to Derby, Burgoyne praised Portland and Charles Fox as 'true patriots'.³¹ These were men from the Rockinghamite wing of the Government, but Wentworth-Woodhouse was only in office for a matter of months before dying. Shelburne took over thereafter. This was unfortunate for Derby, as Fox and Shelburne were political foes. It was not until the Fox-North coalition that Derby held office as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. This was

²⁹ Cobball, *PHE, Volume 18*, 176-7.

³⁰ LA, *A Letter from Lieut. General Burgoyne to his Constituents upon his late resignation* (London, 1779), *Athenaeum Pamphlets* 2.

³¹ LIVRO, *Derby Papers*, John Burgoyne to the Earl of Derby, 20 June 1782, 920 DER (12).

a historical title that included administration of the Duchy's estates.³² But even then, Derby held this position for only four months.³³

Whilst the Liverpool, and some of the Lancashire, MPs did not prove very influential, what of the other branch of the Liverpool lobby – the mercantile interest? They continued to send petitions and delegates to Parliament, the Treasury, Board of Trade, Privy Council, and African Company. The merchant-dominated Liverpool Corporation also continued to network with men on the spot in London, such as the Elder Gascoyne. However, there were major structural changes in the Liverpool commercial lobby after 1774. This included the establishment of a Chamber of Commerce and the Corporation's Committee of Trade, which was discussed in Chapter One.³⁴

Bennett argued that the Liverpool Chamber was successful in its lobbying activities. This was based upon the self-assessment of the Chamber itself. Of the issues identified, 15 (42.9 per cent) were judged to be successful, 3 (8.6 per cent) probably successful, and a further 3 (8.6 per cent) with some influence, if not entirely positive. This resulted in an over 60 per cent success rate.³⁵ Bennett argued that this achievement was due to its membership being inter-linked through shared business, social, and family networks.³⁶ However, upon reflection, this figure does seem inflated. Even Bennett acknowledged that this was based upon the Chamber's own spin, attempting, of course, to justify its own existence.

³² Parliament UK website, <http://www.parliament.uk/site-information/glossary/chancellor-of-the-duchy-of-lancaster/>, accessed 25 June 2014.

³³ Also see Cox, *Derby*.

³⁴ LIVRO, *Board of Trade Committee Minute Book*, 5 April 1775, 352 COU 2/1.

³⁵ Bennell, *Voice of Liverpool Business*, 37.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 101-28.

Results were actually more varied – lobbying achieved success to different degrees: immediate, partial, and long-term.³⁷ The Chamber also endured sizable problems. Although it corresponded with other provincial towns, not every location (namely Bristol) wished to work closely with its rivals in Liverpool. Greater provincial co-operation only came with the establishment of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce in the early-1780s, at the end of the American War.³⁸ Furthermore, the Liverpool Chamber and Committee of Trade did not initially enjoy a harmonious relationship. It was not until 1793 that their memberships began to overlap. Amidst internal disputes and turnover in membership, the Chamber dissolved in 1796.³⁹ Nor was the Committee of Trade especially long-lasting: sitting on 118 occasions, it folded in 1794.⁴⁰ Let us now see how these Liverpool dynamics played out in London on imperial matters up to 1783.

THE QUEBEC ACT, 1774

After the Seven Years War, Canada was placed under British military rule. However, the French *Canadiens* remained in the majority. North believed that if British authority was to be preserved, then colonial authorities needed to secure the loyalty of the French population. It was therefore proposed that a Governor would rule alongside a nominated legislative council of British and French advisors. French law would continue, as would the free practice of Catholicism.⁴¹ William Pitt, often depicted as the architect of British victory in 1763, denounced these

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 37.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 44–6.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 129–36.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁴¹ J.G. Reid and E. Mancke, 'From Global Process to Continental Strategies: The Emergence of British North America to 1783', in P. Buckner, ed., *Canada and the British Empire* (Oxford, 2010), 39.

measures in the Lords in June 1774. He argued that the English system should take precedence over French law, and that the bolstering of Catholicism was unthinkable.⁴²

Sir William Meredith, at this time a member of North's government, hardly features in the parliamentary debates on this issue. No doubt he was still reeling from Burke's devastating attack upon his character in May. Thus, he voiced an opinion on the matter outside Parliament. In the pamphlet *A Letter to the Earl of Chatham*, Meredith acknowledged the contribution made by Pitt to the 'glorious era', when New France had been added to the Empire. However, Sir William parted company with Chatham by supporting North's legislation. He argued that the system of government in Canada was confused, hence threatening the liberty of the people. It utilised both English and French laws, which meant 'no man knew by what right he could take, or give, inherit, convey, possesses, or enjoy property.' Such circumstances enabled the Crown to amend the statute books. Therefore, Meredith asked rhetorically, 'what less than despotism is the power of the crown when it can create or interpret, establish, or destroy laws, by virtue of its own mandates?'⁴³ Sir William claimed that North's Quebec Act improved the system of government by clarifying the rules. In doing so, it preserved the rights of Englishmen.⁴⁴ An unknown author later contradicted the Comptroller's arguments. Whilst a legislative council would be introduced, this remained insufficient for preserving liberty, as its members remained the King's nominees. Furthermore,

⁴² P.D. Brown, *William Pitt Earl of Chatham: The Great Commoner* (London, 1978), 374–6.

⁴³ W. Meredith, *A Letter to the Earl of Chatham* (London, 1774), 6–8.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 25–9.

the threat of absolutism continued because Catholic ceremonies were retained.⁴⁵ It is hard to imagine North opposing the content of Meredith's tract, especially since it supported the ministry. Nevertheless, there is little evidence of the prime minister praising the document. Again, whilst members of the Liverpool-lobby raised their profile, they did not command significant influence.

SUPPORT FOR COERCION, 1774-1775

A series of events paved the way for major unrest in the Thirteen Colonies. In May 1773 Parliament passed the Tea Act to save the EIC from bankruptcy. Under this legislation duties paid on tea were returned to the Company directly, and sold only through designated agents. Although this made tea cheaper in America, the act re-opened the vexed question of taxation in the colonies. On 16 December 1773 six radical Sons of Liberty, disguised as Indians, boarded the company ship *Dartmouth* in Boston harbour. They destroyed 342 chests of tea, valued at £10,000.⁴⁶ London viewed this act of vandalism as a challenge to imperial authority. Therefore, between 1774 and 1775 there was a flurry of activity in Westminster. North's government introduced legislation designed to isolate and punish Boston. However, it had precisely the opposite effect by unifying the colonies against the mother country. On 5 September 1774 the first Continental Congress met in Philadelphia to discuss the situation. British control in the colonies began to unravel as Patriot militias hoarded weapons. The following April British troops were ordered to recover guns in rural Massachusetts, which led to armed confrontations at Lexington and Concord, igniting the Revolutionary War.

⁴⁵ *A Letter to Sir William Meredith, Bart, in Answer to his Late Letter to the Earl of Chatham* (London, 1774), 9-14.

⁴⁶ Cogliano, *Revolutionary America*, 47.

On 20 May 1774 *Williamson's General Advertiser* noted that there was parliamentary opposition to the Government's coercive measures. 'The Duke of Richmond, and nine other Peers, are said to have entered a Protest against the Bill...for regulating the...government of Massachusetts'.⁴⁷ By 27 May there were rumours that the ministry would join forces with William Pitt. There was also uncertainty amongst the London mercantile community.⁴⁸ *Williamson's General Advertiser* printed a letter from the capital on 20 January 1775 stating: 'The commercial part of this city begin to feel a very sensible alarm at the firm and temperate proceeding of the American Congress; and many wise men entertain the most melancholy apprehensions'. In a move that initially seems to weaken the pre-eminence and exclusivity of London in the Cain-Hopkins thesis, metropolitan merchants called upon Liverpool and Manchester to sponsor their initiatives.⁴⁹

But, given that merchants in the capital called upon other commercial centres, this suggests that London-based interests were aware of the importance of mobilizing wider opinion. Evidently London businessmen were not isolated from provincial interests. The example of America after 1774 therefore 'reinforces the point that when City and provincial men co-operated, proceedings were usually dictated by London'.⁵⁰ Liverpool's lack of effectiveness is indicated here. In December 1774, the Chamber of Commerce adopted the cautious strategy of sending a circular letter to other trading towns, wishing to know their opinions on current events. A more assertive style was later adopted on 14 January 1775, when the Chamber sent a petition to Parliament re-stating the importance of the American market. By

⁴⁷ *Williamson's General Advertiser*, 20 May 1774.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 27 May 1774.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 20 January 1775.

⁵⁰ A. Webster, 'Business and Empire: A Reassessment of the British Conquest of Burma in 1885', *Historical Journal*, 43, 4 (2000), 1025.

26 January a delegation of Liverpool merchants went to Westminster for several weeks. Regrettably, 'no security could be obtained'.⁵¹

A key reason for Liverpool's inability to take advantage of this particular situation was the parliamentary lobby's lack of unity. On 19 April 1774 Pennant attacked the ministry, seconding an Opposition motion to repeal the Tea Duty. He argued that raising revenue in America nullified the chartered rights of colonial assemblies. Critics of this resolution included the government's Solicitor-General, who believed this motion emboldened the colonists. Challenging the principle of parliamentary authority, this motion failed to progress.⁵² In contrast, Sir William supported the ministry's agenda. He made contributions to parliamentary debates on some of the coercive measures, including the Boston Port Bill, the Quartering Act, and Justice Act.⁵³ Nevertheless, Meredith's contribution to the Massachusetts Government Bill (which altered the province's charter) is better recorded. Receiving its third reading on 2 May 1774, the Liverpool MP stated that whilst he opposed taxing America he acknowledged the supremacy of Britain over its colonies. Supporting parliamentary sovereignty, Meredith said that now that Americans had resisted an Act of Parliament and destroyed property, it was time to regulate the course of justice. He was with the Government when the bill passed in the affirmative.⁵⁴

Despite siding with the ministry during this period, and being on the winning side, there is still evidence that Sir William was not highly regarded by his peers. On 23

⁵¹ LA, *Abstract of the Proceedings and Resolutions of the Several Committees of the Chamber of Commerce*, Athenaeum Misc Pamphlets 65 (828 PAM).

⁵² Simmons and Thomas, *PDBP*, Volume 4, 180-234.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 393-4. Also see South Carolina Historical Society, South Carolina General Assembly Committee of Correspondence, 1765-1779, Letter from Charles Garth, London, 24 January 1775, 1034.00.

⁵⁴ Simmons and Thomas, *PDBP*, Volume 4, 376-83.

January 1775, a London Alderman requested that the Commons consider a petition from the capital's merchants on the state of America, and refer it to the committee already looking into this matter. But the Government benches were opposed to this because the pre-existing papers had laid the groundwork for coercion. 'Lord North therefore, by his friend Sir William Meredith, moved that this petition should be referred to a committee of its own'. With government support, Meredith's amendment passed 197 votes to 81. However, Thomas Townshend MP observed that the Liverpool MP was being laughed at by his 'new friends' in government.⁵⁵ Nor was Meredith popular with the Opposition. In spring 1775, North successfully moved for a bill restraining the commerce of New England. During the debate, opposition MP Sir George Saville argued that since the Americans had been taxed without their consent, the colonists were in a state of 'justifiable rebellion'. Sir William rebutted this claim, noting that such taxes in America had been legally passed under the 1766 Declaratory Act. Meredith also stated that he 'did and ever would oppose the principle of taxing America'. However, critics pounced upon the contradictions in Meredith's argument. How could an MP that opposed taxing America support the Coercive Acts?⁵⁶ The lack of respect for Sir William, on both sides of the political aisle, demonstrates the weakness of his networks, reducing his ability to influence policy.

⁵⁵ Simmons and Thomas, *PDBP*, Volume 5, 296-9.

⁵⁶ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 45 (1775), 259-61.

SHIFTING SUPPORT AND CRITICISM OF THE WAR, 1777-1780

At the start of the conflict both Meredith and Derby favoured coercion. However, after the British defeat at Saratoga in 1777, both men changed their positions. They now became vocal critics of the struggle. It was not that they supported American independence *per se*. In 1778 Meredith pontificated: 'it was a certain known truth that it was not the interest of America to insist on [independence].'⁵⁷ But they did object to the Government's justification for the conflict, and the manner of the war effort. Although Meredith and Derby voiced their opposition, their substantial impact was limited. The patriotic tide that swept the nation after Bourbon intervention in 1777 reduced the potency of their arguments. By criticising the ministry's policy of restoring imperial authority in America, they appeared to challenge parliamentary sovereignty and the official mind.

After 1777, Sir William derided the ministry's justification for the war. Indeed, he argued that the laws of nature did not support the conflict. These views found expression in his 1778 pamphlet, *Historical Remarks on the Taxation of Free States*. An anthology of letters written by the Liverpool MP, the second letter identified animal species that nurtured their young. Parental care should also extend from a mother country to its colonies.⁵⁸ Meredith also challenged the Government's legal justification for the conflict. North was dedicated to upholding parliamentary sovereignty in the colonies, which was codified in the Declaratory Act. However, on 6 April 1778, Meredith called for repeal of this legislation. It was one of 'several obnoxious Acts' that made reconciliation with the colonists unlikely.

⁵⁷ Cobbett, *PHE*, Volume 19, 1204-7.

⁵⁸ William Meredith, *Historical Remarks on the Taxation of Free States* (London, 1778), 5-8.

Seconded by opposition MP Sir George Yonge, the motion was delayed by the ministry indefinitely.⁵⁹

Both Meredith and Derby opposed the American War because of their anger against perceived ministerial incompetence. Following the King's Speech to Parliament in November 1778, in which George re-stated his determination to fight the war, the Commons considered the traditional Address of Thanks to the monarch. But Fox and Townshend proposed establishing a committee to investigate the misconduct of ministers. Meredith contributed to the debate, and believed that American independence was 'not to be avoided while ministers spoke one language, and held another'. Fox's motion went down to defeat against government majorities.⁶⁰ After the same speech, Derby was amongst those who voted against the Address of Thanks in the Lords. He charged that the Cabinet had been weak, impolitic, and that they had treated Burgoyne disgracefully. Regardless, Derby and the Opposition were unsuccessful in stopping the Address. The preamble to Smith-Stanley's speech was significant. He hoped that he would not be 'charged with inconsistency of conduct', as he supported Britain's right to tax its American possession but voted against the Address of Thanks.⁶¹ This implies that Derby knew his position seemed opportunistic, and therefore reduced his influence in the corridors of power.

Both Meredith and Smith-Stanley favoured peace initiatives. On 11 June 1779 Sir William moved that a petition be sent to the King to secure an end to the war. The

⁵⁹ Cobbett, *PHE*, Volume 19, 1010-12.

⁶⁰ *Gentlemen's Magazine*, 49 (1779), 3-12.

⁶¹ Cobbett, *PHE*, Volume 19, 1291-3.

speech was well received by Charles Fox, who described it as 'one of the finest we ever heard'.⁶² However, the Ministry rejected Meredith's motion because Congress refused to deal with Britain unless George III acknowledged the United States. The implication of Meredith's initiative was that it challenged parliamentary sovereignty, and easily failed without a division.⁶³ Still, Meredith's proposal had some impact, if not concrete success. Only a matter of days later David Hartley, MP for Kingston-upon-Hull, reintroduced virtually the same motion. Meredith wryly reminded Hartley that his own resolution had failed.⁶⁴ The prime minister also informed the King about Meredith's initiative. Unsurprisingly, George expressed disapproval of the motion, describing it as 'very mischievous'.⁶⁵ Smith-Stanley also favoured peace negotiations with America. In the House of Lords on 7 December 1778 Rockingham attacked the manifesto released by the unsuccessful commission under the Earl of Carlisle. This delegation had been sent to America to discuss peace, but proved fruitless. Instead, its members signed a document proposing to fight the war to the finish.⁶⁶ Rockingham called for an address to the King expressing the Lord's disapprobation of the document. Derby contributed to the debate, describing this document as a 'bloody edict' that dishonoured Great Britain. Again, the Opposition's motion succumbed to North's majority.⁶⁷

Members of the Liverpool parliamentary lobby also criticised the management of the land war. In February 1778, Barrington, Secretary at War, urged Parliament to

⁶² *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 12 June 1779.

⁶³ Cobbett, *PHE*, Volume 20, 536-54.

⁶⁴ *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 14 June 1779.

⁶⁵ George III to Lord North, Kew, 12 June 1779, in J. Forster, ed., *The Correspondence of King George III from 1760 to December 1783 Volume IV 1778-1779* (London, 1927), 353-4.

⁶⁶ P. M. Geoghegan, 'Howard, Frederick, fifth earl of Carlisle (1748-1825)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13899>; accessed 12 June 2014.

⁶⁷ Cobbett, *PHE* Volume 20, 1-46.

raise new troops. In doing so, North claimed that the ministry was merely drawing upon past precedents. However, Sir William was amongst those who suggested that the Government was misinterpreting the record. Whilst Pitt had indeed raised troops in 1759, these were old regiments that had previously been approved by Parliament. Nonetheless, Meredith was in the minority when 223 MPs voted with the administration. This particular example illustrates the decline in Meredith's reputation, and the tensions within the Liverpool lobby. Bamber Gascoyne, MP for Truro and close associate of the Liverpool Corporation, openly criticised Sir William. Gascoyne thought 'little regard was due to what was said by one in whom no confidence could be placed.' Meredith retorted: it was 'a pity [Gascoyne] stopt [sic], as abuse from him was great praise'.⁶⁸

The Liverpoolian parliamentarians were especially critical of the conduct of the naval war. By 1778 the French had become involved in the conflict, and their fleet sailed from Toulon on 13 April. This was significant as it threatened British sea power in the Atlantic. 25 May 1778 was a busy day in the House on naval issues. The Rockinghamite Duke of Richmond had spoken at great length, and Meredith moved three resolutions: that Ministers had intelligence on the sailing of the French ships, that no orders were sent until 29 April, and that ministers were inattentive. The outcome indicated that Liverpool MPs could get some things done in Parliament (albeit qualified). The first resolution passed 117 to 91. But when the subsequent motions came to a vote, North successfully moved for an adjournment.

⁶⁸ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 48 (1778), 609-11.

All Meredith could do was to insinuate that this was a ploy to prevent discussing ministerial neglect.⁶⁹

The Keppel-Palliser affair was one of the most infamous episodes from the war. In the summer of 1778, Admiral Augustus Keppel engaged a French fleet at the indecisive Battle at Ushant. The British commander ordered vessels under Sir Hugh Palliser to come to his aid. However, Sir Hugh claimed that he could not see Keppel's signal. By December, Palliser had called for Keppel to be court-martialled. This was speedily adhered to, fuelling rumours that the move was politically motivated. Indeed, whereas Keppel was affiliated with the Opposition, Palliser had ties to the Earl of Sandwich, First Lord of the Admiralty. Held in early 1779, the trial ultimately acquitted Keppel. Palliser subsequently called for his own trial, which cleared his name too.⁷⁰ Meredith played a role in this drama, although it was minor and unfruitful. On 11 December 1778, Tempell Luttrell MP called for the trial of Hugh Palliser, for allegedly disobeying orders. North opposed it, believing there was no evidence to support this claim. Surprisingly, Meredith sided with the prime minister, and successfully moved that the latter part of the resolution be omitted.⁷¹ However, the matter continued on 3 March 1779 when Fox proposed censuring the Admiralty for sending Keppel with too small a force. During his interrogation, Keppel supplied evidence to Fox's questions. It was mooted that this evidence be taken down in writing. But the ministry regarded this as being un-parliamentary, as witnesses required notice before giving evidence. Meredith moved for the

⁶⁹ Cobbett, *PHE Volume 19*, 1161-75.

⁷⁰ P. Mackesy, *War for America*, 3rd edn (Cambridge, 1993), 239-43.

⁷¹ Cobbett, *PHE Volume 20*, 53-73.

evidence to be written down, but was unsuccessful in the face of government resistance.⁷²

LIVERPOOL'S OVERSEAS TRADE DURING THE AMERICAN WAR

The crisis in the Thirteen Colonies disrupted Liverpool's Atlantic trade. Not surprisingly, different branches of the town's lobby were active in supporting these interests. This section does not deal specifically with North American commerce, as this will be addressed in full in the next chapter. But the internationalisation of the American conflict had knock-on effects for the European market. An example from spring 1774 (admittedly prior to the war) further illustrates Sir William Meredith's ineffectiveness. Parliament was considering the declining state of the British linen trade. Various explanations were proposed, including its handicap through constrained credit supplies and increased foreign competition. On 17 May, Frederick Campbell (Sir William's brother-in-law) hoped to save this business by placing a bounty upon the exports of British and Irish linens. This was not a new idea, as it had been in operation until 1756. This call found support from Lord North, so long as it did not threaten other branches of trade. However, Meredith opposed his relative's suggestion on the grounds that the previous duty had damaged the cotton trade. The vote was 129 for the duty, 63 against.⁷³ Meredith was again in the minority, and clearly family ties did not always guarantee support.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 174-89.

⁷³ Cobbett, *PHE Volume 17*, 1143-58.

The Greenland trade also continued to vex the local commercial lobby. Military conflict had led to the contraction of the British whaling fleet, and by 1777 press gangs captured the crewmen from whalers - who were officially exempt from this activity.⁷⁴ Thus, on 14 February 1775 the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce petitioned Parliament to continue the 40s. bounty upon the Greenland Trade. However this came to nothing.⁷⁵ By January 1782 the Liverpool (and Hull) merchants were again calling for new bounties for the Greenland ships. Parliament subsequently acquiesced in Liverpool's request.⁷⁶ Although the lobby was successful on this occasion, the fact that this issue repeatedly came up suggests that the Liverpool businessmen did not always achieve positive outcomes.

Irish trade was also problematic for Liverpool after 1775. Indeed, with the outbreak of hostilities, Irish Patriots identified with the American cause. It was therefore mooted in London that some concessions be granted to Ireland. On 2 April 1778 the Commons decided to establish a committee to consider the state of the Irish trade. By 7 April, there were proposals for Irish-produced goods to be exported directly from there on British ships to British territories. Opponents feared that cheaper Irish taxes and labour would damage British manufacturing, and this ensured that there was a lengthy debate on this matter in the Commons.⁷⁷ At this

⁷⁴ Jackson, *British Whaling*, 66-74.

⁷⁵ LA, Abstract of the Proceedings and Resolutions of the Several Committees of the Chamber of Commerce, *Althausum Miso Pamphlets* 65 (828 PAM).

⁷⁶ Parliamentary Debates, 28 January 1782, 281, House of Commons Papers Online, http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk/lullax/lullaxLdo?area=hoppandid=pr_1780_1796-000264andsource=andpagenum=1SandresultNum=andentries=andqueryId=andackto=FULLRECandfromSearchHistory=andsearchWithin=andshowall=andentlarge=andgoFirstHit=andSEARCHSTRING=: accessed 1 June 2014.

⁷⁷ Cobbett, *PHE Volume 19*, 1100-26.

stage the key element of reform, the Irish Import Bill, was defeated in the Lords.⁷⁸ However, as we shall see, this was only a short-term success for Liverpool.

The second city of empire played a vocal role in opposing this legislation. On 28 March 1778, Liverpool's Committee of Trade learned of the proposals, which enabled greater commerce between Ireland and the West Indies. The Committee responded by drawing up a petition opposing this scheme, and on 15 April sent circular letters to the mayors of several towns criticising plans to open the African trade to Ireland. Three days later, the Committee pressured MPs to defeat the bill.⁷⁹ Other local groups opposed this legislation, including Liverpool manufacturers, such as soap boilers.⁸⁰ Bamber Gascoyne provided support to the Liverpool interest too. On 19 May, he successfully moved in Parliament that duties be levied upon articles that were to be exported under the Irish Importation Bill.⁸¹ This presumably went against the notion of opening Irish trade, delighting the Liverpool Corporation. Hence, on 7 October the Corporation thanked Gascoyne for 'his many great important and eminent Services done this Town...[and]...on the Irish Trade Bills in particular'.⁸²

At this stage, the Liverpool lobby had successfully opposed the reforms to Irish trade. But we cannot attribute this solely to the interventions of the second city of

⁷⁸ Pery, *British Politics*, 92.

⁷⁹ LIVRO, Liverpool Committee of Trade, Board of Trade Committee Minute Book, 352 MIN/COU 2/1.

⁸⁰ Journal of the House of Commons, 5 May 1778, 953-7, House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online, <http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk/lullax/lullaxLdo?area=hoppandid=jho-010078andsource=andpagenum=3andresultNum=andentries=andqueryId=andackto=FULLRECandfromSearchHistory=andsearchWithin=andshowall=andentlarge=andgoFirstHit=andSEARCHSTRING=:> accessed 1 June 2014.

⁸¹ Cobbett, *PHE Volume 19*, 124.

⁸² LIVRO, Liverpool Corporation Records, 7 October 1778, 352 MIN/COU 1.

empire. By May 1778 a flurry of petitions against this proposed legislation swamped Westminster. They came from a variety of locations, including Blackburn, Glasgow, and Lancaster, reflecting widespread opposition from both services and manufacturing.⁸³ Here was a successful instance of provincial co-operation. The sailcloth makers of Liverpool, Warrington, Preston, Wigan, and several other places, also sent a united petition to London criticising the bill. They restated their economic arguments, and invoked the belief that importing sails from Ireland would compromise British security during wartime.⁸⁴ Despite its ability to raise its voice, Liverpool clearly had to enlist the support of provincial towns and men on the spot in London, if it was to succeed. But perhaps the key factor here was that Lord North was tiring of his premiership, and henceforth allowed the measure to be defeated.⁸⁵

Yet, in the longer term, the Liverpool lobby did not succeed in opposing reform to Irish trade. The failure of reform in 1778 generated a considerable backlash in Ireland, resulting in the boycott of English goods, and the 'Buy Irish' campaigns. War with France, the formation of Irish Volunteers, and escalation of public discontent, eventually compelled London to grant the Irish 'free trade' between 1779 and 1780. This was not tantamount to *laissez-faire* economics, but instead

⁸³ Journal of the House of Commons, 5 May 1778, 953-7, House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online, <http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk/fulltext/fulltext.do?area=hopp&id=jhc-010078&source=andpagenum=3&resultNum=andentries=andqueryId=andbackId=FULLRECa&ndfromSearchHistory=andsearchWithin=andshowall=andentlarge=andgoBackFirstHit=andSEARCHSTRING=:> accessed 1 June 2014.

⁸⁴ Debates, House of Commons, 6 May 1778, House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online, 180-94, <http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk/home.do>: accessed 1 June 2014.

⁸⁵ Pary, *British Politics*, 91-2.

granted Ireland full access to colonial commerce, and a repeal of restrictions upon glass and wool.⁸⁶

The biggest issue for Liverpool's overseas trade during these years was arguably the African-West Indian nexus. Different elements of the Liverpool lobby raised their voices on this subject, and often achieved only 'hit and miss' results in influencing policy. In November 1774 the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce noted that the Jamaican Assembly had levied 40s. per head upon imported slaves. The Chamber therefore petitioned the Earl of Dartmouth, Secretary of State for the Colonies, requesting the 'suppressing' of this act, fearing that it made trade less lucrative.⁸⁷ Other commercial forums protested this duty too, including the African Company of Merchants and mercantile counterparts in Bristol and London. By 12 December representatives from these towns had attended the Board of Trade.⁸⁸ As a sign of limited success, Jamaican duties continued to be problematic for Liverpool. On 26 January 1775 the Chamber of Commerce sought to recover the duty levied upon slaves. Yet a 'want of unanimity' prevented this from progressing further. In February yet another memorial was sent to Dartmouth, opposing an additional duty of £5 levied upon every Negro imported into Jamaica over the age of 30. Another Liverpool delegation therefore attended the Board of Trade. But, on this occasion, the town was successful. The Board judged the Act to be improper,

⁸⁶ R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (London, 1989), 242-3 and O'Gorman, *Long Eighteenth Century*, 317-8.

⁸⁷ LA, Abstract of the Proceedings and Resolutions of the Several Committees of the Chamber of Commerce, *Albion Misc Pamphlets* 65 (828 PAM).

⁸⁸ TNA, Colonial Office Records, CO 326/66.

and the governor of Jamaica was instructed not to give his assent to any similar laws in future.⁸⁹

The issue of shipping supplies to the Caribbean was crucial, but again Liverpool enjoyed only mixed lobbying fortunes. On 20 November 1775 the Chamber of Commerce observed that the West Indies were deprived of provisions from North America. It therefore petitioned Parliament to grant permission to export certain supplies to British America. Permission was obtained, but under restrictions. There were also difficulties regarding the supplying of vessels traversing the Triangular Trade. The outbreak of war with America imposed restrictions on the exportation of arms on British vessels. This being detrimental to the African trade, the Chamber sent a petition to the King on 6 September 1775, hoping for permission to ship ammunition in vessels going to Africa. Thomas Case and Thomas Hodgson Junior were dispatched to London to support this measure, and made some headway. However, a similar initiative on 5 September 1776 provided no 'effectual relief'.⁹⁰ As a consequence, several merchants became individually active on this issue. On 3 June 1777 Gill Slater asked the Board of Trade for permission to export sundry ordnance and military stores from Liverpool to St. Vincent. The Board criticised Slater for not identifying how his vessel would take these supplies, and rejected his request.⁹¹ But on other occasions some individuals were successful. Shipbuilder Roger Fisher wanted to export military stores to Africa for the purpose of trade, as well as to carry swivel guns. After the

⁸⁹ LA, Abstract of the Proceedings and Resolutions of the Several Committees of the Chamber of Commerce, Athenaeum Misc Pamphlets 65 (S28 PAM).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations from January 1776 to May 1782* (London, 1938), 95.

vessel had been inspected, the Board concluded that carrying swivel guns was unnecessary to secure the ship. But they had no objection to the first part of the petition, provided that the Customs were financially compensated.⁹²

1777 proved to be an important year for the African market. In the face of declining trade, questions surfaced regarding the competency of the African Company. That February the Board of Trade wrote to merchants in Bristol and Liverpool, calling for information on the state of the African business. The Board also requested that the Commissioners of the Customs list all the vessels belonging to Liverpool and Bristol that had cleared to Africa since 1750. But all of this proved a difficult experience for Liverpool. The Commissioners complained about the impossibility of preparing satisfactory accounts of the Liverpool ships. As a result, the town's Mayor, William Crosbie, informed the authorities that a local committee had been formed to consider this issue. A report was eventually laid before Parliament, but additional problems surfaced on 4 April 1777, when John Dobson of the Chamber of Commerce wrote to Bristol:

One can scarce avoid suspecting, that the intentions of Administration is to let the remainder of the Session slip over, without further attention to this matter...We can not however be content to give the matter up...from the Malpractices of the Company's Servants, We are still willing to entertain

⁹² TNA, Colonial Office Records, Letter from Board of Trade to Privy Council, Privy Council, 1775, CO 389/32.

hopes, that those abuses may be in a great measure, if not totally removed.⁹³

Dobson concluded by requesting that Bristol share its thoughts on the matter. This suggests that these towns did not always do so, and that links between these provincial commercial centres were rarely close. Further complications arose as on 27 May, when a Liverpool deputation attended the Board to prove unidentified 'allegations contained in the report sent from thence'. By June the immediate matter was seemingly at an end.⁹⁴

Other elements of the Liverpool lobby were active on the trans-Atlantic slave trade during the war years. Indeed, Meredith spoke on this matter in Parliament on 5 June 1777. North proposed that £13,000 be paid to the African Company for maintaining their garrisons, but not to discharge their debts. Alongside several MPs, including Burke, Meredith supported the proposal. Failure to supply this money would jeopardise access to valuable commodities, such as mahogany and palm oil. For once, Meredith was in the majority. Nevertheless, the debate exposed the proto-gentlemanly capitalist divisions between the landed Liverpool MP and the mercantile Corporation. The latter's advocate, Bamber Gascoyne, was 'violent in his censure of the African company', and presumably opposed the measure.⁹⁵ It seems unlikely that these issues were ultimately resolved to Liverpool's merchants satisfaction. A letter from Gill Slater, president of the Chamber of Commerce, to Bristol on 12 April 1779 noted that they were 'much

⁹³ BRO, Society of Merchant Venturers, John Dobson to Henry Garnett, Master of the Merchant's Hall, Bristol, 4 April 1777, SMV/2/4/2/20/8.

⁹⁴ TNA, Colonial Office records, Board of Trade original Correspondence, 27 May 1777, CO 326/69.

⁹⁵ Cobbett, *PHE*, Volume 19, 313-6.

alarmed [by]...the Advocates of Monopoly', and that the low ebb of trade strengthened 'the hands of our opponents'.⁹⁶

The Liverpool lobby also strove to protect the territorial security of British possessions in the Caribbean, again with mixed results. At the forefront of this struggle was Richard Pennant. In early-1777 he brought the banker Sir Roger Harries before the House. The latter was examined by Meredith as a witness to 'the distressed situation of the West India Islands.' Sir Robert's testimony afforded 'great satisfaction' in the Commons.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, in a sign that matters were not resolved, Pennant mentioned Jamaica in the Commons again in December 1779. He moved for an address demanding copies of the complaints by the Jamaican assembly, which desired additional protection from the Bourbons. Both the American Secretary and prime minister opposed Pennant's proposal, arguing that it compromised national security.⁹⁸ In early-1780 Pennant presented a petition signed by eighty merchants. It complained that London had not done enough to protect Jamaica. The ensuing debate saw the Secretary of State for the Colonies, George Germain, mobilise government supporters to defeat the petition.⁹⁹ Undeterred by his lack of parliamentary success, Pennant supported the West Indian lobby outside of Westminster. He attended a meeting at a London tavern on 15 October 1779, to help finance a regiment for the protection of Jamaica. A subscription was opened up, and Pennant himself contributed £100.¹⁰⁰ By February 1781 another West Indian committee had been established to support

⁹⁶ BRO, Society of Merchant Venturers, Gill Slater, the Committee of Commerce, Liverpool to Michael Miller Jun. Esqr, Bristol 12 April 1779, SMV/2/4/2/22/18.

⁹⁷ *Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser*, 28 February 1777.

⁹⁸ *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 31 December 1779.

⁹⁹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 50 (1780), 351-3.

¹⁰⁰ *Public Advertiser*, 4 November 1779.

the 'sufferers of calamities in Jamaica and Barbados.' This was in response to the hurricane that had devastated the islands the previous year. Pennant contributed to the scheme alongside notables such as the Mayor of London.¹⁰¹ Thus, whilst Pennant had been vocal, in final analysis his initiatives bore little fruit.

The British attack upon the Dutch island of St. Eustatius in February 1781 had repercussions for the newly elected Liverpool MPs too. After the assault, it was alleged that British commanders had acquired personal wealth for themselves, at the detriment of military operations. In Parliament on 14 May Burke criticised the 'flagrant acts of injustice committed by the commanders'. He therefore moved that an address be sent to the King, requesting that memorials on this matter be laid before the House. This was seconded by Mr Stanley, who had presented a petition from 100 Liverpool merchants affected by these confiscations. Stanley also alleged that neither of the Liverpool MPs had presented this document. In response, Bamber Gascoyne the Younger rebutted this accusation, claiming that both he and Henry Rawlinson had seen two similar documents. Not only had they written back to Liverpool regarding one of the petitions (to which they had not received a response), but they had forwarded the other document to the American department.¹⁰² This incident calls into question the effectiveness of the Younger Gascoyne and of Rawlinson.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 14 April 1781.

¹⁰² *Gentleman's Magazine*, 52 (1782), 417-9.

THE END OF THE WAR AND THE PEACE TREATY

On 25 November 1781 news reached London of Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown. This did not automatically spell the end of the war, as imperial forces still occupied New York, Charleston, and Savannah. However, it paved the way for the end of the North ministry. The Government's decline was not immediate, as it held on to office for another four months. During this time it still inflicted several defeats upon the Opposition. For example, on 27 November 1781 the King delivered his speech to Parliament. Amidst the backdrop of Yorktown, George still wished to prosecute the war. The subsequent Address of Thanks criticised the enemies of Britain, and included a clause to keep on fighting. The Opposition called for the removal of this particular clause.¹⁰³ Smith-Stanley was amongst them, and in an attempt to cast himself as a patriot, Derby claimed that the King was 'held under a delusion', and therefore only 'honest and wise counsel' from Parliament could 'remove the bandages from his eyes'. But this was to no avail. The ministry's majority defeated this amendment, which had challenged parliamentary sovereignty over America.¹⁰⁴

The weakness of the Opposition was further exposed in early-1782, when the Lords resolved itself into a committee to consider the defeat at Yorktown. The Duke of Chandos, then gravitating towards Shelburne, moved that this setback was attributable to poor planning. The First Lord of the Admiralty, Sandwich, opposed this, suggesting that defeat was an accident. Chandos's motion ultimately

¹⁰³ Cobbett, *PHE*, Volume 22, 634-58.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 634-58.

fell to a ministerial majority. However, the incident also demonstrated the personal weakness of Derby. In response to Sandwich's testimony, Smith-Stanley referred to the 'impudence' of the minister. For this he was called to order.¹⁰⁵

The moment that Lord North was finally defeated also indicated the Liverpool MP's lack of political savvy. On 27 February 1782 General Conway moved that continuing the war in America would prove detrimental to Britain, and strengthen the hands of her European foes. This was essentially a call to halt offensive operations in the colonies. North opposed it, and the Attorney-General proposed an adjournment. The Liverpool MPs, Bamber Gascoyne and Henry Rawlinson, were pro-North, and therefore voted in favour of the break. Under most circumstances, siding with North would have resulted in being in the majority. But on this occasion the Liverpool MPs were in the minority.¹⁰⁶ As Cogliano pointed out, after Yorktown and with rising debts, there was declining enthusiasm for the American conflict.¹⁰⁷ By now the tide was moving. Whilst not linked to Liverpool, the example of Sir Horace Mann (MP for Maidstone) during this debate is indicative of the shift in attitudes. Mann had previously supported the American War, on the grounds that it had been just and practical. Nevertheless, 'his eyes were now open' and he hoped to end the struggle. Conway's original motion passed, against the votes of the ministry and its followers.¹⁰⁸ Then, on 15 March

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 989-99.

¹⁰⁶ Debate in Parliament, 27 February 1782, 335, House of Commons Parliamentary Papers online, http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk/lulivac/lulivac.do?area=hoppandid=pr_1780_1796-000363&source=andpagenum=25&resultNum=andentries=andqueryId=andackb=FULLREC&fromSearchHistory=andsearchWithin=andshowall=andanlarge=andgoFistHil=andSEARCHSTRING=: accessed 28 June 2014.

¹⁰⁷ Cogliano, *Revolutionary America*, 85.

¹⁰⁸ Debate in Parliament, 27 February 1782, 335, House of Commons Parliamentary Papers online, http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk/lulivac/lulivac.do?area=hoppandid=pr_1780_1796-000363&source=andpagenum=25&resultNum=andentries=andqueryId=andackb=FULLREC

1782, Sir John Rous of Suffolk moved a motion of no confidence in the ministry. Rawlinson's vote is not recorded, but Gascoyne opposed Rous's motion.¹⁰⁹ However, Gascoyne was in the minority, and North resigned on 20 March. These events clearly show how out of step Gascoyne (and probably Rawlinson) were with the political mood at the time.

With the installation of the Rockingham-Shelburne ministry in March 1782, the question of settling the peace became of paramount importance. Nevertheless, this subject demonstrated that Derby was estranged from the ministry, and therefore achieved little. Being an ally of Charles Fox, Smith-Stanley stood to gain from a Rockingham premiership. But Wentworth-Woodhouses's sudden death propelled Shelburne into office. This was bad news for both Fox and Derby. As a result, the latter spent considerable time in 1782 attacking the new leader. In the Lords on 11 July Derby queried, in front of Shelburne, why Fox had resigned from the ministry. The prime minister did not offer a formal reply, but speculated that Fox had resigned because he had become the chief minister.¹¹⁰ Tensions between Derby and Shelburne also simmered over the peace treaty. On 29 November the British and Americans signed a provisional agreement, whereby the UK acknowledged the independence of the US.¹¹¹ On 13 December the Lords questioned this provisional treaty. Earl Fitzwilliam complained that whilst the upper chamber understood the terms to be conditional, the Commons believed them to

[andfromSearchHistory=andsearchWithin=andshowall=andanlarge=andgoFistHil=andSEARCHSTRING=:](http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk/lulivac/lulivac.do?area=hoppandid=pr_1780_1796-000375&source=andpagenum=34&resultNum=andentries=andqueryId=andackb=FULLREC&fromSearchHistory=andsearchWithin=andshowall=andanlarge=andgoFistHil=andSEARCHSTRING=:) accessed 28 June 2014.

¹⁰⁹ Debate in Parliament, 15 March 1782, 480, House of Commons Parliamentary Papers online, http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk/lulivac/lulivac.do?area=hoppandid=pr_1780_1796-000375&source=andpagenum=34&resultNum=andentries=andqueryId=andackb=FULLREC&fromSearchHistory=andsearchWithin=andshowall=andanlarge=andgoFistHil=andSEARCHSTRING=: accessed 28 June 2014.

¹¹⁰ Cobbett, *PHE*, Volume 23, 200-1.

¹¹¹ Cogliano, *Revolutionary America*, 85.

be unconditional. Therefore, Fitzwilliam wanted a clarifying remark from the premier. Shelburne refused to offer a simple answer, stating that he was bound by his office to keep 'the secrets of the King'. This did not satisfy Derby, who demanded a plain statement whether the Americans were 'independent or not'. But again, Shelburne refused to provide a clear response.¹¹² It is not recorded how this conversation ended, but given the smoothness of Shelburne's evasiveness, it seems that Derby exercised limited influence.

The House of Commons also discussed the peace preliminaries, which split the incumbent Liverpool MPs. North was a political opponent of Shelburne, and therefore voted against the peace preliminaries. However, the Liverpool MPs, who were nominally Northites, divided over the issue. Whilst Rawlinson favoured Shelburne's proposals, Gascoyne went against them.¹¹³ Former Liverpool MPs also voiced an opinion on the peace. In 1783 Sir William Meredith published *A Letter on the Preliminaries of Peace*, in which he analysed the proposed treaties with the Allied powers. He was critical of several clauses, including the extension of American fishing rights off the Grand Banks. Sir William also queried why 'ample and important concessions [have been] made to Spain, disgraced and vanquished as she was'. But Meredith welcomed some articles, including the proposed loss of parts of British India. This was because he had long suspected that tyrannical forces governed the subcontinent. Meredith was also pleased that the Treaty of Paris maintained trading links between Britain and America, and therefore that the 'door was open' between the mother country and her former

¹¹² *Gentleman's Magazine*, 53 (1783), pp.105-7.

¹¹³ Namier and Brooke, *HP: The House of Commons 1754-1790 Volume 2*, 492; and Namier and Brooke, *HP: The House of Commons 1754-1790 Volume 3*, 349.

colonies.¹¹⁴ However, being out of favour, there is no evidence that Meredith's views on the treaty carried any weight.

THE POST-WAR PERIOD

With the signing of the Treaty of Paris in September 1783, the immediate issue for the Liverpool merchants was the subject of compensation. Duncan Campbell, who is recorded in the Liverpool street directories as being a merchant residing on Duke Street, sent a petition to the Marquis of Carmarthen in late 1783. He informed the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that he was writing on behalf of merchants from London, Bristol, Liverpool, Whitehaven, and Glasgow, who had traded to America prior to 1776. The petitioners had previously held property in the colonies, but during the course of the war these estates had been sold off to raise money in Virginia and Maryland. The petition further noted that the articles of peace provided for the lawful recovery of *bona fide* debts. But, when the petitioners had gone over to the US to seek redress, they had been met with resistance. Consequently, the merchants urged Carmarthen to intervene on their behalf.¹¹⁵ This example shows evidence of metropolitan and provincial networking. However, the outcome was initially unsuccessful. This was probably a consequence of the complexity of the issue, rather than the incompetence of the Liverpool lobby. As the American Commissioners noted during the peace negotiations, recovering these estates was 'impracticable; because they were confiscated by Laws of Particular States and in many instances, have passed by

¹¹⁴ W. Meredith, *A Letter on the Preliminaries of Peace* (London, 1783), 1-34.

¹¹⁵ TNA, Colonial Office records, letter to the Right Honourable the Marquis of Carmarthen, 1783, CO 518.

legal titles through several hands'.¹¹⁶ Thus, restitution for these debts did not make significant progress until the 1794 Jay Treaty.¹¹⁷

There were also parliamentary attempts to bolster trade between British possessions and the newly independent United States. This included an initiative by the former Liverpool MP Richard Pennant. Prior to the election of 1784, which saw him return to his old seat, Pennant chaired a committee of West Indian planters. In this capacity he met with the prime minister, Pitt the Younger, who assured Pennant that his government would assist British colonies in the Caribbean. The committee therefore decided to petition the Government, advocating a free trade with North America by American ships. This could not be done on British vessels because of their enormous costs. The petitioners also hoped that this plan would be accompanied by a reduction in fees levied upon American shipping in the British West Indies.¹¹⁸ The Board of Trade reported that the British sugar plantations were indeed in a poor economic state, and therefore any non-manufactured goods that came from America, which the British Isles could not supply, could be imported from the US into the British West Indies. Crucially, however, the Board did not advise that goods be imported or exported from the West Indies to the US on American vessels. These commodities would have to be shipped on British vessels only.¹¹⁹ This evidence shows that whilst Liverpool could work with commercial lobbies, the outcome was often qualified. Indeed, the complete opening of this trade would challenge mercantilism, the Navigation Acts, and ultimately the ideological underpinnings of the official mind.

¹¹⁶ TNA, Colonial Office Records, letter by the American Commissioners in Paris, 1782, CO 5/8.

¹¹⁷ Marshall, *Remaking the British Atlantic*, 268.

¹¹⁸ TNA, Board of Trade records, 1784, BT 6/83.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, BT 6/181.

THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

Alongside the American War, the EIC remained a key imperial issue. Lord North's 1773 legislation had attempted to restore solvency to the Company. But it was on the verge of bankruptcy again by 1780.¹²⁰ The Liverpool parliamentary lobby remained involved with this issue, but to a lesser extent than in 1773. On 21 March 1780 Lord North noted in Parliament that the charter of the Company was due for renewal, subject to it being supplied revenue from taxpayers. Thus, he moved that £4.2 million be 'paid off' to the EIC. Fox objected, claiming that this motion deprived the public of their money, and that it was another attempt by the ministry to gain patronage at Company headquarters. Meredith was a teller for the No votes, who were defeated 142 to 68.¹²¹ Presumably Meredith was less active on EIC matters by 1780 because both Government and Opposition MPs reviled him, and he was ill by this time.

Reform of the EIC remained a parliamentary issue after the 1780 election. From April 1781 to April 1782, there were several debates on the Company's charter, financial dealings, profits, and on the treatment of Indians. However, transcripts suggest that Bamber Gascoyne and Rawlinson played no prominent roles in these debates. This re-enforces the perception that these men were relatively insignificant players in the Commons during these years. In contrast, the Earl of Derby did speak out on Fox's East India Bill during the Fox-North Coalition. Using 'long quotations from authentic records', Smith-Stanley spoke in favour of Fox's legislation. He argued that the behaviour of Governor Warren Hastings in India

¹²⁰ Lawson, *East India Company*, 123.

¹²¹ Cobbell, *PHE*, Volume 21, 309-19.

necessitated a new system of control from Westminster.¹²² But, despite supporting the ministry on this occasion, Derby was in the minority as the King exercised his influence to neutralise this bill. This is yet further evidence that the Liverpool lobby did not achieve concrete results (although it would be more difficult to accomplish under these circumstances if the monarch was determined to have his way).

CONCLUSIONS

In Liverpool's interactions with the metropolis during the era of warfare and revolution, the structure of the town's lobby remained chiefly dominated by merchants, and by the landed elite who represented them in Parliament. However, there were some changes in the structure of the lobby after 1774. The merchants were split between the Chamber of Commerce and Committee of Trade, and by 1780 there were two new MPs. In line with Cain and Hopkins's argument, the provinces – here in the guise of Liverpool – could make their presence felt, but they ultimately wielded limited influence in London. For Liverpool after 1774, the splits between the merchants intensified, and ties between the local landed MPs and mercantile interests remained largely proto-gentlemanly capitalist. This was demonstrated in the disagreements between Meredith and the Elder Gascyne over the African Company. Furthermore, these Liverpool MPs were often out of favour with the ministry of the day because of personal issues and political manoeuvring. After 1777 Meredith and Derby frequently called for peace in America, but this defied parliamentary sovereignty, so cherished by the official mind. Hence the initiatives of the Liverpool MPs (who were mostly associated with the Opposition) fell to Government majorities. Finally, whilst Liverpool had links to

¹²² Cobbett, *PHE Volume 24*, 189-90.

other provincial commercial towns, which produced positive results when opposing the Irish Trade Bill (at least initially), connections to Bristol were not robust. This was illustrated by the tone of correspondence with the latter during the slavery issue of 1777.

Thus ends Part One of the thesis, and its concern with Liverpool's role in the imperial policy-making process. We shall now analyse the social, economic, and cultural impact of the American War upon what was becoming the second city of empire. Indeed, if Liverpool had limited influence over imperial policy-making, this did not mean that the course of the War of Independence – in both its continental and Atlantic manifestations – was insignificant for the inhabitants of town.

PART TWO:
THE IMPACT OF IMPERIAL WARFARE

CHAPTER FOUR:
THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF
THE WAR OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE
UPON LIVERPOOL

The first section of this chapter analyses the patterns of overseas commerce. Both Conway and Marriner suggested that the American War had positive and negative consequences for Liverpool's foreign trades. However, in building a more nuanced interpretation, the new analysis presented here identifies four general phases to Liverpool's overseas trade during these years. Initially, there was a period when business broadly remained steady. Secondly, this was followed by a decline. The third phase was marked by a sluggish improvement. Finally, it was not until the post-war period that a clearer recovery finally took hold. It should be stressed that this structure is a very broad generalisation of the overall data, and individual markets often had their own dynamics. Consequently, there are some anomalous results that do not conform to this general pattern. This underscores the general unpredictability of overseas trade. Nevertheless, the proposed four stages put events into a more structured framework than appreciated by previous writers on this subject. Marriner and Conway also postulated that privateering offered some explanation for the rebound in Liverpool's trade. Whilst this activity undoubtedly played a role in the town's recovery, seizing enemy vessels was extremely hazardous. Henceforth, other factors contributed towards Liverpool's sluggish revival. They included the provision of convoys, the business acumen of local merchants, and developments on the battlefield. However, it was the return to

peace in 1783 that ultimately restored Liverpool's overseas trade. Because the town was closely intertwined with the larger Atlantic World, the American War disrupted several lines of commerce. Thus, to gain a broader understanding of the economic impact of the war, this chapter considers the African, European, and Caribbean markets as well. The second part considers the broader effect of the war upon other branches of Liverpool's economy. Regrettably, there is virtually no evidence of how local agriculture and banking responded to this imperial crisis. But, there is data suggesting that there were both winners and losers in the town, thereby supporting elements of both A.H. John's and T.S. Ashton's assertions. Thus, on the whole, the economic impact of the American War of Independence upon Liverpool's foreign trade and local economy was mixed.

THE PERILS OF OVERSEAS TRADE

Foreign commerce was subject to risk at any given time, even during peaceful periods. Success often hinged upon several factors, not least the skill of the ship's captain. The Liverpool-based merchant William Davenport once confided in Captain John Smale: '[you have] many years experience in this trade, we doubt not your making a proper use of it'.¹ But not every captain enjoyed such a cordial relationship with the owner. The Liverpool and Jamaica merchant Richard Watt wrote that one of his skippers was 'not behaving in a masterly manner' because of his youth and inexperience.² Consequently, owners of vessels wrote detailed letters of instructions to their captains. This included guidelines on the course of

¹ MMM, Davenport Papers, Letter Book, Letter of instruction to Captain John Smale, June 1779, D/DAV/1/1.

² LIVRO, Wall Family Papers, Letter and Account Book of Richard Wall, Richard Wall, Kingston, to Naphaw, 29 July 1781, 920 WAT 1/2/1.

the ship, and what cargoes to purchase.³ The co-operation of the crew was also essential. First mates were employed to lead by example. Nonetheless, one of Davenport's captains, Peter Potter, suffered a first mate that would 'feign sick and Absent himself from the Deck'.⁴ Problems could also arise when loading supplies. Whilst purchasing slaves on the African coast in 1751, Liverpool Captain William Earle noted: 'The Callabars are now very Sawsey [sic] I've had my Clothes Tore of my Back'.⁵ A letter from Captain Potter in 1775 also indicated that Liverpool slavers competed with British rivals on the African coast. Indeed, Potter was relieved that a London vessel would soon depart his area. Thus, he would enjoy the 'advantage of being in the River...by myself'.⁶

The transportation of commodities also proved hazardous. It was not unknown for slaves to rebel on vessels during the middle passage from Africa to America. Handcuffs and regular checks were used to prevent revolts, but they were not fool-proof. The logbook of William Earle's *Unity* indicates that several insurrections took place on one voyage alone in 1770. Slaves died during these risings, and others committed suicide by jumping overboard. The result was a loss of cargo and damaged goods. Some slaves were sick when loaded on board. If illness spread to crewmembers, then the operational effectiveness of the ship was impeded.⁷ Bad weather was especially problematic. David Tuohy's *Minerva* was smashed to 'atoms' by a storm on the Welsh coast in 1781. The result was that

³ LIVRO, Earle Papers, letter of instruction to Captain William Earle for voyage to the Cheslerfield, 22 May 1751, D/EARLE/1/1.

⁴ MMM, Davenport Papers, Correspondence, 20 May 1777, D/DAV/10/3.

⁵ MMM, Earle Papers, Captain William Earle to Mrs Anne Winstanley, 30 August 1751, D/EARLE/3/1.

⁶ MMM, Davenport Papers, Captain Peter Potter, Cameroon, to William Davenport, 23 June 1775, D/DAV/7/2/2.

⁷ MMM, Earle Papers, Log Book of *Unity*, July 1769-May 1771, D/EARLE/1/4.

goods were washed along the shoreline, and Tuohy's nephew perished.⁸ Circumstances at market were equally uncertain. Writing in 1778, the Dominican company Vance, Caldwell & Vance informed William Davenport that two years prior, a hurricane had damaged plantations in Guadeloupe. The result was that planters were unable to run their estates or pay creditors.⁹

THE OVERALL IMPACT OF THE AMERICAN WAR UPON LIVERPOOL'S FOREIGN TRADE

Several sources permit measurement of the economic impact of the American War upon Liverpool's overseas commerce. Firstly, there are shipping figures. Lloyd's Register of Shipping includes data on the master, tonnage, and men on board. Whilst undoubtedly useful, the register only includes vessels covered under Lloyd's marine insurance, and therefore does not give the overall picture.¹⁰ There are also the Naval Office Shipping Lists. Compiled by naval officers in British colonies, they recorded vessels arriving at ports with a description of their cargoes. The records up to 1765 are fairly complete, but few have survived thereafter.¹¹ A more accessible source is the General Register of Shipping. This branch of the Customs recorded 'the Total Number of Ships and Vessels, their Tonnage and

⁸ LIVRO, Tuohy Papers, Captain McOwen to David Tuohy, Holyhead, 17 September 1781, 380 TUO/1/31.

⁹ MMM, Davenport Papers, Vance, Caldwell, Vance, to William Davenport, 22 January 1778, D/DAV/12/3.

¹⁰ D.J. Pope, 'Shipping and Trade in the Port of Liverpool 1783-1793: Volume 1' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Liverpool, 1970), 77-8.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 131-5.

Number of Men, belonging to each respective Port'.¹² Such data is presented below:

¹² TNA, Customs Records, General Register of Shipping, 1772-1786, CUST 17/1-9.

TABLE 11 Total numbers of ships at Liverpool by year, 1772-1786

	1772-73	1773-74	1774-75	1775-76	1777-78	1779-80	1781-82	1783-84	1785-6
Foreign	344	323	326	342	294	227	254	293	329
Coastal	57	69	52	54	78	66	53	56	75
Fishing	1								
TOTAL	402	392	380	396	372	293	307	349	404

Source: TNA, Customs Records, General Register of Shipping, 1772-1786, CUST 171-9.

Note: No figures for fishing are provided in the documents from 1773-1786, and the figures for 1774-75 do not add up. The total given here is the figure on the original document.

Table 11 illustrates the four-stage pattern. For the years 1774-1778, the total annual number of ships remains over 350. However, it drops sharply to 293 by 1779-1780. Then there is a modest improvement between 1781 and 1783, with the numbers back to over 300. Finally, during the post-war period, the figure exceeds over 400 – suggesting a stronger recovery.

TABLE 12 Total Tonnage of Liverpool Shipping by year, 1772-1786

	1772-73	1773-74	1774-75	1775-76	1777-78	1779-80	1781-82	1783-84	1785-86
Foreign	35,977	36,606	37,487	41,029	35,344	30,236	30,371	39,875	50,793
Coastal	2,971	3,318	3,185	3,357	4,413	4,022	3,861	3,189	5,072
Fishing	55								
TOTAL	39,003	39,924	40,592	44,386	39,757	34,258	34,232	43,064	55,865

Source: TNA, Customs Records, General Register of Shipping, 1772-1786, CUST 171-9.

Note: No figures for fishing are provided in the documents from 1773-86, and the figures for 1774-75 do not add up. The total given here is the figure on the original document.

For the eighteenth century three types of tonnage were utilised. Firstly, registered tonnage accounted for the payment of revenues. For buying, selling or leasing ships, measured tonnage was used. Finally, for shipping earnings and cargo capacity, cargo tonnage was recorded.¹³ Regrettably, the General Register does not state which it used. Again, the years vary, but a quadruple structure is discernible. Total annual tonnage between 1774 and 1778 remains over 40,000 tons, or very close to it. But between 1779 and 1782 the value is clearly well below 40,000 tons. It was not until 1783 - the final year of the war - that figures had risen back up to this figure. Finally, by the mid-1780s, the annual figure exceeded 55,000 tons.

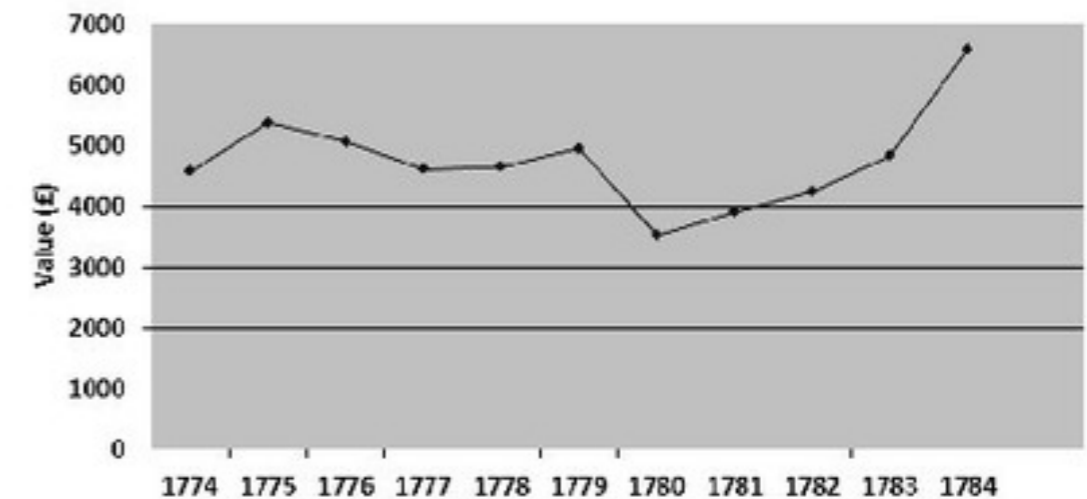
Other useful quantitative sources are duty figures, which indicate the value of goods entering a port. After 1564 Local Port Books recorded customs duties that were paid, but many towns stopped using them by the 1750s.¹⁴ The Board of Trade records hold extensive collections on the value of commodities imported and exported during the eighteenth century.¹⁵ However, much of this data is national in scope, and is rarely broken down according to individual out-ports for the years in question. Fortunately, Brooke's history of Liverpool contains data on local dock duties:

¹³ J.J. McCusker, 'British Ship Tonnage during the Eighteenth Century', in *Research in Economic History*, 6 (1981), 91.

¹⁴ Merchant Trade Records, Port Books 1565-1799, National Archives, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/research-guides/port-books.htm>; accessed 26 February 2014).

¹⁵ TNA, BT 6, in particular.

FIGURE 1 Dock Duties paid in Liverpool, 1775-1785



Source: Brooke, *Liverpool as it Was*, 250-2.

Duty and revenue figures were subject to errors. A contemporary official in Liverpool retorted: 'A number of persons at this Port make it a constant Practice to frequent the Quays, when ships are discharging Tobacco in order to pilfer such'.¹⁶ Still, Figure 1 conforms to the four stages. Between 1775 and 1779, the value of duties remains broadly constant, often being above or near equal to the 1774 value. But then there is a noticeable drop between 1779 and 1780. Penultimately, the value of these duties increased up to 1783. Finally, it was not until after the war in 1784 that there was an appreciable recovery.

Muster rolls outline the composition of a ship's crew, and state from where the vessel sailed. Table 13 shows the number of rolls for vessels arriving at Liverpool,

¹⁶ S.J.L., Rideout Papers, Customs House Letter Book, Liverpool, 24 September 1783, Rideout V.1.

according to its point of departure. There are, however, some limitations. Muster rolls do not always reflect multiple destinations, and the totals given in Table 13 do not equate with the figures in Table 11. Evidently some rolls have been lost.

TABLE 13 Liverpool Muster Rolls, 1775-1785

LIVERPOOL MUSTER ROLLS												
	1774	'75	'76	'77	'78	'79	'80	'81	'82	'83	'84	'85
BRITISH ISLES												
British Isles	70	74	103	119	106	95	81	98	87	108	90	76
ATLANTIC												
Fisheries	5	7	7	12	4		2	3	3	3	7	5
Greenland	8	15	15	19	8	8	4	4	3	3	7	9
AMERICAS												
Newfoundland	2	3										
Canada	1	4	7	3	3	3	2		3	2		2
13 Colonies	39	41	11	7	9	6	7	13	6	12	30	24
West Indies	125	123	123	115	76	53	53	72	89	97	107	136
South America			2	1						2		1
EUROPE												
Europe	61	53	63	56	48	21	16	14	23	33	35	49

AFRICA												
Africa	2	5	6	6	6	5	3	6	4	6	5	8
OTHER												
Cruise / Privateer					1	14	13	20	3	1	1	
Taken			1				6	9	15	6	1	
Distress										1	1	
Loss			5		6		7	5	9	7	5	4
Unclear	8	4	5	20	9	13	12	20	12	4	24	28
TOTAL	321	329	348	358	276	218	206	264	257	285	313	342

Source: TNA, Board of Trade Records, Liverpool Muster Rolls, 1774-185, BT 98/35-45.

This data is useful in two respects. Firstly, Table 13 shows the totals for each year, and supports the four-stage model. Between 1775 and 1777 the total annual number of muster rolls is above 300. Then, from 1778, there is a clear slide in numbers, reaching a trough of 206 in 1780. A slow, lagging, improvement occurs from 1781 to 1783, with figures hovering in the higher two hundreds. Finally, with the restoration of peace, figures are back to over 300 by 1784 and 1785. The second importance of Table 13 is that it illustrates fluctuations within individual markets. Evidently, they declined at different times.

DECLINING TRADE WITH THE THIRTEEN COLONIES

At the start of 1775, Liverpool still maintained contact with the Thirteen Colonies. During that year, 41 vessels arrived in Liverpool from America, and businesses on both sides of the Atlantic still exchanged correspondence. For example, in February the Gildarts wrote to Robert Carter of Virginia concerning quantities of pig iron. But they were also concerned about the deteriorating situation. Gildart noted that colonial embargoes on British goods were highly detrimental, and that 'it's a cruel hardship to make the innocent individuals suffer for government grievances'.¹⁷

But very soon there was a clear drop in the number of vessels sailing from America to Liverpool. This is unsurprising, given that the war was fought over these territories. Indeed, there are only eleven surviving entries for 1776 – a drop of 30 vessels during the previous twelve months. There were multiple causes for this downturn. As British authority in the colonies collapsed, the American Congress took over. The resulting boycotts of British goods achieved their intended results. A Virginian Congressman claimed that several Liverpool ships had sailed to America in 1775, but they had been sent back. He urged his fellow citizens to 'keep a good look-out to prevent their slipping in'.¹⁸ There were also violent reprisals against British properties in the colonies. The *Totness*, owned by the Gildarts, ran aground near Annapolis, Maryland, in 1775. Because the ship

¹⁷ VHS, Robert Carter Manuscripts, Gildarts and Busigny, Liverpool, 20 February 1775, to Robert Carter, Rappahannock River, MSS1 C2468a923.

¹⁸ Virginia delegate, Philadelphia, 30 June 1775, in G. Galwall, ed., *Letters of Delegates to Congress 1774-1789. Volume 1 August 1774-Aug 1775* (Washington, 1990), 561.

contravened the embargo imposed by Congress, it was set alight.¹⁹ Decisions by the British government in late-1775 also hindered Liverpool's trading relationship with the colonies. Under the Prohibition of Trade Act British vessels could still sail to America, but only if they had special licenses granted by the UK government. Between 1775 and 1776 a handful of vessels supplied with coal departed Liverpool for Boston under these conditions (presumably this was to re-supply British troops stationed in the town).²⁰ But the pattern was a downward trend. Table 13 registers only a mere six entries for the Thirteen Colonies in 1779. Yet, as we shall see, British trade to the American colonies, though diminished, did not cease entirely.

DECLINING TRADE WITH THE WEST INDIES AND TRANS-ATLANTIC SLAVERY

In both 1775 and 1776 there were 123 muster rolls in Liverpool from West Indian destinations. Granted there was a decline to 115 by 1777, but this number was still in triple figures - suggesting a broad consistency in trade. As one contemporary noted in 1775, although trade to Africa was not prosecuted with the 'usual spirit, it was far from being at a stand'.²¹

But there is a noticeable drop in the number of West Indian muster rolls between 1777 and 1778, from 115 to 76, respectively. One reason for this was an Order in

¹⁹ *Philadelphia Gazette*, 26 July 1775.

²⁰ BOD, North Papers, North 669.

²¹ *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 6 October 1775.

Council, issued by George III, to restrict the exportation of gunpowder overseas.²² There was a legal precedent for this decision, as an Act of Tonnage and Poundage under Charles II allowed the monarch to prohibit the transportation of gunpowder outside of the kingdom, on the grounds of public safety.²³ Liverpool slavers were affected by this decision because they used gunpowder for defence, and as barter on the African coast. David Tuohy even recorded: 'There has been nothing done in the African business here owing to a prohibition of arms and gunpowder which is a material part of an African ship's cargo'.²⁴ Whilst undoubtedly troublesome, the deleterious impact of this embargo should not be exaggerated. British slave trading vessels could still carry gunpowder overseas under special licenses, and the Order had been issued in 1775 - some time before the noticeable drop in West Indian muster rolls between 1777 and 1778. Henceforth, there were other factors that contributed towards this decline, including attacks by American shipping. Indeed, from the outset of the conflict, the colonists had targeted British interests in the Caribbean - they even captured the governor of the Bahamas in 1776. One Liverpool captain recalled that when colonial privateers captured British slaving vessels, they engaged in economic warfare by selling slaves at discount prices, therefore ensuring that there were too

²² Order by the King in Council, prohibiting the transporting to any parts out of the Kingdom, or carrying coastwise, any Gunpowder, Saltpetre, or any sort of Arms or Ammunition, for the space of three months from the 23d instant, American Archives Documents of the American Revolution 1774-1776, Northern Illinois University Libraries, http://lincoln.lib.niu.edu/cgi-bin/amarch/documentidx.pl?doc_id=S4-V3-P01-sp34-D0003andshowfullrecord=on, accessed 2 February 2014.

²³ An Act to empower His Majesty to prohibit the Exportation of Saltpetre: and to enforce the Law for empowering His Majesty to prohibit the Exportation of Gunpowder, or any Sort of Arms and Ammunition: and also to empower His Majesty to restrain the carrying Coastwise of Saltpetre, Gunpowder, or any Sort of Arms or Ammunition, Anno 29 Geo. III, A.D. 1756, in J. Railton, ed., *The Statutes relating to the Admiralty, Navy, Shipping, and Navigation of the United Kingdom From 9 Hen. III to 3 Geo IV Inclusive* (London, 1823), 255.

²⁴ LIVRO, Tuohy Papers, David Tuohy to Messrs Ryan and Bagona, October 1775, 380 TUO/2/4.

many Africans available in the West Indies. This undercut British and Liverpoolian traders.²⁵

Arguably the most important reason for this drop in West Indian trade between 1777 and 1778 was that it coincided with France's entry into the war. Events in upstate New York had proven decisive. In autumn 1777 British General Burgoyne surrendered to American forces at Saratoga. The French saw this as the opportune moment to seek revenge against the British for defeat in the Seven Years War. On 6 February 1778 a Treaty of Amity and Commerce was signed between France and the United States. The number of muster rolls from the West Indies was cut further to 53 in 1779, owing to Spanish entry into the war (on 12 April 1779 Paris and Madrid signed a treaty of co-operation). British colonists in the West Indies recognised that they were vulnerable to Allied attacks. A letter by Richard Watt in Jamaica noted: 'If France and Spain declares war and America are Enemys [sic] we here are badly situated, instead of your being Governor under the United States I am afraid they Spaniards will appoint a Governor of their own'. The same letter speculated that if these fears came true, there would be reduced demand for colonial sugar in Liverpool, and a rise in mercantile bankruptcies.²⁶

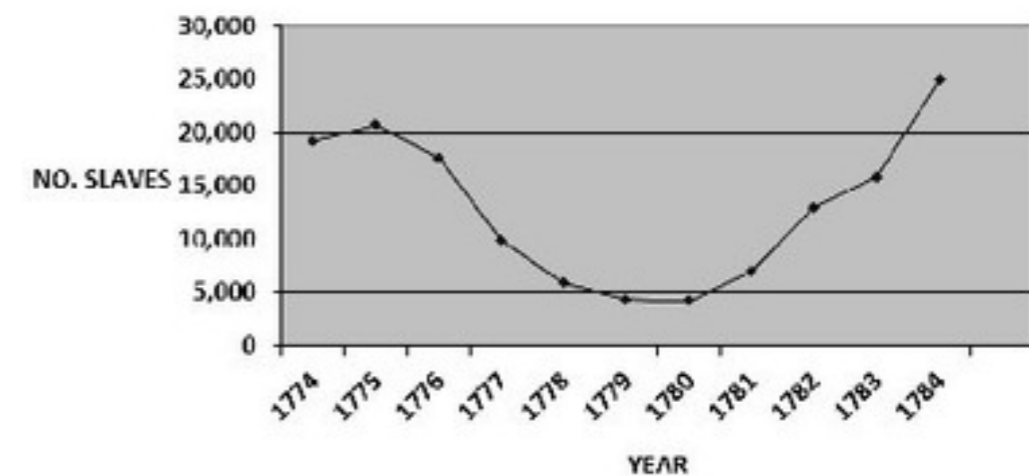
The falling number of vessels sailing between Liverpool and the West Indies between 1777 and 1779 generally had an adverse impact upon trans-Atlantic slavery. Granted, the terms of purchasing slaves in Africa could improve for Liverpoolian merchants. Davenport wrote in 1779: 'The African Trade having been

²⁵ MMM, Davenport Papers, Captain Brighthouse, Barbadoes, to William Davenport, 23 March 1777, D/DAV/11/2/5.

²⁶ LIVRO, Watt Family Papers, Richard Watt to Orland and Thomas Rawson, 17 June 1778, 920 WAT 1/2/1.

dead for sometime past...[we] propose fitting out three, or four ships to Africa in order to work off their stock, and to reap benefit...as Negroes may now be bought 50 p cent less than they were 12 months ago'.²⁷ However, Figure 2 suggests that Davenport's hopes were overly optimistic for many Liverpool slavers.

FIGURE 2 Number of African slaves disembarked in the West Indies from Liverpool ships, 1774-1784



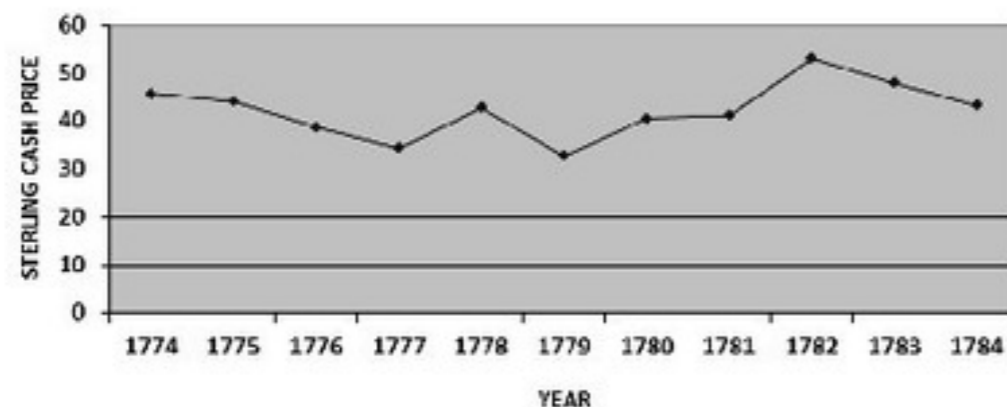
Source: *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*, www.slavevoyages.org; accessed 3 March 2015.

This graph supports the four-stage approach. From 1775 to 1776 the number of Africans disembarked in the Caribbean on Liverpool shipping remained broadly

²⁷ MMM, Davenport Papers, William Davenport's Letter Book, Davenport, Liverpool, to Charles Ford, 23 March 1779, D/DAV/1/1. Richardson's work on William Davenport also shows that the profits from the slave trade often varied from voyage to voyage. This was equally true for Davenport during the American War, with profits of as much as £4,000 in 1779, 1780, and 1783. However, there were losses of over £1,000 in 1775 and 1776. See Richardson, 'Profits in the Liverpool Slave Trade', 80-5.

stable. However, there was a clear dip lasting between 1777 and 1780, which coincided with the interventions of France and Spain. Then there was a subsequent increase in numbers up to 1783. By 1784, with the restoration of peace, pre-war performance was finally exceeded. Yet the declining number of disembarked slaves during the middle of the war was not the end of the woes for Liverpool slavers.

FIGURE 3 Sterling cash price in Jamaica, slaves transported on Liverpool vessels to the West Indies 1774-1784



Source: *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*, www.slavevoyages.org; accessed 3 March 2015.

Figure 3 shows that, with the exception of 1778, the price of slaves declined after 1775, and pre-war prices were not reached again until 1782. In addition to falling numbers of Africans disembarking in the Indies, and reduced prices, there were other problems for Liverpool slave traders. Because of the uncertainty of wartime,

the owners of local businesses hoped that their captains would make short remittances.²⁸ Nonetheless, by 1777 some bills of exchange remained valid for as long as two years.²⁹ At the same time, these problems were compounded by rising costs, such as maritime insurance. The following complaints made by William Davenport below are not untypical:

I received yours...ordering additional Insurance of £200 on the Ruby, to be done in Liverpool, but the underwriters here are so full on this Ship that I coud [sic] not get any more insured upon her under 25 Guineas per cent, which I thought was an Unreasonable premium...I think the whole £700 insured for you on the Ship is on the Average pretty moderate considering the exorbitant premium now given.³⁰

RISING AND DECLINING TRADE WITH EUROPE

Surprisingly, between 1775 and 1776 there was an increase in the number of vessels arriving in Liverpool from the Continent - 53 to 63, respectively. This was probably due to partnerships seeking alternatives to the American market. Indeed, it was not inevitable that France, Spain, let alone Holland, would end up fighting the British. Members of the French government were initially reluctant to become combatants because of the poor state of national finances. Madrid was also concerned that an American victory would generate instability in its own imperial

²⁸ MMM, Davenport Papers, William Davenport's Letter Book, Davenport, Liverpool, to Messrs Bailie and Hamilton, St Vincent, 28 July 1783, D/DAV/1/1.

²⁹ MMM, Davenport Papers, Vance Caldwell Vance, Dominica, to William Davenport, 1 May 1777, D/DAV/1/3/3.

³⁰ MMM, Davenport Papers, William Davenport's Letter Book, Davenport, Liverpool, to Matthew Alexander, Glasgow, 4 November 1780, D/DAV/1/1.

possessions. Thus, for a time, peace was preserved amongst the European powers.³¹

But Table 13 recorded a noticeable drop in Liverpool's continental trade, from 48 muster rolls in 1778 to 21 in 1779. Again, this coincided with France and Spain joining the conflict. But the lowest numbers of vessels arriving in Liverpool from Europe came in 1780 and 1781 (16 and 14, respectively). This dip corresponded with Britain's dispute with the neutral carriers. Russia had initially been courted by Britain to supply troops for the war effort, but these gestures came to nothing. Catherine II was also alarmed by British privateers operating in the Baltic, and therefore proposed that the area become a closed sea, policed by the regional powers. Russia's Armed Neutrality was later agreed to by Denmark and Sweden, and by early-1780 Britain was on the defensive.³² Matters became more complicated in December that year, with the onset of the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War. The sheltering of American Captain John Paul Jones at Texel suggested to London that the Dutch were assisting the Rebels. The Dutch also disliked the Royal Navy seizing their vessels, which was prompted by British fears that the United Provinces were supplying the French with naval stores. Eventually, this provoked an armed conflict.

³¹ H.M. Scott, *British Foreign Policy in the Age of the American Revolution* (Oxford, 1990), 207-311.

³² J. Black, *A System of Ambition? British Foreign Policy 1660-1793* (London, 1991), 218-9 and I. De Madariaga, *Britain, Russia and the Armed Neutrality of 1780* (London, 1962), 382.

THE RETURN TO GROWTH AND THE QUESTION OF PRIVATEERING

Tables 11, 12, 13, as well as Figures 1, 2, and 3, broadly suggest that, at various times and in different markets, there was a sluggish improvement in Liverpool's overseas commerce between c.1780 and 1783. Marriner and Conway partially attributed this rebound to the local privateering enterprise. Indeed, 390 privateers operated out of Liverpool between 1777 and 1783. Although this was behind London's 719 vessels, it exceeded Bristol's privateering fleet. In total, 1,384 commissions were issued to Liverpool privateers during the Revolutionary War.³³ A full audit of the size and dimensions of these vessels is unnecessary, although a few examples will be used for illustration. Liverpool's privateering fleet was not homogenous. *Vulture*, owned by William Boats, displaced a mere twenty tons.³⁴ In contrast, Richard Kent's *Queen* was 750 tons.³⁵ At 14,000 tons, *Mersey* was amongst the largest of Liverpool privateers.³⁶ The number of crewmembers aboard them varied. Indeed, fifteen and 70 men navigated *Vulture* and *Juliana*, respectively.³⁷ The nature of their weaponry was also diverse, with shots ranging from 4lbs to 12lbs. Refits were necessary, and therefore the dimensions of these vessels changed. Francis Ingram's *Nancy* was recorded as displacing 150 tons in January 1781. But by the following November it had been reduced to 100 tons.³⁸ The terms of sailing could vary too. Many Liverpool privateers were provisioned for

³³ Starkay, *British Privateering*, 200.

³⁴ TNA, HCA, *Vulture*, in Registers of Declarations for Letters of Marque against the United Provinces, 1780, HCA 26/54.

³⁵ TNA, HCA, *Queen*, in Registers of Declarations for Letters of Marque against the United Provinces, 1781, HCA 26/57.

³⁶ J.A. Pilon, *Memoirs of Liverpool, historical and topographical* (Liverpool, 1903), 213-4.

³⁷ TNA, HCA, *Vulture* and *Juliana* in Registers of Declarations for Letters of Marque against the United Provinces, 1780, HCA 26/54.

³⁸ TNA, HCA, *Nancy* in Registers of Declarations for Letters of Marque against the United Provinces, 1781, HCA 26/56, HCA 26/58.

a six-month cruise, although vessels owned by William Boats tended to be supplied for a year.³⁹

Liverpool privateers also deployed various tactics to achieve success. This included sailing over a wide area, ranging from the Norwegian Sea to the western Atlantic.⁴⁰ Some privateers also operated close to enemy territory. *Bess*, for example, patrolled the Bay of Biscay, near France and Spain.⁴¹ Prizes were also taken in different ways. Whilst some were captured by lone vessels, others fell victim to co-operating predators.⁴² Privateers from Liverpool were also targeting vessels twenty-four hours a day.⁴³

Starkey pointed out that the net economic impact of privateering is incalculable, due to sparse evidence.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, there are some indications that it benefitted Liverpool. In taking 154 enemy vessels during the American Revolutionary War, the town was the leading prize-taking port on the British mainland. This figure surpassed Liverpool's record in previous conflicts.⁴⁵ Privateering certainly employed local people. According to *Belbana's* 1779 muster roll, all of its 181 crewmembers hailed from Liverpool.⁴⁶ Numerous Liverpool merchants were involved in privateering too, such as Nicholas Ashton, Daniel

³⁹ TNA, HCA, records for Vulture, Jane, and Gregson, in Registers of Declarations for Letters of Marque against the United Provinces, 1781, HCA 26/57.

⁴⁰ TNA, HCA, Governor Johnson, in Captured ships with names beginning with G, 1775-1783, HCA 32/344. Also see TNA, HCA, Canislar, in Captured ships with names beginning with C, 1775-1783, HCA 32/287; and TNA, HCA, Fantasia, in Captured ships with names beginning with F, 1775-1783, HCA 32/329.

⁴¹ TNA, HCA, Ptoleus, in Captured ships with names beginning with P, 1775-1783, HCA 32/430.

⁴² TNA, HCA, Count D'Estaing, in Captured ships with names beginning with C, 1775-1783, HCA 32/299. Also see TNA, HCA, Le Nestor, in Captured ships with names beginning with N, 1775-1783, HCA 32/410.

⁴³ TNA, HCA, La Pauline, in Captured ships with names beginning with P, 1775-1783, HCA 32/418. TNA, HCA, La Pegase, in Captured ships with names beginning with P, 1775-1783, HCA 32/418.

⁴⁴ Starkey, *British Privateering*, 269-72.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 232.

⁴⁶ TNA, Board of Trade records, *Belbana* in Liverpool Muster Rolls, 1779, BT 98/39.

Backhouse, William Gregson, Francis Ingram, Thomas Rumbold, and John Sparling. They all held shares in such vessels, and invariably re-supplied their ships.⁴⁷ The Liverpool privateering enterprise also cast a wider net by benefiting other geographical areas. In 1779 *Knight* had a total of 70 crewmembers, of which 28 came from London.⁴⁸ Some Liverpool-registered vessels were also the property of metropolitan businesses. Indeed, *Minerva* was owned by Edward Whinnel & Co of Leadenhall Street, London.⁴⁹ Some individual privateering ventures were extremely profitable. The outstanding example was the 700-ton Frenchman *Carnatic*, taken by *Mentor* in October 1778. *Carnatic* had sailed to Africa and India. In the process it acquired a sizable cargo including 600 bags of pepper, 18 chests of Chinese cinnamon, and 51 chests of tea.⁵⁰ The prize was estimated up to £135,000.⁵¹ The owner and captain of *Mentor* shared £54,000.⁵² The seamen gained £109 each, and individual ordinary sailors £54.⁵³ The capture was also strategically profitable, as *Carnatic's* 'important papers' were transmitted to Westminster.⁵⁴

But there were several factors that limited the financial worth of privateering. Assuming that prizes were captured at all, then they were not always valuable. Indeed, the Spanish *Nostra Signora* was taken by Liverpool's *Hypocrite* in June 1780. However, its hold was leaky and this damaged the vessel's cargo.⁵⁵ Other

⁴⁷ LIVRO, Account Book of the Enterprise, 1779-1780, 387 MD45.

⁴⁸ TNA, Board of Trade records, *Knight*, in Liverpool Muster Rolls, 1779, BT 98/39.

⁴⁹ TNA, HCA, *Minerva*, in Registers of Declarations for Letters of Marque against the United Provinces, 1780, HCA 26/54.

⁵⁰ TNA, HCA, *Carnatic*, HCA 32/288/5.

⁵¹ R. Muir, *A History of Liverpool* (London, 1907), 221-2.

⁵² Starkey, *British Privateering*, 279.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 315.

⁵⁴ TNA, HCA, Captured ship, *Carnatic*, HCA 32/288/5.

⁵⁵ TNA, HCA, *Nostra Signora*, in Captured ships with names beginning with N, 1775-1783, HCA 32/411.

risks were evident. Gomer Williams identified over 30 Liverpool privateers that were captured by the enemy.⁵⁶ Even if prizes were brought into port, there were often long delays between the seizure of the ship and distribution of royalties. Prizes were first 'condemned' by Admiralty courts, cargoes advertised and sold, and only then were claims settled.⁵⁷ Nor were disputes in the High Court of Admiralty unknown. In February 1779 Captain Bailleul of the London privateer *Betsey* and John Taylor of the Liverpool vessel *Dreadnought* quarrelled over *L'Aimable Agatha*. Both vessels had sighted the Frenchman, and *Betsey* eventually took the prize. Bailleul hoped to take it into London, but subsequently charged that Taylor fraudulently took the prize into Liverpool.⁵⁸ Another example of a dispute in the High Court of Admiralty was *La Fortuna*, a suspected Dutch ship taken by Liverpool-registered *Rumbold*. The owners of *La Fortuna* claimed that the vessel was Danish, and therefore neutral. By June 1782 the authorities decided to restore the ship to its Scandinavian owners, thereby depriving Liverpool of another prize.⁵⁹

The records of the Liverpool privateer *Enterprise* are well preserved, and illustrate the problems associated with this activity in detail. They confirm that local businesses were weary of attacking neutral carriers. Indeed, in 1780 Captain James Haslam was ordered not to detain any neutral shipping, as great expense had been incurred by 'such imprudence'. Haslam was also warned about the

⁵⁶ G. Williams, *History of the Liverpool Privateers and Letters of Marque with an Account of the Liverpool Slave Trade 1744-1812* (London, 2004), 299.

⁵⁷ P. L. Wickins, 'Economics of Privateering', *JESH*, 13, 2 (1984), 379-87.

⁵⁸ TNA, HCA, *L'Aimable Agatha*, 1779, HCA 32/263/4.

⁵⁹ TNA, HCA, *La Fortuna*, in *Sentences in Dutch Prizes*, 1782, HCA 34/57.

dangers posed by British men-of-war impressing the crews of privateers.⁶⁰ It was also possible that the crew of the privateer would plunder prizes for themselves. Haslam was therefore directed to post his 'Lieutenant and two trusty officers...[so that they] examine the Trunks and Chest...and they should sign papers to prevent jealousy or misunderstanding'.⁶¹

Another factor that limited the value of Liverpool privateering was that it was not evident throughout the war. Table 13 indicates that there were no private warships operating out of the port at the outbreak of hostilities. This was due to the uncertain status of the enemy. By authorising reprisals against Rebel trade, Parliament would inadvertently be acknowledging the American Congress.⁶² In the event, as Table 14 illustrates, it was not until 1777 that Liverpool's predatory activities began. By this time British private vessels were authorised to capture American shipping. Table 13 shows the number of Liverpool privateers reaching double digits in 1779 and 1780. This increase took place after an Order in Council in the second half of 1778, granting a privateering war against France. The issuing of privateering commissions against Spain had also begun in summer 1779.⁶³ Table 13 shows a distinct increase in local privateering activity between 1780 and 1781, from 13 to 20 muster rolls. This coincided with the onset of the Anglo-Dutch War in December 1780. Indeed, there was approval amongst Liverpool businesses for preying upon the Dutch, who were believed to be a rich commercial

⁶⁰ LIVRO, *Account Book of the Enterprise*, letter of instruction to Captain James Haslam, Liverpool, 15 June 1780, 387 MD 45.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 16 September 1779.

⁶² Starkey, *British Privateering*, 194.

⁶³ *Ibid.* 194-7.

power. Even Davenport urged Captain Smale to get his commission for reprisals against the Dutch as soon as possible, to 'make every advantage'.⁶⁴

Yet, in terms of the number of vessels sailing, Liverpool's privateering fleet had reached its peak by 1781 – two years before the end of the conflict. That is not to say that privateering did not continue thereafter. Table 14 shows prizes being captured until 1783.⁶⁵ Even though Parliament voted to end offensive operations in North America after defeat at Yorktown in 1781, it was not until November 1782 that preliminary terms were reached with the Rebels. In addition, Britain, France, and Spain only signed preliminary agreements in January 1783. The Treaty of Paris came in late-1783, and an accommodation with the Dutch reached in 1784.⁶⁶ But, crucially, Table 13 shows 20 Liverpool privateer muster rolls for 1781, and the numbers declined thereafter. Evidently the 'mania' of sending ships out as privateers had peaked by mid-1781. The aggression of British privateers resulted in the loss and withdrawal of the Dutch fleet.⁶⁷ Table 14 outlines the composition and numbers of prizes taken, which is also revealing:

⁶⁴ MMM, Davenport Papers, William Davenport's Letter Book, Davenport to Captain John Smale, 12 January 1781, D/DAV/1/1.

⁶⁵ Strangely, Table 13 shows that there was one privateer in 1784, even though licenses granted only until January 1783.

⁶⁶ Conway, *War of American Independence*, 230-2.

⁶⁷ Starkey, *British Privateering*, 207.

TABLE 14 Liverpool Prizes taken to High Court of the Admiralty 1777-1782 – Number and % of that year

	US	FR	SP	DT	TOTAL
1777	9 (100)				9
1778	5 (29)	12 (71)			17
1779	5 (8)	52 (85)	4 (7)		61
1780	3 (13)	10 (42)	11 (46)		24
1781	4 (16)	12 (48)	3 (12)	6 (24)	25
1782	4 (22)	4 (22)	1 (6)	9 (50)	18
TOTAL	30	90	19	15	154
AS %	19	58	12	10	99

KEY: US (American), FR (French), SP (Spanish), DT (Dutch)

Source: TNA, HCA 25/56-122; HCA 26/33-70; HCA 34/43-57; 59

Unsurprisingly, the composition of Liverpool's prizes varied. At the start of the conflict, they were exclusively American. But as the war intensified, and more nations became belligerents, the prizes became more diverse. French vessels constituted the largest number (90) and percentage (58 per cent) of ships taken by Liverpool predators. This reinforces Starkey's point that, nationally, the French

mercantile marine suffered the most from British privateers.⁶⁹ Crucially, Starkey showed that across the country, most prizes had been sentenced between 1778 and 1782.⁶⁹ This was before the signing of the Treaty of Paris. But in Liverpool, the condemning of most prizes had taken place even sooner.⁷⁰ Table 14 does show a significant number of prizes for the town in 1780 and 1781, but a peak of 61 had been reached in 1779. All of this data shows that Liverpool privateering had reached its full potential well before the end of the conflict in 1783.

ADDITIONAL FACTORS IN THE RECOVERY OF OVERSEAS TRADE

Therefore, other factors besides privateering contributed towards the town's sluggish improvement in the early-1780s, and eventual post-war recovery. One potential contribution was smuggling (but this is obviously difficult to assess with certainty). Haggerty also argued that merchants were forced to re-direct their trade.⁷¹ Indeed, it was mooted earlier that this was the reason why Liverpool's trade to Europe increased at the start of the American War. Tables 11 and 12 also indicate that whilst the overseas market declined during the first half of the war, Liverpool's coastal trade grew in numbers and tonnage between 1775 and 1778. But this market declined thereafter, due to colonial privateers harrying the British coast. Liverpool Corporation minutes stated: 'our Ships are frequently taken even in these Channels, and our Coasts annoyed by American Privateers'.⁷² Another factor that may have helped Liverpool was that it could gain from the Government

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 196, 218, 232.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 218.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 232.

⁷¹ Haggerty, *Merely for Money*, 214.

⁷² LIVRO, Liverpool Corporation Records, 15 December 1777, 352 MIN / COU 1.

requisitioning vessels. Indeed, the British army in America could not live off the country due to local resistance, and therefore it had to be supplied with food and stores from the British Isles. Henceforth, the UK government chartered large numbers of merchant ships, which was potentially profitable for businesses. But, as the next chapter shows, this happened only to a limited extent in Liverpool.

There were other possible sources of relief. As in peacetime, overseas traders responded to difficulties by acquiring the latest business and shipping news. A letter from William Davenport in 1779 to a colleague in the West Indies noted: 'We shall be thankfull you'll advise us frequently of the state of your market for Negroes and the terms of payment'.⁷³ Armed with this information, Liverpool businesses could plan future decisions. That said, enemy shipping could disrupt the transmission of commercial intelligence. Whilst the evidence is fragmented, it seems that some local companies restructured themselves. For example, prior to 1775 the merchant firm Rawlinson & Chorley consisted of only two partners. By April 1780 they were referred to as Rawlinson, Chorley & Gregson.⁷⁴ The lack of in-depth materials makes it hard to determine precisely why this restructuring took place. Yet advertisements in the local press prior to the American War suggest that Rawlinson & Chorley dealt primarily with North America and the West Indies.⁷⁵ Thus, they would have been especially vulnerable to the disturbances in the colonies. It is likely a new partner was brought in to replace depleted capital and reduce personal risk. One author suggested that local businesses re-trenched by

⁷³ MMM, Davenport Papers, William Davenport, Liverpool, to Jno. Thompson, 1 March 1779, D/DAV/1/1.

⁷⁴ *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 6 April 1780.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 22 July 1774.

seeking cheaper alternatives.⁷⁶ This is borne out in the documentary record. For example, one of Davenport's vessels was damaged in 1781, and it was repaired in Londonderry. This was because wages, timbers, and planks, were cheaper there than in Liverpool.⁷⁷ However, as we shall see, retrenchment was not always successful as a large number of merchants were amongst the town's bankrupts during the conflict.

Lobbying for naval provision arguably contributed towards the improvement in overseas trade. The Liverpool Chamber of Commerce sent numerous petitions to the Admiralty calling for convoys. On 1 February 1776 they requested that the Navy guard homeward bound ships from the West Indies. The Admiralty responded that convoys would cover trade up to 120 Leagues clear of Jamaica. Although this was a positive step, the Liverpool merchants wanted more. They lobbied for their vessels to be conducted to 45° North Latitude. The Admiralty later instructed the Newfoundland commander to order vessels to stretch occasionally to the outer edge of the Grand Banks. The Chamber of Commerce continued to be active on this issue, and by August 1776 convoys were appointed for outward and homeward bound trade with the West Indies.⁷⁸ But the efficiency of these convoys is questionable. Crowhurst argued that whilst the Admiralty became more adept at organizing commercial defence during the eighteenth century, the American War was especially challenging.⁷⁹ Britain was strained by fighting the Americans, French, Spanish, and Dutch, with few allies. Furthermore, slave vessels were

⁷⁶ Haggerly, *Merely for Money*, 214.

⁷⁷ MMM, Davenport Papers, William Davenport, Liverpool, to Captain Peter Poller, 15 May 1781, D/DAV/1/1.

⁷⁸ LA, Abstract of the Proceedings and Resolutions of the Several Committees of the Chamber of Commerce for the Port of Liverpool, Miscellaneous Pamphlets 65, 828 PAM.

⁷⁹ P. Crowhurst, *The Defence of British Trade 1689-1815* (Folkestone, 1977), 67-8.

especially difficult to protect. They took varying lengths of time to load cargoes and never left the African coast in groups. Under these circumstances, it was virtually impossible to organise a proper convoy system for slave traders.⁸⁰

Developments on the battlefield contributed towards Liverpool's recovery. Although British troops evacuated Boston in 1776, they re-took New York the same year, Philadelphia in 1777, and Charleston in 1780. This ensured that whilst Liverpool's trade to the colonies was constricted, it did not end entirely. Indeed, Table 13 shows muster rolls from the Thirteen Colonies for the duration of the war. Such victories re-opened American towns to British commerce. Thus, some Liverpool businesses resuscitated their links with the Thirteen Colonies. By May 1780 David Tuohy was sending packets to Cork, which then travelled on to New York by way of convoy.⁸¹ Tuohy also sent agents to South Carolina. In 1781, one reported that provisions of all kinds were 'very much in demand.' But there were limitations as British control extended only six miles into the countryside.⁸² Ironically, British defeat at Yorktown in 1781 arguably proved beneficial to Liverpool's overseas commerce. Surrounded by American and French forces on land and sea, Cornwallis was forced to surrender. Such was the humiliation of this defeat that Parliament voted to cease military operations in North America.⁸³ Although this decision brought the prospect of peace closer to hand, it did not in itself end the conflict. Referring to the Battle of the Saintes in April 1782, in which the British defeated a French fleet in the Caribbean, Richard Watt wrote in Jamaica: 'after the news of Sr G.B. Rodney's Victory and that of our force in these

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁸¹ LIVRO, Tuohy Papers, Thomas Tranl, Cork, to David Tuohy, 9 May 1780, 380 TUO/1/13.

⁸² William Simmons, Charleston, South Carolina, to David Tuohy, 27 December 1781, 380 TUO/1/59.

⁸³ C. Hibberd, *Redcoats and Rebels: The War for America 1770-1781* (London, 2001), 333.

Seas are superior I suppose [insurance] will be done for less.⁸⁴ Decisive as it was, not even this battle ended operations in the Caribbean. If anything, London expected a resumption of French and Spanish offensives, and the West Indian front would become more important than ever.⁸⁵ Only with the final arrival of peace after 1783 did Liverpool's overseas trade witness a significant recovery. According to Table 11, the total number of vessels in Liverpool rose from 349 in 1783-1784 to 404 in 1785-1786. Table 12 also indicates an increase in tonnage values, rising from 43,064 in 1783-1784 to 55,865 tons by 1786.

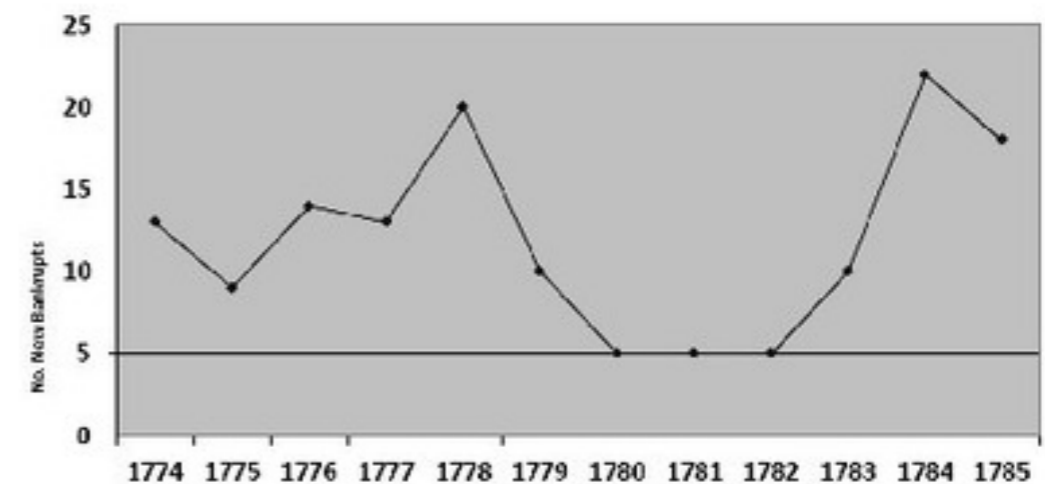
OTHER BRANCHES OF THE LIVERPOOL ECONOMY

The war clearly had a trickle-down effect upon the broader local economy. As a result, some groups had a negative experience. Graph 4 outlines the number of Liverpool bankrupts between 1774 and 1785.

⁸⁴ LIVRO, Wall Family Papers, Letter and Account Book of Richard Wall, Richard Wall, Kingslon, to Thomas Rawson, 16 May 1782, 920 WAT 1/2/1.

⁸⁵ Conway, *War of American Independence*, 140-1.

FIGURE 4 Number of new bankrupts in Liverpool 1774-85



Source: An alphabetical list of all the bankrupts from the first of January 1774 to the thirtieth of June 1786 inclusive with the date of the certificates and supersedures to those who have received them (London, 1788), LANA.

For eighteenth century England as a whole, Hoppit argued that a broad pattern of wartime bankruptcy was discernible – an initial rise, followed by a fall. The restoration of peace also demanded readjustments. In particular, the iron and steel industries suffered from lost government contracts. Henceforth, the number of bankrupts began to increase again.⁸⁶ For Liverpool, this pattern is clearly replicated in Figure 4. Whereas there were nine new bankrupts in the town in 1775, this figure rose to 20 in 1778. Thereafter it began to fall, reaching as few as five in 1782. But with the return of peace, the number of bankrupts increased again to double figures. Several prominent Liverpool merchants succumbed to bankruptcy during this period. Amongst them were Miles Barber in 1777; John

⁸⁶ Hoppit, *Risk and Failure in English Business*, 123-9.

Dobson, Joseph Daltera, and Thomas Case in 1778; John Gore in 1779; William Gregson in 1781; and John Postlethwaite in 1783. However, as Table 15 indicates, both traders and manufacturing were affected. It is not clear why these individuals from a variety of business backgrounds succumbed to bankruptcy during these years. Indeed, the causes are not articulated in these particular bankruptcy records. But, given that it fits the broad pattern of bankruptcy during wartime, it was likely related to the ups and downs of doing business during the American conflict.

TABLE 15 Occupations of Liverpool bankrupts 1774-1786

OCCUPATION	NUMBER	% OF WHOLE
Manufacturer / Retail	72	48
Merchants	58	38.7
Dealer	10	6.7
Money Scrivener	4	2.7
Unclear	3	2
Professional	2	1.3
Mariner	1	0.7
TOTAL	150	100.1

Source: LANA, *An alphabetical list of all the bankrupts from the first of January 1774 to the thirtieth of June 1786 inclusive with the date of the certificates and supersedures to those who have received them* (London, 1788), 232/94

Conversely, some areas of the local economy did well out of the War of Independence. Local shipyards benefited from the multiplier effect of rising government expenditure. The core of Georgian Britain's shipbuilding was the Royal Dockyards. However, the increasing incidence of warfare after 1688 meant that it became increasingly common to use private contractors to supplement the construction of naval vessels. Liverpool had seven such private contractors by the 1770s, and Table 16 shows that they built warships during the American Revolution.

TABLE 16 Number of King's Ships launched at Liverpool, 1777-1784

YEAR	NO. LAUNCHES	TOTAL TONNAGE
1777	1	367
1778	3	1,412
1779	1	887
1780	4	2,660
1781	5	3,080
1782	3	1,405
1783	1	711
1784	1	710

Source: R. Stewart-Brown, *Liverpool Ships in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1932), 89.

Liverpool's private yards made a sizable contribution to the war effort. This was not initially apparent, as no military vessels were launched into the Mersey in 1775. Indeed, the first of two mobilizations was limited, as North's government hoped to keep costs down by pursuing a limited engagement in the colonies. However, a second, more intense, mobilization took place after Bourbon intervention in 1778.⁸⁷ This pattern was repeated in Liverpool. That year three military vessels were launched into the Mersey, and an additional five by 1780. By the end of the conflict in 1783, eighteen Royal Naval vessels had been launched.⁸⁸ The key factor behind this growth was an increase in national government expenditure. In 1775, £339,151 was spent on warship construction, of which 13 per cent was invested in the private yards. By 1780 this expenditure had almost doubled to £670,000. Merchant contractors accounted for half of this sum. Whilst Liverpool was behind the private yards in London (in 1778 there 17 warships were being built on the Thames, compared to only 5 on the Mersey), Liverpool was ahead of Bristol.⁸⁹ The American War also marked the first time that the number of merchant-built warships exceeded those launched in the Royal Dockyards.⁹⁰ Furthermore, the construction of warships in Liverpool had an impact upon the broader regional economy. Many of the anchors for Liverpool ships were made in Whitehaven.⁹¹ The copper for locally built warships was also obtained from Macclesfield.⁹²

⁸⁷ D. Baugh, 'Why did Britain lose command of the seas?', in J. Black and P. Woodfine, eds, *The British Navy and the Use of Naval Power in the Eighteenth Century* (Leicester, 1988), 154.

⁸⁸ Stewart-Brown, *Liverpool Ships*, 89.

⁸⁹ BOD, North Papers, North b.54-b.57.

⁹⁰ R. Knight, 'Devil bolts and deception? Wartime naval shipbuilding in private shipyards, 1739-1815', *Journal of Maritime Research*, 5, 1 (2003), 41.

⁹¹ TNA, Admiralty Records, Thomas Mitchell, Liverpool, to the Navy Board, 15 November 1780, ADM 106/1258.

⁹² TNA, Admiralty Records, Charles Roe, Macclesfield, to the Commissioners of the Navy, 18 November 1780, ADM 106/1262.

The private yards in Liverpool made an additional contribution to the war effort. A.H. John pointed out that military conflict stimulated technological development. Liverpool shipwright Roger Fisher was a keen innovator. After the Seven Years War he published *Heart of Oak*, which criticized the exhaustion of timber supplies in the UK, and urged immediate replanting of trees.⁹³ His sense of innovation was also important during the American War. The coppering of hulls, to reduce drag and to increase speed, had initially been pioneered in the Royal Dockyards.⁹⁴ But the Navy Office complained in January 1779 that coppering resulted in the gathering of verdigris, a green pigment that is evidence of oxidation. It later penetrated the planks and damaged the ship. Fisher informed the Navy Office that covering the bottom with paper dipped in hot tar could prevent this. The Navy agreed that ships of the line could safely be coppered Fisher's way.⁹⁵ Thus, the degree of naval construction in the Liverpool private yards, as well as Fisher's role in supporting technological innovation, reinforces Morriss's argument that private yards made a substantial contribution towards British war efforts during the Long Eighteenth Century.⁹⁶ Liverpool was clearly part of this process.

However, the trickle-down impact from the American War also had some ambiguous consequences, especially upon the Leeds-Liverpool Canal. Construction of this waterway had begun in 1770, and by 1773 31 miles of canal had been built in Lancashire. The complete length between Wigan and Liverpool

⁹³ R. Fisher, *Heart of Oak: The British Bulwark to which is added an appendix shewing the author's sentiments, how the resent Navy of England may be preserved, so as to endure more than double the Number of Years it will continue in the present Mode of laying up Ships* (London, 1771), vii.

⁹⁴ Macdougall, *Royal Dockyards*, 15.

⁹⁵ NMM, Board of Admiralty In-Letters, 27 January 1779, ADM/B/198.

⁹⁶ Morriss, *Foundations of British Maritime Ascendancy*, 133-7.

was opened in October 1774.⁹⁷ The following year the American War commenced. In some respects, these disturbances did not hinder the development of the canal. Liverpool merchant William Blundell recorded that the amount of coal carried on it increased from 31,401 tons in 1781 to 70,555 tons in 1784. Similarly, the transportation of Limestone rose from 2,451 tons in 1781 to 3,229 tons by 1784.⁹⁸ However, it can be argued that the war had profoundly negative consequences for the waterway. No work was undertaken to extend the main line of the canal between 1777 and 1790. Clarke argued that the American War had a detrimental impact upon industry in Lancashire and Yorkshire. Indeed, it reduced the supply of money that was necessary to complete the project.⁹⁹ This argument is partially substantiated by Table 15, which shows that manufacturers and merchants, (groups who had sponsored the canal) were a sizable proportion of Liverpool's bankrupts during the period.

The best that can be said is that if the Leeds-Liverpool Canal was adversely affected during these years, the American War was but one factor amongst many. Waterway construction was necessarily expensive, having to pay labourers and compensation to those inconvenienced.¹⁰⁰ The most expensive measure taken by the Company was the purchasing of the Douglas navigation in 1772, which improved access to Wigan and boosted the supply of water.¹⁰¹ As a result, by

⁹⁷ Clarke, *Leeds and Liverpool Canal*, 77-8.

⁹⁸ LIVRO, Miscellaneous Documents, William Blundell, Tonnage figures for coal and other materials carried on the Leeds-Liverpool and the Douglas Navigations 1781-1790, MD 58.3.

⁹⁹ Clarke, *Leeds and Liverpool Canal*, 84.

¹⁰⁰ TNA, Leeds and Liverpool Canal Company, Minutes of Liverpool Committee and General Assembly, 1775-1780, NA, RAIL 846/42. Also see 15 and 23 November 1775, 11 January 1776 and 1 May 1777.

¹⁰¹ Clarke, *Leeds and Liverpool Canal*, 75-6.

1784, the Company was £18,000 in debt.¹⁰² It was not until changes in personnel and improvements in the national economy in the early-1790s that money became available again, and construction of the main line resumed.¹⁰³

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter provides a nuanced interpretation of the impact of the American conflict upon the 'empire at home', or specifically Liverpool's economy. In terms of overseas trade, the precise timings of downturns and upturns vary according to which sources are drawn upon, but shipping numbers and tonnages, as well as revenue figures, suggest that there were four broad phases to Liverpool's commercial experience. Initially, overseas business broadly remained steady. Secondly, this was followed by a decline. The penultimate phase was marked by a sluggish improvement. Finally, it was not until the post-war years that a clearer recovery took place. The various branches of Liverpool's overseas commerce declined at different times. Whereas the American market declined immediately, European trade fell later. The diversity of experiences, and the fluctuations in some figures that do not conform to this general pattern, underscore the unpredictability of overseas trade. Marriner and Conway stressed the role of privateering in bringing about an improvement in overseas activity. Certainly, the number of Liverpool privateers increased between 1779 and 1781, and, as Marriner and Conway rightly pointed out, this had some benefits for the local economy. But taking enemy vessels was highly dangerous, not always rewarding, and had arguably reached its peak between 1779 and 1781. Henceforth, other

¹⁰² TNA, Leeds and Liverpool Canal Company, Minutes of Liverpool Committee and General Assembly, 1775-1780, 21 July 1784, RAIL 846/42.

¹⁰³ Clarke, *Leeds and Liverpool Canal*, 84-5.

factors, such as the provision of convoys, the business acumen of local merchants, and developments on the battlefield, contributed towards Liverpool's rebound. Yet the most important factor was the restoration of peace by 1783, which proved conducive for a sustained post-war recovery.

The war also had an effect upon the broader local economy. There were victims of wartime dislocation, and thus the number of bankrupts increased. Alternatively, some areas of the local economy, namely shipbuilding, flourished from the multiplier effect of increased national government expenditure. This trend also illustrated the importance of private yards in sustaining Britain's war efforts. Infrastructure projects enjoyed mixed fortunes. Whilst the amount of goods transported along the Leeds-Liverpool Canal increased, construction of the main line of this waterway ceased. Thus, on the whole, the economic impact of the Revolutionary War upon Liverpool was mixed. There were winners and losers, and thus we combine Ashton's and John's assertions. Conway summed it up:

The picture...is highly variegated. Historians disagree about the impact of war on the eighteenth century economy, and such is the complexity and range of the issues to be weighed that a proper audit is probably impossible. But whether we are focusing on costs or benefits, losers or winners, one thing is clear. The American war made its mark.¹⁰⁴

With the benefit of hindsight, we know that the War of Independence did not stop Liverpool's long-term economic march, urban sprawl, and growth in overseas

¹⁰⁴ Conway, *War of American Independence*, 194.

trade. The strategies and factors mentioned in this chapter, as well as the longer-term socio-cultural attributes, diversification of business portfolios, and geographical factors detailed in Chapter One, enabled Liverpool to survive the Revolutionary War. The town's overseas trade continued to prosper thereafter. As Pope noted: 'The years 1783-1793 in Liverpool were a period of economic upsurge and commercial vitality'.¹⁰⁵ Trade with Europe underwent considerable expansion. Africa and the Caribbean remained Liverpool's most valuable destinations, but were becoming less important. Indeed, the 1780s and 1790s witnessed the development of markets that were to play a major role in Liverpool's nineteenth century economy, such as the cotton, corn, and fruit trades.¹⁰⁶ Obviously, the United States became a major supplier of Liverpool's cotton. Furthermore, despite the economic dislocation of the War of Independence, Maw has shown that the American market grew in importance for Liverpool after 1783. The town became the largest exporter of cotton manufactures to the USA by 1806 – even overtaking London. In brief, this was because many English émigré merchants that had left for America hailed from Lancashire and Yorkshire. US merchants also chose to bypass London, and go directly to the source of cotton manufactures in North West England. In addition, subsequent improvements to Liverpool's shipping and banking facilities made the town more attractive to US businesses.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Pope, 'Shipping and Trade', 476.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 476-82.

¹⁰⁷ P. Maw, 'Yorkshire and Lancashire ascendant: England's textile exports to New York and Philadelphia 1750-1805', *EHR*, 63, 3 (2010), 734-68.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL IMPACT OF THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE UPON LIVERPOOL

This chapter continues to analyse how overseas imperial warfare affected life back home in the UK. Firstly, it synthesises existing knowledge of the socio-cultural consequences of the American War upon Liverpool. Secondly, it taps into previously neglected sources. Finally, it contributes to several historiographical debates. Whilst it is not clear what impact the war had upon local living standards (a key social factor), it is evident that the conflict *did* affect the town in several respects. Indeed, the war influenced patterns of criminality, migration, and labour relations. This extends Bowen's argument that Hanoverian warfare impacted upon the British regions to include the northern provinces too.¹

Another social consequence in Liverpool was the militarisation of the community. Indeed, this manifested itself in several ways, namely the housing of prisoners of war, boosting civil defences, intelligence gathering, and recruitment of service personnel. The militarisation of the town enables us to assess the degree to which the central fiscal-military state could influence the localities. Conway found that during the American War if London wanted to achieve its goals, it sometimes had to accommodate local circumstances. For instance, the raising of men for army service was often the product of working alongside provincial elites. Nonetheless,

¹ Bowen, *War and British Society*, 41.

central government's role should not be minimised. It raised men and resources through impressment into the Navy, often overriding local opposition.² However, Conway's analysis only made limited reference to Liverpool. The evidence from this town suggests that militarisation prompted local authorities in Liverpool to seek concessions from the centre. But, whilst these were sometimes granted, the directing nature of the fiscal state was ever-present.

This chapter considers other themes too. Bradley stated that the conflict divided British public opinion.³ Wilson built upon this, stressing that the American War magnified existing ideological, religious, partisan, and socio-economic distinctions.⁴ Both authors used Liverpool as an example to substantiate their arguments, and that information is synthesised here. The town did conform to the accepted consensus that the American War split opinion, and that economics and religion were key dividing lines. But the example of Liverpool also demonstrates that quantitative evaluation can reveal local subtleties.⁵ Wilson further argued that the American Revolution prompted a re-evaluation in British imperial ideology. The war polarised an older libertarian approach to empire against the more authoritarian model developed by mid-century.⁶ This schism was evident in Liverpool too, as both those in favour of coercion and conciliation used imperial ideology to justify their positions. Finally, Colley postulated that the rise of 'Britishness' owed much to warfare, pitting Protestant Britain against the Catholic Bourbons. This in turn generated a greater sense of patriotism. The example of

² Conway, *British Isles and the War of American Independence*, 347-53.

³ J.E. Bradley, 'The British Public and the American Revolution: Ideology, Interest and Opinion', in H.T. Dickinson, ed., *Britain and the American Revolution* (London, 1998), 141.

⁴ Wilson, *Sense of the People*, 269.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 271.

⁶ Wilson, *Sense of the People*, 282-4.

Liverpool during the War of Independence indicates that there were certainly different identities in the town, including a sense of 'Englishness'. But the essential flow of Colley's thesis is supported. During the war-years some locals referred to the 'British', and identified against 'the Other'. The latter included the European powers, and, eventually, the American colonists.

LIVING STANDARDS

Judging the impact of warfare upon living standards is extremely difficult.⁷ This uncertainty arises from the sheer number of factors that require considering, including inflation, incomes, prices, regional variations, and taxation.⁸ Analysing living standards in Liverpool from 1775 to 1783 is especially challenging, as there is little long-running data, and much of it is contradictory. As the previous chapter indicated, there were some economic winners during these years, such as shipbuilders. Individuals also managed to achieve remarkable social mobility. Chapter One recalled how Banastre Tarleton came to the attention of Lord Cornwallis for his military exploits. Other anecdotal evidence suggests that some individuals continued to enjoy high quality lifestyles. Liverpool Corporation records show that money was still spent on functions at the Exchange during the war.⁹ Advertisements in the local press for luxury goods, such as silks and country

⁷ J. Rule, *The Labouring Classes in Early Industrial England 1750-1850* (London, 1996), 40-5. Also see M.W. Flinn, 'Trends in Real Wages 1750-1850', *EHR*, 27, 3 (1974), 395-413; and T.R. Gourvish, 'Flinn and Real Wage Trends in Britain 1750-1850', *EHR*, 29, 1 (1976), 136-42.

⁸ See R. Black and C. Gilmore, 'Crowding Out during Britain's Industrial Revolution', *JEH*, 50, 1 (1990), 109-31; E.W. Gilboy, *Wages in Eighteenth Century England* (Cambridge, 1934), 219-20; P. Mathias and P. O'Brien, 'Taxation in Britain and France 1715-1810: A Comparison of the Social and Economic incidence of taxes collected for the Central Governments', *JEEH*, 5 (1976), 601-50; and P. K. O'Brien, 'The Political Economy of British Taxation, 1688-1815', *EHR*, 2, 41 (1988), 1-32.

⁹ LIVRO, Liverpool Corporation Records, 6 October 1779, 352 MIN/COU 1.

homes, imply that there was still demand for these commodities during war years.¹⁰

Conversely, other records suggest a decidedly negative impact. The conflict forced some local businesses to make employees redundant. For example, in 1778 the cotton manufacturers Craven & Rosson laid off 120 children from the Liverpool Blue Coat School. They had originally been employed for roving, carding, and picking cotton for the spinning machines. But because of the 'Deadness of the Cotton Branch of Trade' the company became 'utterly incapable to Employ so large a number'.¹¹ Indeed, between 1772 and 1774, 64 per cent of British cotton imports came from the West Indies.¹² The war disrupted the Caribbean market, and therefore impacted upon the British cotton industry. Conway also pointed out that increased wartime taxation generated considerable opposition in parts of Britain. The pseudonymous 'Varro' reflected this by criticising 'burthensome taxes' during the 1780 Liverpool election.¹³

Quantitative evidence for declining local living standards is patchy. There would seem to have been some price inflation in the town. The cost of a Liverpool newspaper between 1777 and 1783, for example, rose by 20 per cent from 2 ½ d. to 3d.¹⁴ The coach to London, on the other hand, rose by a more modest 7 per cent from £2.2s to £2.5s between 1776 and 1781.¹⁵ These figures suggest that Liverpool was not out of kilter with the national picture. According to the

¹⁰ *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 19 March, 18 June, and 9 July 1779.

¹¹ LIVRO, Blue Coat School Records, Quarterly Board Meetings, Minute Book, 29 June 1778, 377 BLU 15/1/1.

¹² Price, 'Imperial Economy', 84.

¹³ LA, Varro, 8 September 1780, in Liverpool Poll Book 1780.

¹⁴ *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 9 May 1777 and *Williamson's General Advertiser*, 3 April 1783.

¹⁵ *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 19 April 1776 and 31 May 1781.

Schumpeter-Gilboy price index, national prices for consumer goods rose from an index of 113 in 1775 to 129 in 1783 – a 14 per cent rise.¹⁶ Set against these price rises, there is some evidence of declining wages, or, at least, stagnating wages for public employees. Indeed, Corporation records reveal that the salary of local Beadle remained constant throughout the war. However, others like the gardener saw their wages cut.¹⁷

Even if one assumes declining living standards (which is not clear cut), there are competing explanations for this trend. As we saw in the previous chapter, a number of merchants engaged in overseas trade were made bankrupts between 1775 and 1783. Local businesswoman Sarah Clayton (who had interests in property and collieries) also suffered the same fate in 1778. Whilst the exact causes of their demise remain unknown, Chapter Four showed a decline in overseas trade for a time during the conflict. It seems probable that there was a connection with this trend and the onset of war. But there are other potential reasons for possible declining living standards. On 2 February 1776, the Corporation noted that the 'deplorable Case of the Poor' was due to bad weather.¹⁸ The Blue Coat charity school also commented on the increased number of dispossessed children, attributing this to Liverpool's continued urban expansion.¹⁹ Significantly, neither entry referred to the struggle in the colonies. Thus, it remains unclear how the war affected local living standards.

¹⁶ B.R. Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge, 1988), 720.

¹⁷ LIVRO, Corporation Records, Principal Book of Accounts, 1772-1784, 352 TRE/1/1/6.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2 February 1776, 352 MIN/COU 1.

¹⁹ LIVRO, Blue Coat Hospital and School records, A Report on the State of the Blue Coat Hospital in Liverpool from 25 December 1782 to 25 December 1783, 377 BLU/12.

CRIME AND UNREST

We can be more certain that the war affected local criminality. Liverpool was 'a tough town to police' during the eighteenth century.²⁰ Poaching, scams, and bodily harm, were amongst the most frequent crimes committed. Imprisonment was the most obvious form of punishment, and there were five major detention centres in the town. This included the tower at the bottom of Water Street, which, in 1740, became a gaol for housing felons and debtors. A House of Correction was also opened next to the workhouse on Brownlow Hill in 1776. Its purpose was to punish criminals, and make vagabonds work. More extreme punishments, such as execution, were available, but rarely used.²¹

The onset of war immediately precipitated violence in the town. Exact details of the Sailors Riot of August 1775 vary according to individual accounts. Nonetheless, a general chronology of events is discernible. Some contemporaries believed that the disturbances in America initially forced the laying up of a 'great number of Guinea ships'.²² Up to 3,000 sailors became unemployed, and wages cut for those who retained their jobs. On Friday 25 August, the crew of *Derby* responded by unrigging their vessel. Some of the offenders were committed to prison, but a gang of armed sailors released them, as well as a female accomplice.²³ Protesting continued into the weekend, and increased the following Monday. The mariners demanded redress of their grievances at the Exchange. Failing to achieve this,

²⁰ M. Macilwee, *The Liverpool Underworld: Crime in the City 1750-1900* (Liverpool, 2011), 13.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 11-31.

²² Yell data in Chapter Four indicated that Liverpool's overseas trade initially remained stable after the outbreak of hostilities in 1775. It seems likely that by making mariners redundant in 1775 the merchants were hoping to save their businesses from bankruptcy in the longer term. This was a well-founded fear, as Figure 4 shows a higher incidence of local business failures between 1776 and 1779, than in 1775.

²³ *South Carolina Gazette*, 11 December 1775.

they returned on Tuesday. However, a body of hired men protected the town hall from attack, which resulted in a violent encounter that led to multiple deaths. The next day armed sailors marched on the Exchange, and ransacked the homes of local merchants. By Thursday, troops arrived from Manchester and Chester to quell the riot.²⁴

This unrest had several consequences. In the immediate aftermath, over 40 men were arrested.²⁵ Liverpool Corporation granted the freedom of the town to the officers responsible for silencing the disturbances.²⁶ Merchants also attempted to seek redress. Indeed, Thomas Ratcliffe sought compensation for damage done to his home. But this was a lengthy process, as there was uncertainty under which legislation he was entitled compensation. It would be another two years before he received remuneration.²⁷ The Sailor's Riot contributed towards the increased sense of fear in the town during the war. As we shall see, there was apprehension that belligerent powers would attack the port. Disgruntled sailors also continued to pose a risk. The Mayor noted in 1779 that crews from privateers caused 'great annoyance of the inhabitants', and therefore troops were stationed to prevent breaches of the peace.²⁸ Additional steps were taken to ensure tranquillity. In 1777 the council appointed a police committee, which advised people not to leave their homes at night. By 1779 the Yorkshire militia were assigned to Liverpool.²⁹

²⁴ R.B. Rose, 'A Liverpool Sailors' Strike in the Eighteenth Century', *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, 68 (1958), 85-92. For more on eighteenth century sailors see M. Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750* (Cambridge, 1987).

²⁵ *South Carolina Gazette*, 11 December 1775.

²⁶ LIVRO, Liverpool Corporation Records, 11 September 1775, 352 MIN/COU 1.

²⁷ LMA, Miscellaneous Document, 1777, MISC M55/9/16.

²⁸ *Williamson's General Advertiser*, 1 January 1779.

²⁹ Muir, *History of Liverpool*, 219-20.

The war likely affected the size of Liverpool's prison population too. Contemporary social reformer John Howard recorded the number of inmates incarcerated. His data is not unproblematic, as prison populations often fluctuated throughout the year. Even if there was an increase in the number of occupants, it is not clear whether this was down to the war, or the increased vigilance of local authorities.³⁰ Nevertheless, the annual number of inmates in Liverpool Borough Gaol is consistent with the pattern associated with periods of warfare.³¹ In November 1774 there were 58 prisoners in the facility. By 1779 the figure dropped to 29. This may indicate the effectiveness of the Recruitment Acts, which augmented the size of the armed forces with criminals. Of these, two were listed as deserters or impressed men, suggesting a direct military link. By 1782, however, the number of inmates at Liverpool Borough Gaol had increased to 34. This supports the idea that demobilisation led to a higher incidence of crime.³²

MIGRATION AND REFUGEES

The decision to wage war in America impacted upon Liverpool by reducing overseas migration. Chapter One mentioned that the town facilitated the movement of unfree Britons across the Atlantic. However, there seems to be no transport contract between Liverpool and America after 1775.³³ The second city of empire also serviced the movement of free peoples across the ocean. Contemporary Treasury records listed migrants sailing from England to America,

³⁰ M.E. Delacy, 'County Prison Administration in Lancashire 1690-1850' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Princeton University, 1980), 211-21.

³¹ D. Hay, 'War, Dearth and Theft in the Eighteenth Century: The Record of the English Courts', *P&P*, 95 (1982), 117-60, and J. Innes, 'The Domestic Face of the Military-Fiscal State: Government and Society in Eighteenth Century Britain', in Stone, *Imperial State at War*, 108-9.

³² J. Howard, *The State of the Prisons in England and Wales with Preliminary Observations and an Account of Some Foreign Prisons and Hospitals* (Warrington, 1784), 437.

³³ CRO, Transport Bonds to America, 1731-1775, ZQRTB.

and Liverpool was one point of departure. These migrants came from various parts of the UK, and travelled to the West Indies and North America. New York and Philadelphia were amongst the most frequent destinations from Liverpool. Continual runs of data from this period are limited, but it seems that the outbreak of war in 1775 sharply reduced the number of migrants. In 1774, 243 free migrants left Liverpool for the Americas. Twelve months later, there was a large drop to a mere eight recorded entries.³⁴

Warfare invariably creates refugees, and 7,000 Loyalists fled the colonies for the UK. Most of them resided in London, during which time they worked, socialised, and travelled around Britain.³⁵ Some loyalists visited Liverpool, but often they did not find it appealing. Samuel Curwen recorded that whilst the docks were 'stupendously grand', housing was 'by a great majority in middling and lower style'. Its character was 'nautical and so infinitely below our expectations.'³⁶ Other loyalists had a thoroughly unpleasant experience in Liverpool. Joseph de Sabbe was a physician who had resided in America. When the disputes between Britain and the colonists became violent, he boarded a ship owned by John Sparling, bound for Liverpool. However, owing to the limited time to collect his property, De Sabbe had little money. Thus, when he arrived at Liverpool in 1776, he was jailed for not paying his passage.³⁷ Taken as a whole, the evidence on criminality, labour unrest, reduced overseas migration, and visits by colonial refugees, suggests that the American War affected Liverpool – and therefore that regions outside of the South of England were impacted by eighteenth century warfare too.

³⁴ G. Fothergill, ed., *Emigrants from England 1773-1776* (Baltimore, 1964), 44-142.

³⁵ M. B. Norton, *The British Americans* (London, 1974), 99-102.

³⁶ A. Oliver, ed., *The Journal of Samuel Curwen Loyalist Volume 2* (Cambridge, 1972), 627-8.

³⁷ TNA, State Papers, Petition from J. De Sabbe, Liverpool Prison, 6 July 1776, SP 78/299.

PRISONERS OF WAR

We now turn to militarisation of the community, and this enables us to determine the balance of power between the central fiscal-military state and local authorities. Liverpool was a depot for enemy combatants 'from the force of circumstances rather than any suitability of its own'.³⁸ Indeed, because the town was a privateering port, it served as a convenient detention centre. Extant sources do not provide numbers, but between 1775 and 1783 Liverpool housed people from various nations. This included neutrals that were captured on enemy vessels, who, after further investigation, were released.³⁹ Most inmates tended to be American, French, or Spanish, the majority of which were confined to the Gaol on Mount Pleasant.⁴⁰ On the whole, prisoners were humanely treated. Orders were given that inmates be 'victualled and supplied with clothes and necessaries'.⁴¹ However, it was later alleged that the agent, Mr Oliphant, did not carry out these instructions with the Americans. After conducting an investigation, the Navy Board found 'him totally unfit to be continued in the employment'. Oliphant was replaced, and £20 distributed amongst the prisoners as compensation.⁴²

Housing these people put a strain on local resources, which brought the Corporation into conflict with central government. French and Spanish prisoners were especially dangerous because of the 'racial animosities' between the two.⁴³ Thus, the Corporation actively solicited the removal of prisoners from the town. In

³⁸ Abell, *Prisoners of War in Britain*, 186-91.

³⁹ NMM, Admiralty records, Committee for the Sick and Hurt, 7 December 1780, ADMW410.

⁴⁰ LIVRO, Liverpool Corporation records, 13 September 1779, 352 MIN / COU 1.

⁴¹ NMM, Admiralty records, Committee for the Sick and Hurt, 13 February 1778, ADMW404.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 20 October 1779, ADMW409.

⁴³ Abell, *Prisoners of War*, 186-91. NMM, Admiralty records, Committee for the Sick and Hurt, 7 August 1779, ADMW406.

November 1778 the local government sent a memorial to the Privy Council, requesting that French prisoners be transferred to an inland town.⁴⁴ This yielded some results, as a number of prisoners were moved to Ormskirk, Chester, and Lancaster. But the centre did not always acquiesce to provincial requests. In 1780 Liverpool hoped that a government vessel would transport prisoners from the town to Plymouth. This was rejected, and Liverpool instructed to find other methods of removing the inmates.⁴⁵ Even when prisoners were moved, there were more to take their place. By 4 January 1780 orders were issued that the Durham militia escort ten Frenchmen from Whitehaven to Liverpool.⁴⁶ Thus, whilst local government tried to modify exactions forced upon it, the direction of the fiscal-military state was evident.

CIVIL DEFENCE

Several attempts were made to bolster the town's defensive posture. The need for protection was not unfounded, as the US Congress targeted Liverpool for destruction.⁴⁷ The main form of local defence was the construction of fortifications. This had previously been attempted during the Seven Years War, but did not materialise due to difficulties with the landholders of the intended site. With the nation again at war, this matter was back on the agenda. In 1776, Liverpool petitioned the Privy Council for a Fort and Barracks to lodge two companies of soldiers.⁴⁸ By May 1777, the Master-General of Ordnance reported that construction of a battery on the pier was insufficient, as the breadth of the river

⁴⁴ LIVRO, Liverpool Corporation records, November 1778, 352 MIN / COU 1.

⁴⁵ NMM, Admiralty records, Committee for the Sick and Hurt, 14 December 1780, ADMAM410.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 4 January 1780, ADMNW410.

⁴⁷ Marine Committee to Benjamin Franklin, 19 July 1779, in G. Gawall, ed., *Letters of the Delegates to Congress 1774-1789* (Washington, 1985), 261-2.

⁴⁸ TNA, Privy Council records, Court of St James 11 December 1776, PC1/3089.

enabled enemy vessels to fire at the docks and town. Thus, an alternative was proposed - a total of two batteries, with one at Hoxhey Nook and the other at Seacomb Point. The crossfire from both would dissuade enemy vessels from attacking the town. But this plan would take two years to complete, and therefore hulks were deployed in the river as short-term solutions.⁴⁹ Construction of a fort commenced on the north shore by Princes Dock, with barracks for 500 troops. Batteries were also placed at the mouth of the docks.⁵⁰ As evidence of the impact of warfare upon British society, when troops arrived in these garrisons they interacted with local civilians. The Mayor of Liverpool noted that inhabitants purchased clothes from the soldiers, and that this was detrimental to the welfare of the troops. Henceforth, anybody found guilty of this crime would be punished.⁵¹ Advertisements were also placed in the local press demanding information on the whereabouts of deserters.⁵²

The construction of these fortifications placated the needs of the locality. However, the direction of the fiscal-military state remained paramount. Liverpool Corporation believed that national government had agreed to supply gunpowder with the forts. When this commodity did not arrive, Liverpool petitioned Westminster to procure it.⁵³ But, in the summer of 1779, the Privy Council rejected this appeal, arguing

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, report of the Master-General of the Ordnance, 15 May 1777, PC1 /3089.

⁵⁰ Muir, *History of Liverpool*, 220-1.

⁵¹ *Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser*, 28 November 1781.

⁵² *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 23 January 1781.

⁵³ TNA, Privy Council Records, Petition from Liverpool, 25 March 1779, PC1/3091.

that this had never been part of the arrangement.⁵⁴ To acquiesce would encourage similar requests from other towns.⁵⁵

INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

Another example of the war impacting upon Liverpool, as well as the growing reach of the fiscal-military state, was the expansion of intelligence gathering. During the Early Modern Period there were two obvious ways of conducting this, either through resident diplomats in other countries or networks of agents.⁵⁶ However, with the advent of privateering at port towns, opportunities for acquiring information were expanded. Enemy vessels were brought into port, papers confiscated, and crews interviewed. Over twenty standard questions were prepared for interrogation. This included details of where the ship had sailed from, what cargo it carried, and whether it was insured. A series of additional questions could follow, such as asking about passengers and passports.⁵⁷

Crucially, these interrogations shed light on the relationship between local and national government. In Liverpool, local merchants conducted and transcribed these interviews. For example, Johnson Gildart, fluent in French, interviewed crewmembers from *Canister* in 1778 at the Golden Lyon on Dale Street.⁵⁸ Fellow merchant Joseph Daltera also translated testimonies from *La Pauline* at Pontack's

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Council Chamber, Whitehall, 10 June 1779, PC 1/12/113.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, report by Board of Ordnance, 18 August 1780, PC1/12/37.

⁵⁶ D. Szechi, 'Introduction: The Dangerous Trade in Early Modern Europe', in D. Szechi, ed., *The Dangerous Trade: Spies, Spymasters and the Making of Europe* (Dundee, 2010), 2-3.

⁵⁷ TNA, HCA, Governor Johnson, in Captured ships with names beginning with G, 1775-1783, HCA 32/344.

⁵⁸ TNA, HCA, *Canister*, in Captured ships with names beginning with C, 1775-1783, HCA 32/287.

Coffee House on Water Street.⁵⁹ However, the importance of central government was evident in these interviews. The interrogation documents were highly formalised, suggesting that they were centrally designed.

RECRUITMENT AND SERVICE IN THE ARMY

Banastre Tarleton remains the outstanding example of a Liverpool-born man serving in the British army during the American War, but he was not alone. If there were attempts to recruit soldiers in Liverpool at the outset of the war, then they were modest. This was probably due to the initial limited mobilisation. But, on 15 December 1777 the Corporation considered 'the most serious...present state of publick Affairs in America'. It noted how the Declaration of Independence had made reconciliation more difficult, and overseas trade was reduced. In a move that symbolised the importance of local initiative, Liverpool Corporation pledged to raise a regiment.⁶⁰ This was reminiscent of Britain's 'amateur military tradition', or part-time volunteer soldiering.⁶¹ The 79th Regiment of Foot were informally known as the 'Liverpool Blues', in honour of the local battalion that operated during the '45.⁶² The new regiment initially numbered over 1,000 men.⁶³

Despite this local initiative, national considerations remained paramount. The War Office outlined the specifications of the regiment to the Liverpool mayor on 8

⁵⁹ TNA, HCA, *La Pauline*, in Captured ships with names beginning with P, 1775-1783, HCA 32/418.

⁶⁰ LIVRO, Liverpool Corporation Records, 15 December 1777, 352 MIN / COU 1.

⁶¹ S. Conway, 'Like the Irish? Volunteers Corps and Volunteering in Britain during the American War', in J. Flavell and S. Conway, eds, *Britain and America Go to War: The Impact of War and Warfare in Anglo-America 1754-1815* (Gainesville, 2004), 143-4.

⁶² J.A. Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool, Historical and Topographical including a History of the Dock Estate*, 2nd edn (Liverpool, 1903), 214-5.

⁶³ Muir, *History of Liverpool*, 220-1.

January 1778. It would contain eight battalions, one company of grenadiers, and a company of light infantry. None of the men were to be under 5ft 4 inches tall, and would be aged between 18 and 30.⁶⁴ In May 1778 the regiment assembled at Bank Hall to receive their colours.⁶⁵ Thereafter, the 79th was at the operational disposal of the central state, and experienced conditions associated with army life. In summer 1778 they received their training at Warley in the Midlands.⁶⁶ The following year they disembarked for Jamaica. By November 1779 there were only 933 men in their ranks. Muster rolls show that there had been only five desertions since August. Evidently, the loss of manpower was predominantly due to illness.⁶⁷

The 79th also experienced the horrors of combat. After the internationalisation of the war, they took part in an expedition to attack Spanish America. Governor Dalling of Jamaica proposed that British troops move down the San Juan River, near Mosquito Shore, to take possession of Lake Nicaragua. This would cut Spanish America in half. The expedition departed Jamaica in February 1780, and Horatio Nelson conveyed some of these troops. They reached Central America in March, and by 15 April opened fire on the Spanish at St. John's Castle. Deprived of water, the Spanish struck their colours a fortnight later.⁶⁸ During this action, the behaviour of the 79th varied. For his bravery, the commander was recommended for promotion, but some of the regiment also abandoned their posts.⁶⁹ Fortune

⁶⁴ Parliamentary Register, 22 January 1778, House of Commons Papers Online, 21-2, http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk/lulivac/lulivac.do?id=pr_1774_1780-000641; accessed 25 July 2014.

⁶⁵ *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 29 May 1778.

⁶⁶ J.A. Houlding, *Fit for Service: The Training of the British Army* (Oxford, 1981), 343.

⁶⁷ TNA, War Office Records, Regiment Reports, 1 August 1779, 1 September 1779, 1 October 1779 and 1 November 1779, WO 17/200.

⁶⁸ TNA, CO, Lt. Polson's Journal, 1780, NA, CO 137/77.

⁶⁹ TNA, CO, Governor Dalling to George Germain, 2 June 1780, CO 137/77. Also see TNA, Colonial Office records, Lt. Polson's Journal, 1780, NA, CO 137/77.

turned into failure, as Spanish re-enforcements entrapped the British, and there were a lack of provisions. Humidity and rain rotted the tents, leading to illness. Poor conduct by the British troops also alienated the local people, who had previously supported them. Thus, by November, the British were forced to withdraw.⁷⁰ Only 84 men from the 79th returned home to Liverpool at the end of the war, and their colours were deposited at the Exchange.⁷¹ Although the records are patchy, it seems that in 1782 more troops were raised in the town for internal defence.⁷²

THE NAVY: REQUISITIONS AND PRESS GANGS

The expansion of the Royal Navy in Liverpool contributed towards the militarization of the community. One of the first initiatives to expand the Senior Service was to requisition vessels from private owners. In 1776 the Navy sent agents to Liverpool for such purposes. Two local transports were forthcoming, and sent to Plymouth for refitting. However, it seems that no other private vessels were supplied to the state from Liverpool. Some were foreign-built, and therefore could not serve in American waters under the Navigation Acts, whilst others proved unsuitable because they were designed for the African and Greenland trades. The owners of others simply refused to hand over their property under the terms and conditions offered.⁷³ This suggests that the localities would not always comply with the centre.

⁷⁰ TNA, CO, Mr Hodgson's Narrative: *Notes on the Rise, Progress and end of the late expedition towards the lake of Nicaragua, written as matters had appeared to xxx and composed in an inconvenient corner of the dirty hold of the packet Dashwood*, 1780, CO 137/80.

⁷¹ Muir, *History of Liverpool*, 221.

⁷² LIVRO, *Annals of Liverpool*, Volume 13, in *Materials towards a History of Liverpool* collected by John Holl and Matthew Gregson, 943 HOL. However, nothing else has survived about this force.

⁷³ NMM, Admiralty records, Navy Office in-latters, 31 January 1776, ADM/B/191.

However, there are examples of the Navy and central state asserting a great influence over Liverpoolian society. The previous chapter noted that several warships were built on the Mersey between 1777 and 1784. Locally-built *Adamant* took part in the Chesapeake campaign, the failure of which consigned Cornwallis to defeat at Yorktown.⁷⁴ Other Liverpool-built vessels, such as *Alligator*, remained in the Mersey for a time.⁷⁵ This was for defensive purposes, because American Captain John Paul Jones had been sighted off Whitehaven in 1778. *Assistance* was positioned in the Mersey too. The Lieutenants Logbooks suggest a mundane routine on-board. Crews were frequently mustered, maintained the ships rigging, and were sent ashore to receive supplies. In such an environment, several hands deserted, which prompted remaining crewmembers to go ashore to impress new sailors.⁷⁶

'For the eighteenth century navy the manning problem was always the critical factor which limited operational possibilities and damaged social relations.'⁷⁷ Localities frequently opposed impressment. A letter from the Admiralty Office in 1770 noted that the Mayor of Liverpool refused to support press warrants, 'alleging that the mob, who are very numerous, would set fire to his house, as they had done to one of his predecessors'.⁷⁸ During the American War, there was clear resistance to impressment in Liverpool. Ships evaded the gangs by landing their crews long before arriving at the port.⁷⁹ The Corporation also tried to neutralise the

⁷⁴ Stewart-Brown, *Liverpool Ships*, 101-3.

⁷⁵ NMM, Admiralty records, Lieutenant Log Book, HMS *Alligator*, 1780-1781, ADM/ L/A/103.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, Lieutenant Log Book, HMS *Assistance*, 1780-1781, ADM/ L/A/210.

⁷⁷ N.A.M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain 1649-1815* (London, 2006), 312.

⁷⁸ TNA, Privy Council records, Admiralty Office, 14 December 1770, PC 1/9/63.

⁷⁹ *South Carolina Gazette*, 9 April 1777.

rationale for these gangs by providing bounties for men to serve in the Navy.⁸⁰ There were also violent clashes between the press gangs and local community. In March 1780 a gang assembled in front of a house in Hackins Hey, where a number of sailors resided. The mariners refused to open the door to the pressmen, which resulted in a disturbance. In the end, the master of the house was sent to the infirmary, and a member of the Yorkshire militia shot dead.⁸¹ Thus, by 1781, press gangs were 'Worried almost every excursion' in Liverpool, and they acknowledged that they were fortunate to escape with their lives.⁸² Still, on balance, there were limits to local opposition against impressment. Despite violent reprisals, the State continued to send gangs to Liverpool for the duration of the war. This was presumably because there was a steady supply of sailors to be tapped. Local accomplices also supported gangs. The Navy drew £100 in favour of the Liverpool banker Charles Caldwell, for carrying on the impress service.⁸³ In 1776 the Mayor promised that the personal liberties of sailors would be respected, even if press gangs were operating in the town. Locals dismissed this as a hollow declaration.⁸⁴ Thus, the strength of the centre, and the relative weakness of the Corporation, is inferred.

VETERANS CHARITY

The expansion of the fiscal-military state was also manifested through increased provision of veterans charities. Indeed, Greenwich Naval Hospital had been built in

⁸⁰ LIVRO, Liverpool Corporation records, 2 January 1777, 352 MIN/COU 1.

⁸¹ *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 23 March 1780.

⁸² TNA, Admiralty records, Advice Tender, Liverpool, 10 February 1781, ADM 106/1263.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, James North to Commissioners of the Navy, Liverpool, 3 April 1780, ADM 106/1262.

⁸⁴ *South Carolina Gazette*, 9 April 1777.

the late-seventeenth century to care for wounded service personnel.⁸⁵ As part of the militarisation of Liverpool, a charity was established in 1775 for soldiers serving in America, as well as for their widows and orphans. This scheme was funded by voluntary local subscriptions. The subscribers came from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, including the landed elite, merchants, retail, and manufacturing. Subscribers also came from outside the town and included both genders. A 26-member committee, comprised chiefly of local government officials, merchants, and church leaders, received these sums. The funds were later deposited in the local Caldwell's Bank, and as of 17 November 1775 they had raised £1,049. Despite this local organisation, the scheme was nevertheless modelled upon on a London-based institution.⁸⁶ Once again, this indicates the direction of the metropole.

OPINION IN LIVERPOOL

Turning to intellectual and cultural impacts, the American War split opinion within Liverpool. Views were transmitted through word of mouth at church groups, social clubs, and taverns.⁸⁷ Ideas were also disseminated through print culture, for by the 1750s there were over 30 provincial newspapers.⁸⁸ Liverpool had a sheet as early as 1710, but it failed shortly afterwards. However, *Williamson's Advertiser* proved more enduring. Established in 1756, this newspaper had a wide circulation in

⁸⁵ Innes, 'Domestic Face of the Military-Fiscal State', in Stone, *Imperial State at War*, 109-11.

⁸⁶ *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 17 November 1775.

⁸⁷ Wilson, *Sense of the People*, 3.

⁸⁸ J. Black, *The English Press in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1987) and F. O'Gorman, *Long Eighteenth Century*, 126-9.

London, Bristol, Glasgow, Dublin, and the Isle of Man.⁸⁹ On 11 September 1775 the Corporation was one of the first towns to send a coercive address to the King. The inhabitant's address later that month, which also favoured coercion, collected over 500 signatures from gentlemen, clergy, and merchants. However, a Lancashire-wide petition for conciliation was produced in November. It collected 4,000 signatures, of which 292 came from Liverpool.⁹⁰ Table 17 shows Bradley's breakdown on the socio-economic background of the Liverpool petitioners. It also contrasts this data with Bristol, which reveals important differences between the towns. The percentage difference has been added to demonstrate the degree of polarisation within groups.

⁸⁹ G.A. Cranfield, *The Development of the Provincial Newspaper 1700-1760* (Oxford, 1962), 24, 50, 98, 200, 231-4, 254.

⁹⁰ Bradley, *Religion, Revolution and English Radicalism*, 342-4.

TABLE 17 Socio-economic backgrounds of petitioners and addressers in Bristol and Liverpool by percentage (1775, 1780)

	BRISTOL			LIVERPOOL		
	CON	COE	DIFF	CON	COE	DIFF
Gentleman	15.0	33.2	(18.2)	18.5	28.4	(9.9)
Merchant	15.0	20.0	(5)	35.8	27.6	(8.2)
Retail	26.1	16.5	(9.6)	18.5	23.1	(4.6)
Artisan	42.2	27.7	(14.5)	25.9	20.9	(5)
Labourer	1.1	2.3	(1.2)	1.2	0	(1.2)
Other	0.6	0.3	(0.3)	0	0	(0)
TOTAL	100	100		99.9	100	

Source: Bradley, *Religion, Revolution and English Radicalism*, 374

KEY: Conciliation (CON), Coercion (COE) and the percentage difference between them (DIFF).

Socio-economic background was a key factor in determining opinion. This was especially the case in Bristol. Indeed, amongst gentleman in that town, a noticeably greater percentage favoured coercion than conciliation - by as much as 18 per cent. It is believed that the upper classes held a greater vested interest in preserving law and order, and therefore opposed the Revolution.⁹¹ Alternatively, Bristolian retailers and artisans inclined towards conciliation. This was probably

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 375

because they could ill-afford wartime dislocation.⁹² This socio-economic interpretation works in Liverpool too, but to a lesser degree. Within the sample, local gentlemen generally favoured coercion, whilst artisans supported conciliation. Yet the level of polarisation within the social groups was less pronounced in Liverpool than Bristol. Unlike the latter, the percentage differences for Liverpool do not reach double figures. This echoes an argument in Chapter One, that socio-economic considerations were not always the primary factor in determining the outcome of Liverpool elections. Interestingly, unlike their Bristolian counterparts, Liverpool merchants formed a larger share of conciliatory petitions than coercive addresses. Liverpool mercantile opinion is more remarkable given that, in a broader sample of provincial opinion, Wilson found that by 1775 merchants generally supported coercion.⁹³ Presumably, Liverpool merchants took a different view because they enjoyed the second largest volume of trade with America, and feared any economic backlash from coercion.⁹⁴

Bradley found that religion was the 'clearest predictor of opinion over America'. Indeed, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, and Quakers, felt aggrieved with the established Test and Corporation Acts. Therefore, they were statistically Rebel America's closest friends.⁹⁵ In a sample of Bristolian petitions and addresses, Bradley found that Dissenters were a significant percentage of signatories to conciliatory petitions. In contrast, more Anglicans leaned towards

⁹² *Ibid.*, 378

⁹³ Wilson, *Sense of the People*, 270.

⁹⁴ London enjoyed the largest trade with America. Yet it was found that a third of signatories in coercive addresses from that town were merchants. Presumably many of them were wealthy and stood to gain from wartime government contracts. Sainsbury, *Disaffected Patriots*, 117-9.

⁹⁵ Bradley, 'British Public and the American Revolution', 142.

coercion.⁹⁶ A similar pattern occurred in Liverpool. Within Bradley's sample, Anglican clergy comprised 10 per cent of those signing coercive addresses, whilst they were only 2 per cent for conciliatory petitions. Presumably, Anglicans feared that the rebellion would challenge the position of the Church of England. In contrast, Liverpoolian Dissenters constituted 14.3 per cent of those signing conciliatory petitions, compared to 9.3 per cent for coercive addresses. However, it is significant that of those signing conciliatory petitions, in Bristol 29.1 per cent of the signatories were Dissenters, whilst in Liverpool the figure for Dissenters was appreciably lower at 14.3 per cent. Evidently, fewer Liverpoolian Dissenters displayed their religion's preference for conciliation. This was due to several factors, not least that some Liverpool Dissenters had interests in slavery, and therefore a vested interest in preserving the imperial order. There was also a lack of uniformity amongst Liverpool's dissenting ministers. Indeed, three of the seven did not sign petitions for peace.⁹⁷ Thus, we can see that the American War divided Liverpool opinion, often based upon socio-economic and religious status. However, there were some local differences with the general national pattern.

IMPERIAL IDEOLOGY

David Armitage argued that by the second quarter of the eighteenth century, Anglophone inhabitants of the Atlantic openly referred to 'the British empire'.⁹⁸ Indeed, Liverpool Corporation used this precise term in its minute book.⁹⁹ And when the Liverpool Blues received their colours in 1778, the commanding officer

⁹⁶ Bradley, *Religion, Revolution and English Radicalism*, 389-91.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 373-5, 390-3.

⁹⁸ Armitage, *Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, 172.

⁹⁹ LIVRO, Liverpool Corporation records, 15 December 1777, 352 MIN / COU 1.

praised his troops for their loyalty. Not only would they be fighting to defend King and country, but they would also 'SUPPORT...THE CONSTITUTION...PRESERVE THE UNION OF THE EMPIRE'.¹⁰⁰

Nevertheless, imperial ideology was not set in stone. Jack Greene showed that, in general, British imperial ideology was associated with Protestantism, overseas commerce, and constitutionalism.¹⁰¹ However, in Liverpool during the 1775-1783 conflict, constitutionalism was used to justify both coercion and conciliation. In its coercive address of 1775, the Corporation claimed that imperial authority was structured through 'our glorious constitution'. At the apex stood the King, and phrases in this document such as 'the throne' and the 'protestant succession' imply that loyalty was given to the institution of monarchy. However, loyalty was also given to the person. Recognising George's mortality, the addressers hoped that 'your Majesty may long reign'. The other core component of the constitution was the 'legislature'. This particular reference supports Dickinson's argument that the British prosecuted the war to secure parliamentary sovereignty.¹⁰² References were also made to the familial relationship within the Empire, headed by the King's 'paternal care'. Thus, the advocates of coercion were 'ready and willing to exert our utmost Endeavours for the Discouragement of all such illegal Proceedings'.¹⁰³ The people's coercive address also vowed to crush the American rebellion because it had shown 'contempt...to the legal authority and constitutional

¹⁰⁰ *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 29 May 1778.

¹⁰¹ Greene, 'Empire and Identity from the Glorious Revolution to the American Revolution', 208-30.

¹⁰² H.T. Dickinson, 'Britain's Imperial Sovereignty: The Ideological Case against the American Colonists', in H.T. Dickinson, ed., *Britain and the American Revolution* (London, 1998), 64-96.

¹⁰³ LIVRO, Liverpool Corporation records, 11 September 1775, 352 MIN / COU 1.

power'.¹⁰⁴ A pro-government letter, dated 27 October 1775, was also signed by 'A Friend of the British Constitution'.¹⁰⁵ At the same time, opponents of the war used constitutionalism to support their opinions. A letter to the *Liverpool General Advertiser* noted that the colonists constituted 'no efficient part' of the Westminster Parliament. This raised the question of whether the Americans were 'no longer subjects, but slaves'. The author then decried the impolitic nature of the situation by asking: 'Would not an Englishman be moved with indignation, was he to be told, that what he procured...was at the disposal of an American power?'¹⁰⁶

This evidence from Liverpool supports Wilson's argument that the American War provoked a crisis of imperialism. Constitutionalism enabled both sides to claim an ideological justification for their position.¹⁰⁷ This schism clearly demonstrated the incompatibility between an earlier form of imperial ideology that had a 'libertarian fervour', and the empire of authority that had developed by the mid-eighteenth century.¹⁰⁸ Evidently British imperialism was faced by a cruel paradox.

NATIONAL IDENTITY

At first glance, the evidence from Liverpool between 1775 and 1783 does not support Colley's idea that warfare stimulated the development of patriotic *Britons*. As a port town, Liverpool often brought mobile people together from various backgrounds, and therefore there were arguably several identities within the town. There were 'multiple elites' on the Corporation, Anglicans and Dissenters, as well

¹⁰⁴ *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 6 October 1775.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 27 October 1775.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 17 November 1775.

¹⁰⁷ Wilson, *Sense of the People*, 237-8.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 157.

as slavers and later abolitionists.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, in a letter to the local press in November 1775, a supporter of conciliation wrote of the character of the 'English Constitution' and 'Englishmen'.¹¹⁰ This tends to support Kidd's argument that the historic patriotisms of England, Scotland, and Ireland, formed competing claims to Britishness.¹¹¹

Nevertheless, the general framing of Colley's argument is still supported by the Liverpool case. Indeed, there are several references to 'Britain' and 'British' in local literature during this period.¹¹² Evidently local and national identity was not mutually exclusive. But what did it mean to be British in Liverpool during the American War? Some contemporaries defined themselves by attacking 'the Other', and contrasting non-Britons with their supposedly superior British values. Of course Liverpoolians during the Revolution were not conscious of Saidist or post-colonial analyses.¹¹³ Even so, locals expressed disapprobation of foreign powers. A conciliatory letter of 13 October 1775 argued that a reason to avoid this war was because it would prove 'a triumph to [Britain's] deadliest enemies'.¹¹⁴ Anti-Bourbon rhetoric became more prevalent as the war intensified. A locally published poem from the early 1780s, entitled *The Dismember'd Empire*, ridiculed the European powers. 'Gallia' was the first to 'put in force the foul, malignant plan', which was then followed by 'Iberia'. The poem also berated the Dutch as 'low

¹⁰⁹ Longmore, 'Civic Liverpool', 139, 52-4. Also see chapters by C.G. Pookay and J. Belchem and D.M. MacRaid in *Liverpool 800* on cosmopolitan and multi-cultural Liverpool during the nineteenth century.

¹¹⁰ *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 17 November 1775.

¹¹¹ C. Kidd, *British Identities before Nationalism: Ethnicity and Nationhood in the Atlantic World 1600-1800* (Cambridge, 1999), 6.

¹¹² For example, LIVRO, Liverpool Corporation records, 11 September 1775, 352 MIN / COU 1 and *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 27 October 1775, 17 November 1775.

¹¹³ See D. Kennedy, 'Imperial History and Post-Colonial Theory', JICH, 24, 3 (1996), 345-63 and E. Said, *Orientalism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985).

¹¹⁴ *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 13 October 1775.

thoughted'.¹¹⁵ During the 1780 poll an election song contained stringent anti-French rhetoric, with references to 'frogs'. This allowed the writer to contrast impure French symbols with virtuous British beef and 'Liverpool Ale'.¹¹⁶

A key problem for the British during the War of Independence was that they could not decide whether the Americans were enemies or brothers.¹¹⁷ In Liverpool at the start of the conflict, both those in favour of coercion and conciliation regarded the colonists as brethren. The Corporation's loyal Address referred to 'our fellow subjects in America'.¹¹⁸ An advocate of conciliation also wrote a letter to the press referring to this 'unnatural war' through the spilling of 'kindred blood'.¹¹⁹ Even by the middling stages of the conflict, the Corporation still regarded the colonists as fellow subjects of Britain. It sent another memorial to the Crown in 1779, referring to the 'perfidious Alliance of our...Enemies the House of Bourbon with your Majesty's revolted colonies in America'.¹²⁰ However, towards the end of the war, there was a hardening of attitudes against the colonists in Liverpool. This led to comparisons between wholesome Britons and disloyal Rebels. At the 1780 general election a Liverpool voter urged his peers to elect a 'Gentlemen of Independent Fortune', who was a friend to the king, country and the 'present Happy Constitution'. They absolutely should not support the 'Abettors of American Rebellion or promoters of Petitions and Associations of a Republican Faction'.¹²¹

¹¹⁵ BL, *The Dissembled Empire*, Liverpool, RB.23.B.929.

¹¹⁶ LA, Liverpool Poll Book 1780, A New Song, no date.

¹¹⁷ D. Wahrman, 'The English Problem of Identity in the American Revolution', *American Historical Review*, 106, 4 (2001), 1238.

¹¹⁸ LIVRO, Liverpool Corporation records, 11 September 1775, 352 MIN / COU 1.

¹¹⁹ *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 13 October 1775.

¹²⁰ LIVRO, Liverpool Corporation records, 6 June 1779, 352 MIN / COU 1.

¹²¹ *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 8 June 1780.

If individuals did not measure up to this vision of loyal gentlemen consuming beef and ale, then they were vulnerable to criticism. This was largely due to a deteriorating military environment and international situation, whereby some Britons began looking for the enemy within.¹²² After 1777 Sir William Meredith was a supporter of conciliation. Thus, by the 1780 election, some local freemen criticised him as a traitor. Meredith 'hath told us that...we must not fight, That America should over England prevail'. The allegedly unpatriotic MP was also juxtaposed with virtuous Liverpoolians, who had defeated the Jacobites and now fought at sea.¹²³ Richard Pennant, who had criticised coercion from the start, was labelled by 'Old England' as Benjamin Franklin's 'worthy colleague'.¹²⁴ Thus, to ensure that Pennant would be defeated in 1780, 'Benevolus' successfully urged his peers to vote for Bamber Gascoyne the Younger, who had 'not a single Seed of rebellion in his disposition'.¹²⁵

CONCLUSIONS

Clearly the American War had a significant cultural and social impact upon Liverpool. It affected men, women, and children. Therefore, Bowen's argument that warfare had a significant impact upon England, notably in the South East, can be extended to include the North too. By looking at the housing of prisoners, intelligence gathering, construction of defences, and interaction with the armed forces, this chapter found that the community became increasingly militarised.

¹²² G. Newman, *The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History 1740-1830* (Basingstoke, 1997), 194-200.

¹²³ LA, A New Song, no date, *Liverpool Poll Book 1780*.

¹²⁴ LA, Old England, no date, *Liverpool Poll Book 1780*.

¹²⁵ LA, Benevolus, 7 September 1780, *Liverpool Poll Book 1780*.

Whilst the provinces could influence the centre, the direction of Brewer's fiscal-military state was ever-present. This chapter reached other conclusions too. The war in America split opinion in Liverpool. Like other towns, this reflected socio-economic and religious divisions. But there were some local peculiarities in Liverpool's experience. Contrary to the broader national trend, Liverpool merchants favoured conciliation over coercion. Likewise, local Dissenters were less opposed to coercion than their counterparts elsewhere. Liverpool's experience of the War of Independence also reflected the schism within imperial ideology – constitutionalism was used to support the proponents of coercion and conciliation. Finally, this case study indicated that whilst the emergence of a British national identity was not as smooth as Colley predicted (for there were references to 'Englishness'), her argument does have some basis. Locals articulated this by contrasting themselves with 'the Other'. The French were frogs and the Americans, eventually, became republicans. In contrast, virtuous Liverpudlians were gentlemen that supported the constitution.

CONCLUSIONS

Using Liverpool during the American Revolution as a case study, this work enhances knowledge of British imperialism 'at home' during the late-eighteenth century. Much has been written about how the American Revolution impacted upon Britain. Yet, within this canon of work, Liverpool, arguably the second city of empire, receives only patchy coverage. One author stated: 'the historiography of the American Revolution has flourished as never before.'¹ By looking specifically at Liverpool during this struggle, this thesis adds another chapter to the history of the Revolution.

To reiterate, Liverpool was a significant location during the Hanoverian period. The town enjoyed sizable demographic growth, and by the 1750s was emerging as the major industrial centre within the North West mineral economy. Liverpool therefore had manufacturing interests, and several canals linked the town to its industrial hinterland. Liverpool was also integrated within the larger Atlantic World. After construction began of the Old Dock in 1707, the port expanded its trading relations around the British Isles, mainland Europe, North America, and the Caribbean. By mid-century, Liverpool had overtaken the capital and Bristol in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. During the 1760s and 1770s Liverpool was also making abortive attempts at increasing its access to the eastern market. Combined, all these factors ensured that a vibrant local mercantile community developed. These

¹ S. Newman, 'Writing the History of the American Revolution', in M. Stokes, ed., *The State of U.S. History* (Oxford, 2002), 23.

merchants established social ties with their counterparts around the Atlantic, as well as political-lobbying networks in London.

PROTO-GENTLEMANLY CAPITALISM

This mix of commercial and manufacturing interests in the town, as well as an industrial hinterland, makes Georgian Liverpool an ideal case to test the Cain-Hopkins theory of British imperialism. In brief, their work stressed the importance of the landed elite and southern financial-commercial services over northern industry in the policy-making process. This thesis generally supports gentlemanly capitalism, but with some modifications.

Chapter One considered the relationship between manufacturing, the commercial sector, and landed elite in Georgian Liverpool. It found that the local economy was broad-based. Within the town there were manufacturers such as pottery-makers, watch-makers, and ship-builders. Conversely, there were merchants employed in services such as transportation, distribution, wholesale of goods, commerce, and some banking. Manufacturers and services transacted business together, socialised in each other's company, and were both involved in local government. Henceforth, there are some grounds for supporting Daunton's and Ward's argument that manufacturing and services cannot be easily separated from the other, and therefore manufacturing did matter. Nevertheless, merchants and fellow services, such as professionals, enjoyed a numerical advantage over manufacturers on the governing Corporation and lobbying forums. Given the contacts between manufacturing and services, it seems that, at best,

manufacturing enjoyed only indirect influence over decision-making. The relative lack of political influence enjoyed by manufacturers in Georgian Liverpool mirrors the fact that the economic development of industry was slower than once thought. Manufacturers were less well represented not because they were socially unacceptable *per se*. Indeed, the landed Liverpool MP Richard Pennant had ties to slate mining in North Wales, and the Earl of Derby held shares in the Leeds-Liverpool Canal, which transported raw materials for manufacturing purposes. Instead, on average, Liverpool manufacturers were poorer than their mercantile counterparts. Although there was considerable risk in merchanting, those who survived the perils of overseas commerce enjoyed affluent lifestyles and positions within the community. Henceforth, merchants dominated the Corporation, which often promoted from within. In this favoured position, local mercantile services interacted with the landed elite. For example, the merchants serviced the debts of the Derby family, who in turn rented their land to Liverpool merchants. A similar arrangement existed with the Duke of Atholl on the Isle of Man.

Yet, whilst the coming together of merchant services and the landed elite in Georgian Liverpool supports the broad parameters of Cain and Hopkins, some modifications are appropriate. Firstly, that the gentlemanly capitalist complex was not exclusive to London and the South East - it operated in the provinces as well (additional research may show that this phenomenon existed in other provincial towns, besides Liverpool). Secondly, the eighteenth century should be seen as a period of emergent (or proto) gentlemanly capitalism. Even Cain and Hopkins acknowledged that the development of a landed-commercial nexus was not easily achieved. We see this in Liverpool between 1763 and 1783. The relationship

between the local merchants and landed elite was not always harmonious. There was hardly any inter-marriage between Liverpool services and the local aristocrats during this period. This supports Stone's argument that entry into the upper classes from below was not especially 'open'. Several reasons account for these circumstances. Historic antagonisms between Liverpool Corporation and the local landed elite proved problematic. There were also cultural differences between the merchants and landed sorts. Indeed, some contemporary sources complained about the town's fixation with business, as opposed to refined 'gentlemanly' living. Personal animosities existed between the merchant-dominated Corporation and local landed MPs as well. This was illustrated through the tense relationship between the Corporation and Sir William Meredith, 3rd Baronet of Henbury. Fissures based upon party, ideology, religion, and socio-economic status, were exposed during election periods. Thus, only 'proto-gentlemanly capitalist' ties could be established at this stage. Yet, despite these tensions, the links between local merchants and landed elite did not implode. The latter benefited from the former's services, whilst the merchants shared business and family networks, and aped the trappings of an elite lifestyle. As demonstrated with the links between merchant James Gildart and the planter George Washington, Liverpool extended these proto-gentlemanly capitalist networks beyond the North West. This reinforces Bowen's point that the empire (and in this case its former imperial possessions) was knit together by socio-economic trans-oceanic networks. However, the example of Liverpool during the American War indicates that there was potential for closer gentlemanly capitalist ties beyond the 1780s. Banastre Tarleton, the son of a prominent Liverpool merchant and famous soldier during the War of Independence, was closely associated with General Lord Cornwallis.

Extant primary sources reveal that, for a time, a close relationship existed between the two men. Future work may determine when proto-gentlemanly capitalism actually became gentlemanly capitalism.

Chapters Two and Three determined how effective the Liverpool lobby was in Westminster between 1763 and 1783. Two broad arguments stood out. Firstly, that the Liverpool lobby (comprised primarily, though not exclusively, of merchants and the landed elite) utilised a variety of methods to advance its goals. This included sending petitions and delegates to various branches of government, including the Admiralty, Board of Trade, and Treasury. Liverpool also cultivated contacts with men on the spot, such as Bamber Gascoyne the Elder. This was made possible through regular postal and coach services to the South East. The fact that most of the Liverpool MPs during this period either owned land or held titles suggests that prior to the 1850s, the elite were the significant component of the gentlemanly capitalist compound. Secondly, although Liverpool could make its voice heard in the corridors of power, and achieved some success, it ultimately did not wield considerable influence over policy-making. In doing so, this dissertation confirms Cain and Hopkins's argument that the provinces could only flatter London.

It is surprising that Hanoverian Liverpool did not enjoy greater lobbying success. After all, the town stood out in several respects, not least in its demographic growth, command of the African slave trade, and being represented by the lively Meredith. There were some occasions when Liverpool was on the 'winning' side, namely the repeal of the Stamp Act in 1766 and the defeat of the Irish Trade Bill in

1778. But this was a short list of successful interventions – even Irish trade was reformed between 1779 and 1780.

There were five key reasons for Liverpool's lack of input in the metropole. Firstly, splits existed amongst the local mercantile services. This was significant because merchants predominated on local government and lobbying forums. Bennett and Haggerty have shown that social, familial, and religious bonds, tied the local merchants. But that did not mean they were always united. Chapter One demonstrated that Liverpool merchants were a diverse group with different business interests and family backgrounds. They were also divided by personalities and issues, which were clearly exposed in 1774 with the split between the independent Chamber of Commerce and pro-Corporation Committee of Trade. Up to 1783, it was rare for these organisations to collaborate. As Checkland showed, this divided relationship continued into the post-1783 period, with the American and West Indian merchants pursuing rival goals.² However, Webster suggests that this confrontational relationship became less pronounced with the establishment of a Liverpool East India Chamber in the 1820s and 1830s – well after the American Revolution.³

Secondly, during these years, there were only proto-gentlemanly capitalist ties between the local merchants and landed elite that represented them in Parliament. True, the Corporation enjoyed better links with Sir Ellis Cunliffe, Henry Rawlinson, and the Younger Gascoyne. However, they were not the MPs for most of this

² S.G. Checkland, 'American versus West Indian traders in Liverpool 1793-1815', *JEH*, 18, 2 (1958), 141-60.

³ Webster, 'Liverpool and the Asian Trade', 44-50.

period. Sir William Meredith did work with the local mercantile services, presenting their petitions and meeting with the merchants. This was evident during the Stamp Act crisis of 1765, and over the West Indian market. However, there were clear differences. The Corporation candidates fought bitterly against Meredith in 1761, plans were hatched to bring in a credible alternative to defeat the incumbent in 1774, and Meredith clashed with Bamber Gascoyne the Elder (a protégé of the Common Council) on several occasions. The Corporation also disagreed with Richard Pennant, as the pro-Corporation candidates defeated him in 1780.

Thirdly, Liverpool's parliamentary representatives for most of this period were out of favour with the governments of the day. This was due to a mixture of factors, including the possession of relatively lowly social titles, personal problems, political disloyalty, and being on the Opposition benches for too long. Indeed, Sir Ellis Cunliffe was plagued by illness. Richard Pennant was also distracted by administering his family's estates, and he was not closely associated with any one political group. The Younger Gascoyne and Henry Rawlinson were the town's MPs after the 1780 election, but were not especially active in Westminster, or were allied to the dying North administration. This obviously reduced their scope to shape the agenda. Edward Smith-Stanley, 12th Earl of Derby, was challenged by marriage problems, tied to an inept Opposition between 1777 and 1781, and thereafter constrained by power rivalries within successive coalitions. Sir William Meredith was by far the most vocal of the local MPs. During his career he briefly served in two administrations, first under Rockingham and then under North. But therein lay the problem - Meredith transferred his political loyalties, and was seen as untrustworthy.

Fourthly, the Liverpool parliamentary representatives, as well as the merchants, were also out of sync with the official mind. During the late-eighteenth century this entailed acceptance of the Glorious Revolution, and acknowledgement of parliamentary sovereignty over the Empire. At the outset of the American War, Pennant was against the Government's coercive agenda. In contrast, Meredith initially stood firmly with North. However, after 1777 Sir William supported peace negotiations with the Rebels, which threatened parliamentary supremacy. This made him susceptible to criticism from political opponents. There were other occasions when Liverpool challenged the status quo. During the 1760s the local merchants called for the opening of the eastern trade. This threatened the EIC's chartered rights, and the failure of this motion made Liverpool less successful in lobbying circles.

The fifth reason for Liverpool's lack of lobbying success was poor co-operation between provincial towns. It was not all negative, as Liverpool did reach out to other towns on a variety of issues, including whaling and overseas trade. This contributed towards successful repeal of the Stamp Act, and defeat of the 1778 Irish Bill. Nevertheless, there were significant fissures that limited provincial co-operation. The disputes between Liverpool and Yorkshire over the route of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal may suggest the limited development of regional identities by the eighteenth century. The tone of correspondence between Liverpool and Bristol often indicated an unpredictable relationship. Presumably, the reason for this tepid relationship was that Bristol and Liverpool were commercial rivals, and their MPs (Meredith and Edmund Burke) were not allies between 1774 and 1777. Liverpool also had links to the commercial town of Glasgow. Whilst there had been

lingering suspicion of the Scots from the Jacobite period, the establishment of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce in 1783 fostered closer ties with Liverpool. However, this was too late to affect provincial lobbying during the American Revolutionary War.

So, who did make imperial policy? Cain and Hopkins argued that it was the gentlemanly capitalists. For the nineteenth century, Robinson and Gallagher highlighted a combination of proto-nationalism and the involvement of men on the spot on the periphery, followed by the official mind's response in London. In a more recent study, John Darwin sought to strike a balance between these variables. There may have been political dealings that prompted empire building. But once there, men on the spot were hard to restrain. This was a 'useful corrective' for paying too much attention to the role of rational policy-makers and the official mind. Henceforth, British expansion was 'driven not by official designs but by the chaotic pluralism of British interests at home and of their agents and allies abroad'.⁴

This thesis, whilst considering an earlier period than Darwin, also demonstrates that there were a multitude of factors in shaping policy. Events on the edge of empire, such as the battles at Lexington and Concord, helped set the agenda in London. Services, and to a lesser degree manufacturing, were evident in this process. Provincial towns and lobbies, themselves influenced by circumstances in their localities, contributed to the debate. Henceforth, inputs into decision-making were multifarious and chaotic. Nor was there always unanimity in London. Echoing

⁴ J. Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System 1830-1970* (Cambridge, 2009), 3.

the views of Dummett, there were conflicting interests in the metropolis. Parliament itself was split between Lords, Commons, Government, and Opposition. These divisions were clearly exposed after the Boston Tea Party, when there were reports of restructuring the ministry. Henceforth, London, with its various departments, was by no means unified or the sole arbiter. Yet, on balance, London did impose some degree of order and rationality upon the policy-making process. It was the social, economic, political and cultural capital of the nation, and therefore the capital enjoyed financial ballast and social prestige. This was confirmed by the provinces and overseas officials competing for the capital's attention. The official mind was not a formal agreement, and, as seen above, the landed and titled Liverpool MPs did not always share the same opinions as the landed political elite in London. Still, principles such as parliamentary sovereignty provided a framework, and hence a basic unity, if not unanimity. To disregard these general principles was detrimental, which Liverpool discovered on several occasions. In short, the metropolis was a vital component of the imperial decision-making process, but it was still one part in a larger crowded field.

Like others before it, this work suggests that imperial policy-making was a constant struggle between London and the provinces, akin to the swings of a pendulum. Despite their best efforts during the twenty-year period between 1763 and 1783, the Liverpool lobby attempted to exercise influence over imperial issues. However, for the most part, London held sway. Yet, there is some evidence that by the final decade of the eighteenth century the pendulum was swinging. Donald Read noted that by the 1790s provincial towns had further developed socially, economically, and politically, and thus began to take a lead on national issues.

London remained key, but the metropolis had physically expanded to such a degree that it could not act in harmony.⁵ Webster also noted that this struggle continued into the nineteenth century. Business interests in London were well-placed to shape policy. Even provincial towns such as Liverpool acknowledged that they depended heavily upon London for negotiating bills of exchange. Yet the provinces did not passively acknowledge London's pre-eminence. Leone Levi was one of the driving forces behind the establishment of a second Liverpool Chamber of Commerce by the 1850s. Whilst he acknowledged the primacy of the metropolis, Levi hoped that the establishment of a new Liverpool Chamber would forge unity amongst local businesses. This could lead to a financial centre on the Mersey that was independent of London. Thus, during the early-nineteenth century, Liverpool and other provincial areas made their voices heard. Although they did not replace London's dominance, the capital's influence was 'mediated and mitigated' through extensive relations between City financiers and provincial manufacturers. However, with the emergence of new financial forces after 1848, the influence of the gentlemanly capitalists increased again.⁶

IMPERIAL WARFARE AND THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT

AT HOME

Chapter Four builds upon existing work on the economic impact of the American War upon Liverpool. What emerges is a more nuanced account of the conflict in

⁵ D. Read, *The English Provinces c. 1760-1960: A Study in Influence* (London, 1964), 1-34.

⁶ A. Webster, 'The Strategies and Limits of Gentlemanly Capitalism: The London East India Agency Houses, Provincial Commercial Interests, and the Evolution of British Economic Policy in South and South East Asia 1800-50', *ESR*, 59, 4 (2006), 743-64 and A. Webster, 'Liverpool and the Asian Trade 1800-50: some insights into a provincial British commercial network', in Haggerty, Webster and Whiles, *Empire in one City*, 35-54.

Merseyside history. Liverpool's overseas trade was clearly affected by the struggle, and there were four general phases. The exact chronology varies according to the sources: the first saw trade remaining broadly steady, secondly it declined, thirdly there was a sluggish improvement, and finally a post-war recovery. Liverpool's economy was closely intertwined with the broader Atlantic World, and therefore the American War disrupted the African, European, and West Indian markets too. Marriner and Conway attributed Liverpool's rebound to privateering. Knowing more about the composition of the town's privateering fleet may prove a topic of future research. But it is clear that this activity, at best, was merely contributory towards the town's recovery. As Starkey observed, taking an enemy vessel was extremely hazardous and unpredictable. Furthermore, local privateering did not operate at the start of the war, and had run its course before its end. Instead, other factors accounted for Liverpool's return to growth. Local merchants retrenched their businesses, convoys arguably helped, but the most important factor in stimulating overseas trade was the return to peace in 1783. Chapter Four also considered the trickle-down effect of the war upon Liverpool's home economy. A.H. John believed that military conflict had generally positive affects upon the economy, whilst T.S. Ashton argued that it was fundamentally negative. This thesis integrates both views. Indeed, whilst there was an initial rise in local bankruptcy, the increase in national government expenditure had a multiplier effect upon local shipbuilding. This supports Morriss's assertion that private naval yards were also important in supporting eighteenth century war efforts – not just the Royal Dockyards.

Chapter Five analysed the social impact of the War of Independence. Bowen argued that in some parts of the country, notably southern England, the effects of

war were conspicuous. By drawing upon the example of Liverpool between 1775 and 1783, the final chapter argued that Bowen's analysis should be extended to include the northern regions too. The militarisation of Liverpool, which included the housing of prisoners of war and the construction of defences, led to increased interaction between the provinces and Brewer's fiscal-military state. Reminiscent of Part One of the thesis, this section argued that whilst the localities made their opinions felt in the corridors of power, the influence of central government during times of war was ever-present. The American conflict also divided public opinion in Liverpool. Like other urban areas, this was often based upon socio-economic status and religious affiliation. However, there were local peculiarities too. Unlike their counterparts in Bristol, Liverpool merchants favoured conciliation. Presumably this was because they feared any disruption to the American market. Nor were Liverpool Dissenters as opposed to the war as their counterparts in Bristol. Bradley attributed this to the conservatism of certain local religious groups. Such evidence may lend tentative, if not full, support for Liverpool's alleged 'exceptionalism'. Because of its long distance in-migration, the town was supposedly in northern England, 'but not of it'.⁷

This chapter also dealt with cultural aspects of empire. Liverpool's experience of the War of Independence reflected the schism within imperial ideology. The conflict polarised an older libertarian attitude against the newer 'empire of authority'. Proponents of the war justified it on the grounds that Parliament had the right to tax the colonists. In contrast, those in favour of conciliation stressed the constitutional rights and liberties of the Americans. Furthermore, the example of

⁷ J. Belchem, *Mersaypride: Essays in Liverpool Exceptionalism* (Liverpool, 2000), xi-xvii.

Liverpool between 1775 and 1783 suggests that whilst there were other identities in the town, there was the presence of 'Britishness'. Locals did oppose 'the Other', which included the Bourbons, and eventually the Americans. This gave them an opportunity to assert what was superior about themselves. Amongst the comparisons were British beef against French frogs, and British monarchism against US republicanism.

LIVERPOOL AS AN IMPERIAL TOWN

John Mackenzie was undoubtedly correct to argue that 'Liverpool was...in many senses, an imperial city'.⁸ This was relevant as much in the eighteenth-, as it was in the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries. During the Hanoverian period, Liverpool was economically linked to the Atlantic empire through trade and the transportation of African slaves. Liverpool merchants were also tied to their counterparts overseas through bonds based upon migration, religion, and family. Lobbying networks with Westminster ensured that the town was bound to the governance of empire too. Militarily, Liverpool sent men such as Banastre Tarleton and the 79th Regiment to serve in the colonies, to uphold imperial rule. Furthermore, as we have seen, the American War impacted upon Liverpoolian society. This had implications for the local economy, opinion, and identity. Thus, we cannot deny that Liverpool was an imperial town.

Several historians have argued that the American War prompted longer-term re-evaluations of empire. Bowen noted that the loss of the colonies generated a

⁸ J.M. Mackenzie, 'Liverpool and empire – the revolving door?', in Haggerty, Webster and White, *The Empire in One City*, 226.

much keener awareness of Britain's character as a multinational empire.⁹ Wilson also suggested that radicals subsequently adopted an anti-imperialist nationalism.¹⁰ Where did Liverpool fit into this debate? It is beyond the scope of this project to consider Liverpool's relationship with the Empire much beyond 1783. Nevertheless, some speculative comments can be made. Despite the difficulties and horrors associated with the American War, such as disrupted trade, militarisation of the community, men dying overseas, not to mention eventual defeat, Liverpool retained its attachment to empire after American independence. It was, as Gould put it: 'the persistence of empire'.¹¹ Although some Liverpudlians did criticise the origins and handling of the American War, none of the sources reviewed suggest a clear rejection of imperialism in the town. However, this documentation was authored primarily by the middling and upper social groups. The views of the lower orders remain largely shrouded in mystery. Despite the strains of the American conflict, the imperial system was not discredited in Liverpool. Indeed, whilst the Empire may have changed, Liverpool remained an imperial city. Trade between Britain and America increased after 1783, so much so that Hopkins speculated that after independence the United States became Britain's 'honorary dominion'.¹² A future project may determine what role Liverpool played in this development. In 1807 the trans-Atlantic slave trade was abolished. But, despite the upheavals this decision caused the town, even into the 1980s

⁹ H.V. Bowen, 'British Conceptions of Global Empire 1756-83', *JICH*, 26, 3 (1998), 21.

¹⁰ Wilson, *Sense of the People*, 284.

¹¹ E. H. Gould, *The Persistence of Empire: British Political Culture in the Age of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, 2000).

¹² A.G. Hopkins, 'The United States 1783-1861: Britain's Honorary Dominion?', in *Britain and the World: Historical Journal of the British Scholar Society*, 4, 2 (2011), 232-46. Also see P.J. Marshall, *Remaking the British Atlantic: The United States and the British Empire after American Independence* (Oxford, 2012).

Liverpool ships of the Elder Dempster line sailed to Africa.¹³ Between 1813 and 1833 the monopoly of the EIC was undermined by Whitehall. Henceforth, the eastern market in India and China was increasingly open to provincial ports, including Liverpool. In sum, the American Revolution was an important, albeit brief, part of Liverpool's longer imperial trajectory.

¹³ N.J. White, 'Ferry off the Mersey: The Business and the impact of Decolonization in Liverpool', *History*, 96, 32 (2011), 188-204.

APPENDIX

This section lists occupations according to category.

Agriculture

Cow Keeper.

Banking, Insurance and Brokers

Banker, Broker, Insurance Broker.

Government and Civil Administration

Alderman, Corporation Treasurer, Customs Officer, Deputy Recorder, Dock Master, Exchange Keeper, Land Waiter, Mayor, Officer of Excise, Overseer of Poor, Salt Office, Sergeant at Mace, Tax Gatherer, Tide Surveyor, Tide Waiter.

Hospitality, Leisure and Entertainment

Coffee House, Inn Keeper, Organist, Tavern Keepers

Merchants, Agents and Dealers

Agent, Broker, Coal Merchant, Flax Merchant, Iron Merchant, Isle of Man Trader, Linen Merchant, Merchant, Timber Merchant, Whitehaven Trader, Wine Merchant.

Professionals

Architect, Attorney, Physician, Surgeon, Surveyor, Rector, Reverend, School Master.

Tradesmen and Retail

Anchor Smith, Boat Builder, Book Seller, Bread Baker, Brewer, Brush Maker, Builder, Butcher, Brazier, Breeches Engraver, Brick Layer, Cabinet Maker, Carver, Chair Maker, Cheese Maker, China Maker, Clock Maker, Confectioner, Cooper, Cork Cutter, Cotton Spinner, Distiller, Draper, Druggist, Enameller, File Cutter, Fishmonger, Flax Dresser, Flour Seller, Glass Maker, Grocer, Gunsmith, Hatter, Hosier, Iron Monger, Leather Smith, Marble Cutter, Mathematical Instrument

Maker, Meal Man, Milliner, Painter, Paviour, Pipe Maker, Pork Seller, Potter, Roper, Saddler, Sail Maker, Shoe Maker, Ship Carpenter, Silk Weaver, Silversmith, Stocking Manufacturer, Sugar Baker, Tailor, Tallow, Tanner, Tobacconist, Trunk Maker, Upholsterer, Victualler, Watch Maker, Wheel Wright,

Titled

Captain (included here because not certain whether a ship's captain or in the military), Esquire, Gentleman, Mister, Missus.

Transport and Communications

Carter, Currier, Horse Hirer, Pilot, Postmaster, Stable Keeper.

Other / Uncertain

People who have more than one occupation and where these jobs are in different sectors.

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Kenyon family papers

Molyneux, Earls of Sefton, records

Stanley, Earls of Derby, records

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Liverpool Athenæum

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Liverpool Poll Book 1780

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Bluecoat Hospital and School

Board of Trade Committee Book

Coleman Papers

Committee Book of the African Company of Merchants Trading from Liverpool

Corporation records

Gregson Papers

Liverpool Directory 1766, 1774, 1777, 1781

Liverpool Memorandum Book

Liverpool Unanimous Society

Materials towards a History of Liverpool collected by John Holt and Matthew Gregson

Miscellaneous documents

Roscoe Papers

Sefton Mock Corporation

Tarleton Papers

Tuohy Papers

Watt family Papers

Ye Ugly Face club

London Metropolitan Archives

Boodles records

Brookes records

Miscellaneous

Manx National Heritage Centre Archives, Douglas, Isle of Man

Atholl Papers

Merseyside Maritime Museum

Davenport Papers

Earle collection

Mitchell Library, Glasgow

Glasgow Chamber of Commerce

National Archives, Kew, London

Admiralty records

Board of Trade records

British Rail records (Leeds-Liverpool Canal)

Colonial Office records

Customs records

High Court of Admiralty records

Home Office records

Privy Council records

State Papers

Treasury records

National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth

Clive records

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Bland family Papers

Curtis family Papers

Robert carter manuscripts

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Adams Weekly Courant

Felix Farley

Gentleman's Magazine

General Evening Post

Liverpool General Advertiser

Lloyd's Evening Post

London Chronicle

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Eighteenth Century Collections Online

History of Parliament Online

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online

National Archives website

Northern Illinois University Libraries

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

Parliament UK Website

Thomas Jefferson Exhibition, Library of Congress

Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database

to negotiate for exemptions from the Crown's 1763 Proclamation Line regarding Indian land. They simply wanted land.

Searcy's petition was less substantial than Sims's Address. Searcy's statement is of concern here because it was addressed to the county court as the immediate repository of royal authority. Searcy expressed broader concerns, but all he asked the court to do was to bar Jones from practicing law there.

Sims's lower profile makes any assessment of his personal narrative elusive. We have little more than his words, frozen in 1765. What is clear is that he articulated widespread backcountry grievances in language that reflects his culture and makes its realities almost accessible to us today. The Nubush Address has been a lodestone for historians seeking to sort out the stresses of his time and place. And yet, as far as has been learned, Sims did not take part in the Regulator movement. Husband thought Sims had been badly burned by the retribution for his 1765 effort. Further, Sims could not have avoided knowledge of the brutally with which the Regulators were quelled in 1771. Governor Tryon left North Carolina after the campaign. A few years later, the men who had stood together in backcountry power networks, in the eastern-run legislature, and as militia commanders under Tryon challenged the governor's successor and championed Independence. Perhaps George Sims did not want to live under a government of their making. Fifteen years before giving himself to the British war effort, he had delivered these words:

"It is not our mode, or form of Government, nor yet the body of our laws, that we are quarrelling with...."

He had ended his call to action with this statement of intent:

"Here I am this day with my life in my hand, to see my fellow subjects animated with a spirit of liberty and freedom, and to see them lay a foundation for the recovery thereof, and the clearing our County from arbitrary tyranny; God save the King."³

British Imperial Policy-Making: Gentlemanly Capitalism, The American Revolution & Liverpool, 1763-1783¹

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In *British Imperialism* P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins proposed the paradigm of "Gentlemanly Capitalism." This theory stated that impulses from the metropole, as opposed to the draw from the periphery, set the British imperial agenda.² The writings of Cain and Hopkins harked back to the Glorious Revolution of 1688. With the coronation of Dutch-born William III, England became increasingly intertwined with mainland European affairs. As a result the country's armed forces were expanded, and central government acquired increased powers for raising revenue. The genesis of the so-called "Military Fiscal State" coincided with the "Financial Revolution" of the 1680s and 1690s.³ During these decades the use of credit and insurance became increasingly common. Such developments presented the service sector, in particular, with opportunities for advancement. One way for this group, of which merchants were an important part, to promote their interests was to work alongside the landed elite.⁴ The latter were useful clients because they knew people within

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² P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion 1600-1914* (Harlow, 1993), 1-104.

³ See John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State 1688-1783* (London, 1989) and Lawrence Stone, ed., *An Imperial State at War: Britain from 1689 to 1815* (London, 1996).

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Liverpool in the Eighteenth Century

The writer Daniel Defoe famously referred to Hanoverian Liverpool as "one of the wonders of Britain."²¹ In 1708 the town had a population of approximately 7,000 inhabitants. Sixty years later this figure had mushroomed to over 34,000.²² This demographic growth was brought about by natural increases, as well as immigration from surrounding areas. Thus, by mid-century, Liverpool possessed many of the hallmarks indicative of an expanding urban area. This included a town hall, bank, customs house, hospital, and theatre.²³ Another noteworthy development during this period was the rise of Liverpool as a port. Ever since the Middle Ages the town had enjoyed economic links with Ireland and mainland Europe. By the eighteenth century the port was fast becoming an integral component of the "British Atlantic Trading Community."²⁴ This expansion was facilitated by the provision of infrastructure, such as turnpikes, canals, and docks.²⁵ The table below shows the number of ships departing from Liverpool between 1762-1763.

TABLE 1 Number of Vessels Departing from Liverpool, 1762-1763

Destination	Number of Departures	%
Great Britain (England, Scotland & Wales)	828	49.9
Other British Isles (Ireland & Isle of Man)	5.1	30.8
America (North America & West Indies)	141	8.5
Europe (All destinations - includes Russia)	100	6
Africa (All Destinations)	74	4.5
North Atlantic (Greenland & North Fishery)	4	0.3

²¹ Daniel Defoe, *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, 3rd ed. (Boeke Penguin books, 1979), 25.

²² Jane Longmore, 'Civic Liverpool 1680-1800,' in *Liverpool 800: Culture, Character and History*, ed. John Belchem (Liverpool, 2006), 113-70.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Sherrylynne Haggerty, *The British Atlantic Trading Community 1760-1810: Men, Women and the Distribution of Goods* (Leiden, 2006), 1-18.

²⁵ Sheila Marriner, *The Economic and Social Development of Merseyside* (London,

Source: Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser, 22 February 1764.

The information provided above illustrates the nature of Liverpool's foreign trade during the period. However the table is limited, as it does not include the financial value of each destination, nor does it indicate the number of vessels arriving in the port. This is due to the scarcity of surviving quantitative data from the era. That said, it is obvious that the port enjoyed a diverse overseas portfolio. The town traded extensively within the confines of the British Isles, and local merchants regularly shipped foodstuffs from mainland Europe. Liverpool was also involved in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.²⁶ The Americas proved to be a sizable market as well, given that they accounted for nearly 10% of the port's arrivals between 1762-1763. Demand for West Indian sugar increased during the century, and local companies such as Benson & Postlethwaite and Rawlinson & Chorley regularly traded with continental North America. Key destinations within the thirteen colonies included Boston, New York, Philadelphia, James River, and Charleston. From these locations Liverpool imported commodities such as cotton, rice, timber, and tobacco.²⁷

In such an environment it was not surprising that a class of elite businessmen emerged within the local community. It is difficult to be precise, owing to methodological difficulties and the absence of a clear universal definition of the term, but it would seem that by 1766 there were approximately 200 "merchants" in Liverpool. The local street directories indicate that men such as Robert Armistage, Nicholas Ashton, and Henry Trafford held this title.²⁸ How should we seek to define these individuals? It is stating the obvious that they were "capitalists". Indeed, local enterprises were keen to accumulate as much profit as possible. Although businesses regularly went bankrupt, John Tarterton emerged as a towering example of local mercantile wealth. At the time of his death, in 1773, the net value of his estate was approximately £79,000.²⁹ Cain and Hopkins would

²⁶ See Roger Anstey & P. E. H. Hair, eds., *The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition 1760-1810* (London, 1975).

²⁷ Francis Hyde, *Liverpool and the Mersey: An Economic History of a Port 1700-1979* (Newton Abbot, 1971), 10-42.

²⁸ J. Gaze, 'Liverpool Directory for the Year 1766', Liverpool Record Office [hereafter LR0], microfilm.

²⁹ Annual profit and loss accounts of John Tarterton, 1718-1773, Tarterton Papers,

government circles that could bestow information. Consequently, through social interaction, the service sector and aristocracy gradually merged. Thus Gentlemenly Capitalism was spawned. The key consequence of this phenomenon was to create "an international trading system centred on London."³⁰

Since its original publication, over fifteen years ago, *British Imperialism* has continued to generate heated scholarly debate.³¹ Indeed, a major criticism is that this work downplayed the role of the industrial lobby in shaping imperial policy (the authors maintained that because industry was not a traditional income-earning occupation for the predominantly agricultural elite, it was therefore less influential). Moreover, Gentlemenly Capitalism has been slammed for being too London-centric. Cain and Hopkins believed that because of the proximity of the City of London to Parliament, and to the other departments of state, this "provided opportunities for gaining access to information and for influencing policy that simply did not exist elsewhere."³² Therefore, London and the southern commercial sector were the key architects behind British imperial policy. In doing so, Cain and Hopkins have implied that the northern industrial peripheries of Britain were isolated from the centre.

This essay will focus upon the role played by the North of the British Isles in the imperial decision-making process. It will suggest that *British Imperialism* dismissed the significance of the peripheries far too hastily. Instead, these locations possessed resources of their own and, although the pendulum did swing between peaks and troughs, the northern regions nonetheless enjoyed influence over key policy issues.

It is clear that the Cain-Hopkins thesis has already been placed under a great deal of scrutiny. However, whilst most of these investigations have taken place using the contexts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Gentlemenly Capitalism has seldom been

³⁰ Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism*, 44.

³¹ A very recent example of scholarship in this field is Shilgeu Akita and Nicholas J. White, eds., *The International Order of Asia in the 1720s and 1850s* (Parrham, 2010). Criticisms of the Gentlemenly Capitalist model can be found in David Cannadine, 'The Empire Strikes Back,' *Past & Present* 147 (1995): 180-94; D.K. Fieldhouse, 'Gentlemen, Capitalists, and the British Empire,' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 22, no. 3 (1994): 531-41; and Andrew Porter, 'Gentlemenly Capitalism and Empire: The British Experience since 1750,' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 18, no. 3 (1990): 245-95.

³² Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism*, 63.

tested within an eighteenth century framework.³³ Therefore, this paper seeks to redress an imbalance within the secondary literature. The reason for specifically analysing the years 1763-1783 is self-evident: this was the period when the thirteen North American colonies sought to re-evaluate their relationship with Britain. Initially they hoped for redress within the imperial system itself, and then finally as an independent power. Much has been written about the American experience during the Revolution and War of Independence.³⁴ Equally, historians such as Stephen Conway and H.T. Dickinson have analysed how the Mother Country responded to these events.³⁵ Case studies have provided detailed accounts of how the revolt affected specific areas within England, such as London and Bristol.³⁶ Yet, surprisingly, there does not appear to be a comprehensive investigation of the repercussions of the American Revolution upon the prominent commercial and maritime center of Liverpool. Often referred to as the "Second City of the Empire", there are occasional references to Merseyside in this literature – but they are fragmentary and are not brought together in a larger synthesis.³⁷ Therefore, by conducting a survey of Liverpool during the American Revolution, a gap in the local historiography will be filled, and a contribution towards the larger debate over the nature of British imperialism will be made.

³³ See Raymond Dunnett, ed., *Gentlemenly Capitalism and British Imperialism: The New Debate on Empire* (Harlow, 1999). For a rare insight into eighteenth century Gentlemenly Capitalism see Huw Bowen, *Elites, Enterprise and the Making of the British Overseas Empire 1680-1775* (Basingstoke, 1996), 22-46. According to Bowen, there were three core components to this phenomenon: the landed elite, merchants, and financiers. Moreover, as the eighteenth century progressed, these groups became increasingly non-British. Scots, Welsh, and Irish joined their ranks in greater numbers.

³⁴ General introductions include Colin Banville, *The American Revolution* (Basingstoke, 1991) and Edward Countryman, *The American Revolution* (New York, 1985).

³⁵ Stephen Conway, *The British Isles and the War of American Independence* (Oxford, 2000) and H.T. Dickinson, ed., *Britain and the American Revolution* (Essex, 1998).

³⁶ See P.J. Marshall, *Britain and the American War of Independence* (Bristol, 1977) and Joan Stansbury, *Disaffected Patriots: London Supporters of Revolutionary America 1769-1782* (Kingman, 1987).

³⁷ For more on Liverpool and empire see Sherrylynne Haggerty, Anthony Webster and Nicholas J. White, eds., *The Empire in One City: Liverpool's Inconvenient Imperial Past* (Manchester, UK, 2008).

that during the early eighteenth century Liverpool had the drive, determination, and resources in which to affect the central decision-making process in London. In this regard the port had been somewhat successful. It shall now be determined whether or not Liverpool continued to be influential during the American revolutionary period.

Liverpool & British Imperial Policy-Making, 1763-1783

In 1763 Britain emerged victorious from the Seven Years War. As a consequence the country was burdened by a national debt of £137 million. With the restoration of peace, the administration of George Grenville went about the task of raising revenue within the North American colonies. An initial step included the passage of the Sugar Act. It would appear that Liverpool had little input upon the content of this particular measure. Evidently the town's peak of 1729 had, by this time, given way to a trough. There were two reasons for this. Firstly, it was no coincidence that James Murray, Second Duke of Atholl, died in January 1764. The following year the Isle of Man Purchase Act reversed the feudal rights of the Lords of Mann to the British Crown.²² As a result Liverpool lost one of its key contacts. A second explanation for the port's lackluster performance was that one of the town's Members of Parliament (MP) had fallen out of favour with the government. Sir William Meredith had initially been a supporter of Prime Minister George Grenville. However relations between the two men gradually soured, especially with regards to the treatment of the radical John Wilkes. Liverpool's influence continued to be limited when the Cabinet sought to levy stamp duties in America. Sir William spoke out against this measure, warning: "We ought...to be extremely delicate in imposing a burden upon others which we...do not share ourselves."²³ But it was to no avail, as the Stamp Act received the Royal Assent on 22 March 1765.

Events radically transformed Liverpool's ability to influence the metropolis, and a trough subsequently became a peak in early July 1765. George III replaced Grenville with the Marquis of Rockingham. This was most fortuitous for Liverpool, given that Meredith was an associate of the Duke of Portland - who in turn was

a supporter of the new premier. Thus, on 26 July, Williamson's *Liverpool Advertiser* announced: "The Hon. Sir William Meredith, Baronet, one of the Representatives in Parliament for this Borough, is appointed one of the Lords of the Admiralty."²⁴ In doing so he became a key "man on the spot" in London. Given Sir William's aversion to the Stamp Act, his new posting at the heart of Whitehall enabled him to carry on the task of opposition with far greater effectiveness. Circumstances were also on his side. The repercussions of the duty were keenly felt in both Britain and America. By the autumn the British press contained alarming stories from the colonies that acts of violence had been perpetrated against stamp collectors, and that American ports were threatening the non-importation of British goods. Commercial interests within the UK, including those at Liverpool, were alarmed by these events. On 3 January 1766 the *Liverpool General Advertiser* reported: "Last Saturday at a meeting of the merchants at George's Coffee house, the Hon. Sir William Meredith made a most elegant...speech on the present posture of affairs in America." The result was that the Liverpool merchants formed two committees to protect their trade - one for the American market, the other for African interests. The newspaper also suggested that Liverpool took a lead in organizing opposition to the Stamp Act in other parts of Britain: "On Monday the American committee met, and drew up a memorial to be laid before the House of Commons, and also wrote circular letters to the out-ports, to desire their concurrence."²⁵ Therefore, Liverpool played a sizable role in helping to bring about the repeal of the stamp duty, which finally occurred in March 1766.

Consistent with this theme of peaks and troughs, Liverpool's influence stalled between 1766-1774. This was not because the port was isolated from Westminster. On the contrary, the Liverpool lobby proved successful in prompting Parliament to legislate for a piloting facility on the River Mersey in 1766.²⁶ However the Borough had problems closer to home, which in turn diverted its full attention from London. The first distraction was the problematic construction of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal. By mid-century the Yorkshire town of Leeds was trading on a larger scale. As such it was eager to sell its textiles over a wider geographical area. Liverpool, for its part, was

²² Arthur Moore, *A History of the Isle of Man* (Douglas, 1997), 527-46.

²³ Patrick Woodland, "Meredith, Sir William, third baronet (bap. 1724, d. 1790)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004

²⁴ Williamson's *Liverpool Advertiser*, 26 July 1765.

²⁵ *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 3 January 1766.

²⁶ *Journal of the House of Commons*, 18 March 1766 (accessed at

likely argue that, because the town was situated in the North of England, Liverpool was engaged primarily in industrial-related activities. Whilst it is certainly true that prominent members of the local business community subscribed to the fund that created the Leeds-Liverpool Canal in the 1770s, it is equally important to remember that overseas trade constituted a highly important sector as well. These "traders" were "mercantilists" in the sense that they recognized the benefits bestowed upon them by the system, such as the protection of their shipping by the Royal Navy. However, an article in the *Liverpool General Advertiser* newspaper on 23 January 1763 made reference to the town petitioning Parliament "for opening the trade to India."²⁷ Whilst it would be premature to describe mid-eighteenth century Liverpool as a nucleus for embryonic "free traders", evidently some local companies were not averse to challenging the monopoly enjoyed by East India Company.

To help realize their ambitions, these Liverpool merchants had several resources at their disposal. Locally, they developed a well-organized machine designed to plan and execute their agendas. Businessmen such as James Gildart, John Parr, and John Sparling often served on the local Corporation. This was one step along their journey towards becoming the Mayor. Alternatively, some merchants preferred to conduct their affairs in local coffee houses and social clubs. Such venues enabled members to discuss the key issues of the day. Ye Ugly Face Club was a prime example of this. During the War of Austrian Succession the said society denounced the French for using "Open Violence...to render us...Naves of Arbitrary power."²⁸ Liverpool merchants also enjoyed connections further afield. By the 1760s "flying machine" coaches linked the town to different parts of the North West region. As a result, there were occasions when the Liverpool and Manchester lobbies co-sponsored petitions in Parliament.²⁹ The port also had contacts with the outer peripheries of the British Isles. For example William Roscoe, the celebrated Liverpool lawyer and writer, regularly corresponded with his associates in Scotland.³⁰ Aristocratic connections were not unknown either. John Tarleton served as the private banker to the titleholder of the Isle of Man, the Duke of Atholl. This was a

particularly valuable contact for Liverpool, given that Tarleton dealt with "disbursements" valued at several thousand pounds each.³¹ The

Liverpool Memorandum Book of 1753 also indicated that the town possessed a sizable knowledgeable of the capital city itself. This particular document contained timetables of when post was sent to and from London.³² Armed with this information, Liverpool merchants could plan their strategies for London-based forums, such as the African Company of Merchants.³³

Given the rise of the port, it was practically inevitable that Londoners would develop an opinion of Liverpool. Not all of their conclusions were flattering, but a letter from the capital dated 1771 stated a view that is represented in several surviving testimonies: "YOU (Liverpool) are not more distinguished for the extent and flourishing state of your Commerce, than for the Public-spiritedness of your Conduct: in both you tread upon the heels of our great Metropolis."³⁴ Therefore, in some circles at least, Liverpool was held in high regard. This in turn provided the town with leverage in order to exercise influence in the corridors of power. An early example of this took place in 1729, when the Africa Company sought to build fortifications on the African coastline. The London merchants opposed this measure, fearing the financial cost of such a scheme. However it soon became evident that they would not be able to defeat these proposals by themselves. Consequently, the London lobby requested of their counterparts in Bristol and Liverpool that "we may all meet together...to unite in our Councils to defeat and disappoint our adversaries."³⁵ The plans devised by the company were frustrated at several stages in the House of Commons. What is significant for this paper is that Charles Pole, a London merchant, wrote to John Hardman of Liverpool: "I am glad you are determined to send up some body...its highly necessary."³⁶ Thus, it can be seen

²⁷ John Tarleton to Duke of Atholl, Liverpool, 21 February 1761, Atholl Papers, Marx National Historical Library, Douglas, Isle of Man, MS 69707 X / 26 - 17.

²⁸ R. Williamson, "Liverpool Memorandum Book, 1753-180, 920 MD 407.

²⁹ Committee Book of the African Company of Merchants trading from Liverpool, 1750-1820, LRO, 352 MD / 1.

³⁰ *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 15 November 1771.

³¹ Unsigned letter, London, 27 January 1729, Reports from Various Correspondences on the Parliamentary Opposition to the African Company's Petition, Miscellaneous Documents, LRO, MD 72 - 102.

³² Letter from Charles Pole to John Hardman, London, 7 February 1729, Reports from Various Correspondences on the Parliamentary Opposition to the African Company's Petition, Miscellaneous Documents, LRO, MD 72 - 06.

²² *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 23 January 1767.

²³ Records relating to Ye Ugly Face Club, 1743-1757, LRO, 367 UCL.

²⁴ *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 23 January 1767.

²⁵ R. Hadden to William Roscoe, Glasgow, 2 May 1772, Roscoe Papers, LRO, 920 R0S / 20C7.

Once these disturbances had been suppressed, and with Britain mobilized to fight the war, Liverpool found its voice again. The town's representatives undertook measures designed to protect the port's immediate interests. As one might expect from a major maritime centre, Liverpool was especially concerned with the protection of its shipping. In 1777 the local Corporation complained: "our [vessels] are frequently taken even in these Channels, and our Coasts annoyed by American Privateers."⁵⁷ These circumstances prompted Liverpool to call upon the Admiralty to expand their protection of the merchant marine. A letter from Vice Admiral Hugh Palliser to the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Earl of Sandwich, stated: "The Merchants of Liverpool are very pressing for a frigate to be constantly employed to attend their trade to a certain distance into the sea."⁵⁸ Palliser continued, stating that if this request was granted then every port would expect the same treatment. Therefore a compromise was reached, whereby a battleship would join a convoy at Cork every month and escort the vessels out.⁵⁹ This is further evidence that the port could influence the agenda. Nor was it just American vessels that Liverpool merchants feared. In June 1780 the owners of the local privateer, the *Enterprise*, informed Captain James Haslam: "If you fall in with any British man of war and the Captain attempts to impress any of your people, represent to them...Mr. Gascoyne's letter upon that subject, which will certainly prevent any...Expressing."⁶⁰ These orders clearly demonstrate the utility of another of Liverpool's so-called "men on the spot", Banber Gascoyne the Elder. Hitherto a London merchant, Gascoyne later married a Liverpool woman. During the American War he served as a Lord of Trade and Plantations, and made several representations in Parliament on Liverpool's behalf.⁶¹

The town also proved vocal on the security of the West Indies. As one prominent scholar observed: "The scale of West Indian wealth was recognized in the eighteenth century. Planters reckoned that the value of the British Caribbean Islands amounted to

⁵⁷ Ibid., 15 December 1775.

⁵⁸ Vice Admiral Hugh Palliser to the First Lord of the Admiralty, London, 16 May 1777, in *The Private Papers of John, Earl of Sandwich*, eds. G. Saxe and J. Owen (London, 1912), 265.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 266-9.

⁶⁰ Orders to Captain James Haslam, 1780, *Account Book of the Enterprise*, 1779-1780, LRO, J67 MD 45.

⁶¹ Liverpool Corporation Town Books, 7 October 1778, LRO, Corporation Records 2

equally keen to secure a route from which it could gain access to Lancashire's coalfields. After a public meeting was convened in July 1766, a subscription was raised for the purpose of building a canal between the two towns.⁶² The process of construction proved to be far more challenging than anticipated. Indeed, there were disputes regarding the precise route of the waterway. One source alleged that because the Liverpool traders were so unhappy with its direction, they withdrew funding to deliberately "disconcert the Association."⁶³ Another reason for Liverpool's patchy performance in the capital was that the town did not speak with a unified voice. In 1774 there was a clash over who should contribute to send representatives to Westminster. Originally a voluntary "Trade Duty" had been used to pay for such purposes, but it had gradually lapsed. Then, on 22 February, it was ordered by Liverpool Common Council that the Trade Duty be expanded. The Town's Recorder was instructed to "meet the merchants and read over the foregoing act to them." This scribe was also ordered not to leave a copy of the proposals with the merchants, so as to "regulate their position...this evening."⁶⁴ A week later it was clear that these plans would not be adhered to, and the scheme was abandoned. As one contemporary put it, this incident had only served to increase the "Spirit of Party" within the town.⁶⁵

The pendulum swung once again between 1774 and 1775. By this time the difficulties associated with the Leeds-Liverpool Canal were abating, and fresh disturbances in America gave Liverpool something new to focus upon. In response to the Boston Tea Party, the administration of Lord North introduced the Coercive Acts. This solicited a largely hostile response from the colonists, resulting in the assembly of the First Continental Congress and the imposition of a colonial embargo on British goods. Once again events in America endangered British commercial interests, and, unsurprisingly, Liverpool's merchant community wasted no time in making its voice heard. The newspapers recorded that on 5 January 1775 a gathering of London merchants had read "a letter from the Council of Commerce at Liverpool."⁶⁶ Then, only a matter of weeks later, Liverpool undertook the time-honored method of petitioning

⁶² Colin Speakman, *The Leeds-Liverpool Canal* (Shropshire, 1993).

⁶³ Unsigned document, *Reason against an intended application*, 1772, Miscellaneous Documents, LRO, MD 56 / 58.2.

⁶⁴ Liverpool Town Books, 22 February 1774, LRO, Corporation Records 2 / 6.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 26 January 1774.

⁶⁶ *Liverpool Advertiser*, 5 January 1775.

£50-60 million in 1775.⁶⁷ However with the outbreak of hostilities that year, and the subsequent intervention of the Bourbon powers, British possessions in these waters proved vulnerable. In spring 1777 Liverpool's other Member of Parliament, Richard Pennant, brought a banker by the name of Sir Robert Harries before the House. Harries was examined by Sir William Meredith, as a witness into "the distressed situation of the West India Islands." Evidently Sir Robert provided a good testimony, affording "great satisfaction" in the Commons chamber.⁶⁸ Pennant continued to raise the issue of the West Indies throughout the conflict. In December 1779 he moved for "an Address to his Majesty, to order Copies of all Memorials, Requests and Complaints of the Assembly of Jamaica, desiring protection." The document from which this debate is recorded does not state if this resolution was successful or not. Yet it is evident that Pennant had prepared the way (intentionally or otherwise) in instigating a heated discussion over matters of far greater importance, namely the competence of government ministers. Both the American Secretary and Prime Minister opposed Pennant's proposal, on the grounds that it would surely compromise national security. This response prompted a fiery rebuttal from another debater, John Cavendish, who insisted that "nothing could be more absurd than denying what was demanded, because most of those petitions and memorials had been reported in the journals on the island." The esteemed parliamentarian from Bristol, Edmund Burke, also used this incident as an opportunity to savage the administration for disgracing the reputation of the House of Commons.⁶⁹ Once again, Liverpool played a role in setting the tone of discussions in Westminster.

Liverpool-related interests also contributed towards the process that helped ultimately bring about the conclusion of the war between the years 1781-1783. Edward Smith-Stanley, the Twelfth Earl of Derby, resided at Knowsley Hall on the outskirts of Liverpool. Smith-Stanley served as an MP for Preston in the 1770s, and had originally supported Lord North's coercive measures against America. Yet when his relative General John Burgoyne was ostracized for the British defeat at Saratoga, Smith-Stanley became a vocal critic of government policy. After his accession to the peerage, in 1776, the Earl of Derby took "the lead in the House of Lords in this

⁶⁷ Kenneth G. Morgan, *Slavery, Atlantic Trade and the British Economy 1660-1860* (Cambridge, MA, 2000), 49.

⁶⁸ *Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser*, 29 February 1777.

Parliament directly. The Borough wrote: "with pleasing hopes (we look) up to the British Parliament, from whom we trust that these unhappy Divisions will Speedily be healed."⁷⁰ The outbreak of war that summer presented the port with opportunities to line its own pocket. On 4 December Liverpool presented yet another memorial to Parliament: "British Islands in the West Indies...have hitherto Supplied from the Continent of North America, with Wheat, Wheat Meal, Bread...which Supplies are by the present Disputes with America entirely withheld from the numerous Inhabitants of the said Islands...And therefore praying, That the Petitioners may have Leave to export Wheat, Wheat Meal, Biscuits, Bread, and Pease, to...British Islands in America."⁷¹ The outcome of this petition is revealing. Although the House of Commons ordered that this merchandise be shipped out *only* from London, in doing so they had nonetheless supported the general thrust of Liverpool's request.⁷² Thus, although the town did not get exactly what it wanted, it had played a role in helping to shape British imperial policy regardless.

Despite this modest recovery in Liverpool's influence, the port suffered a temporary setback. Although the local Corporation had sent a memorial of support to King George III, there were clearly anti-war sympathies within the port. On 13 October 1775 one writer in the Liverpool press claimed: "Each drop of blood spilt in the contest with America...is certain loss to Britain, and a triumph to her deadliest Enemies."⁷³ There were other reasons for these sentiments. Due to adverse trading conditions, local ships had started to moor up in the docks in greater numbers. This in turn prompted merchants to cut the wages of their crews. Labor unrest soon engulfed Liverpool, and the Corporation was required to call upon a Regiment of Dragoons to quell the "Riotous Sailors and others." Through their actions these troops saved "the Town and Shipping from impending Destruction."⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Petition from Liverpool to Parliament, 26 January 1775, [accessed at <http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk>].

⁷⁰ Petition from Liverpool to Parliament, 4 December 1775, [accessed at <http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk>].

⁷¹ Petition from Liverpool to Parliament, 29 April 1776, [accessed at <http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk>]. Other ports such as Poole backed this scheme as well.

⁷² *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 13 October 1775.

⁷³ *Liverpool Corporation Town Books*, 11 September 1775, LRO, Corporation Records 2 / 6.

great cause." During this time he worked alongside key Opposition politicians, including Charles James Fox.²² Accused of being unpatriotic, Derby shot back at critics by claiming that his opposition arose from "a conviction that he was doing his duty, and a conviction that what he said was true."²³

The purpose behind this paper has been to modify the writings of P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins. In 1993 they proposed the paradigm of Gentlemenly Capitalism, which argued that the northern peripheries of the British Isles were less than successful in influencing British imperial policy.²⁴ Further research is needed into how the result of the 1780 General Election impacted upon Liverpool's ability to influence policy, as well as the relationship between General Lord Cornwallis and Liverpool-born Banastre "Bloody Ban" Tarleton. However, by using Liverpool during the American Revolution as a case study, this essay has demonstrated that the North could (and did) assert its influence in the corridors of power. True there were troughs, such as the years 1766-1774, when local issues diverted Liverpool's full attention away from the metropolis. However, there were several factors that enabled the town to overcome these obstacles. Liverpool's prominence as a port and commercial centre meant that it was capable of mobilizing several "men on the spot" in London. These individuals included Sir William Meredith MP at the Admiralty, as well as Hamber Cascoyne the Elder at the Board of Trade. As a result the "Second City of the Empire" influenced important issues, such as the handling of the Stamp Act crisis, and had an input on naval and West Indian affairs during the Revolutionary War.

²² Letter from John Burgoyne to the Twelfth Earl of Derby, 20 June 1782, Derby Papers, LRO, 920 DER (12).

²³ *Williamson's General Advertiser*, 19 December 1782.

²⁴ They also claimed that southern financial interests, centred upon the City of London, were the key driving force behind British imperial policy; however, documentary evidence has revealed that major fault lines developed in the City, Westminster, and Whitehall following the Boston Tea Party of 1773. This led to opposition to the Coercive Acts, and the Earl of Chatham refused to commit to Lord North's administration. Therefore the southern commercial lobby may not have been as dominant as Cain and Hopkins suggested. See *Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser*, 20 May 1774 and Charles Garth to Gentlemen in South Carolina, London, 11 March, 1774, *Committee of Correspondence Papers*, 1765-1779, South Carolina Historical Society, 1034.00

"A Brief and Accurate View of the Wonderful Bonaparte!" New England/Mid-Atlantic View Of Napoleon, 1796-1800

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In the spring of 1800, an anonymous letter arrived for the publishers of the *Oriental Trumpet* of Portland, Maine, about the French general, Napoleon Bonaparte. Thinking it interesting, publishers Rand and Burdick printed the letter in their weekly paper. The anonymous writer's purpose was to debunk the popular belief of the greatness of Bonaparte through a "portrait" he would provide. Entitled "A Brief and Accurate View of the Wonderful Bonaparte!", the letter contains the following summation:

This motley mixture of crime, absurdity, egotism, and bombast, previous to entering upon military career, he was a good *Roman Catholic* and *Royalist*. On taking the command of the armies, he was a good *Atheist* and *Sans Culotte*. In Egypt, he was a good *Mohometan* and *Republican*. Now, we find him a good *Christian* and *Patriot*. But, after all, it appears impossible to tell what his political and religious principles really are! This fact, however, is incontestible, viz. He is a genius, as versatile as vain and insignificant. Such has been, and such is, "the Hero of France!!!" "the Admiration of his own sect!!!" What a wonderful and incomprehensible man is Bonaparte!!!

¹*Oriental Trumpet, or Town and County Gazette* (Portland, ME), 6 March 1800, 1. This is perhaps a good time to note that all strange spelling errors, italics, and/or erratic punctuation belong to the early Americans, which were retained to preserve the flavor of turn of the century America.