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GLOBAL CITIZENS: URBAN CITIZENSHIP IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF ENGLISH AMERICA

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Abstract

This essay explores the role that ideas about urban citizenship played in the political and economic development of English colonies across the Americas. Scholars have traditionally portrayed English America as rural in comparison to Spanish and Portuguese Americas. While it is true that English colonial towns did have smaller populations than Iberian cities, ideas about urban political identity were not absent in English colonies. In fact, urban citizens, and their political culture, were at the forefront of English colonization in the early-seventeenth century. In contrast to Iberian America, though, English colonists established fewer new urban communities and instead continued to hold on to their identity rooted in particular English towns and cities. As such, English America became a web of overlapping urban citizen networks still tied to English corporate communities. As a result, when the English monarchs sought to centralize the imperial state in the early seventeenth century, colonists resisted this political and economic encroachment by adopting the structures and rhetoric of urban republicanism. The importance of these urban republican traditions helps to explain the specific form of republicanism that became popular in English America in the decades before the American Revolution. This rich tradition of urban republicanism was largely disconnected from specific urban communities in the New World, and this allowed the ideology to be flexible enough to resist the rationalizing reforms of the late eighteenth century and give rise to a more overtly exclusionary definition of citizenship in the new United States.

Keywords

Citizenship – English America – urban republicanism – corporation – political culture – puritanism.

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CIDADÃOS GLOBAIS: CIDADANIA URBANA E A CONSTRUÇÃO DA AMÉRICA INGLESA

Resumo

Esse artigo examina o papel que ideias sobre a cidadania urbana tiveram no desenvolvimento das colônias inglesas nas Américas. Tradicionalmente, as Américas inglesas são tidas como rurais em comparação com as Américas portuguesa e espanhola. Enquanto é certo que vilas coloniais inglesas contaram com populações menos numerosas do que aquelas das cidades coloniais ibéricas, noções de identidade política urbanas não estiveram ausentes nas colônias inglesas. De fato, a cidadania e cultura política urbanas estavam à frente do processo colonizador inglês no século XVII. Contrário ao que ocorreu nas Américas Ibéricas, porém, colonos ingleses criaram menos comunidades urbanas novas e continuaram a cultivar suas identidades enraizadas em cidades e vilas específicas da Inglaterra. Dessa forma, a América inglesa se tornou uma teia de redes de cidadanias urbanas sobrepostas umas às outras ainda conectadas às comunidades corporativas inglesas. Consequentemente, quando monarcas ingleses tentaram centralizar o estado imperial no início do século XVII, colonos resistiram a essa imposição política e econômica através da adoção de estruturas e retórica urbanas republicanas. A importância destas tradições republicanas urbanas ajuda a explicar o tipo específico de republicanismo que se tornou popular na América inglesa nas décadas anteriores à revolução americana. Essa rica tradição republicana urbana esteve em grande parte desconectada de comunidades urbana específicas, o que permitiu que essa ideologia se mantivesse flexível o suficiente para resistir às reformas racionais do final do século XVIII e para sustentar uma definição mais abertamente excludente de cidadania na nova nação americana.

Palavras-chave

Cidadania – América Inglesa – Republicanismo Urbano – Corporativismo – Cultural Política – Purtanismo.

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Thomas Hothersall arrived in Virginia in 1621 and quickly settled down to grow tobacco. He was one of the first generation of Virginia "planters." But when he penned an account of his transatlantic crossing, Hothersall introduced himself as "late zitysone and groser of London."[3] The choice of title may seem surprising because, unlike the Iberian Atlantic where the title of *vecinos* was a critical marker of status throughout the colonial period, scholars have traditionally associated the language of citizenship in English America with the rise of revolutionary republicanism in the mid-eighteenth century. Yet Hothersall was one of many early English colonists who claimed citizenship. It was a citizenship that was rooted not in new colonial communities, but which connected their identity to the corporate towns and cities that had begun to flourish as self-conscious civic communities in early-modern England. Just like many other early modern Europeans, the ideal of urban citizenship framed English people's understanding of what it meant to be part of the political and economic community and it made sense to extend that framework to England's new dominions. Yet they did so in ways that were very different than Iberian America's traditions of urban political identity. They extended existing urban identities across the English Atlantic, providing a particular, grounded, and exclusive claim to economic and political rights within the nascent empire. Ultimately, this form of citizenship provided an important framework and lexicon for English colonists' political identity throughout the seventeenth century, and its legacy continued to shape ideals of republican citizenship in the revolutionary period.

Historians have largely overlooked this story because Hothersall's assertion of citizenship run counter to the established image of English America. English colonies have long been portrayed as peculiarly rural, particularly in contrast to Spanish America. J. H. Elliot's major comparative study of European empires in the Ameri-

3 The quote appeared in a manuscript written by Hothersall now lost, but preserved in BROWN, Alexander. The First Republic in America. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1898. p. 416.

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cas has emphasized that English colonies never boasted towns and cities with the population or the political and cultural institutions to rival Mexico City, and the work of Patricia Seed has provided a compelling explanation for this contrast by arguing that English people who ventured to the western hemisphere did so primarily with an aspiration to construct property in agricultural land.[4] Scholars such as Tamar Herzog and Jeremy Mumford have paid careful attention to the Spanish construction of urban political spaces and identities in America, and Ángel Rama and Ernesto Capello have emphasized the profound legacies of this tradition, but until recently there has been little comparable work on English America;[5] even with the revival of legal and cultural approaches in recent decades, the work of scholars such as David Hackett Fischer and Christopher Tomlins has focus on a patchwork of English rural cultures that they argue shaped colonial development.[6]

Furthermore, while some scholars have recognized that many English colonists had come from or sojourned in England's towns and cities, they have portrayed this as a disorienting experience that exposed future colonists to a disorderly proto-capitalist world of avaricious merchants and stripped them of traditional communitarianism. Historians have also seen the urban merchant investors who funded and organized English colonialism as free-trading proto-liberals who shunned restrictive and hierarchical urban corporate life

4 ELLIOTT, J. H., Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830. New Haven, NJ: Yale University Press, 2006. SEED, Patricia. Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press, 1995.

5 HERZOG, Tamar. Defining Nations: Immigrants and Citizens in Early Modern Spain and Spanish America. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. 2003. MUMFORD, Jeremy. Vertical Empire: The General Resettlement of Indians in the Colonial Andes. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012. RAMA, Ángel. The Lettered City. Trans. John Charles Chasteen. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996. CAPELLO, Ernesto. City at the Center of the World: Space, History, and Modernity in Quito. Pittsburgh, PA. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011.

6 FISCHER, David Hackett, Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America. Oxford. Oxford University Press, 1989. TOMLINS, Christopher, Freedom Bound: Law, Labor, and Civic Identity in Colonizing America, 1580-1865. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press, 2010.

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and sought only quick profits.[7] These depictions stand in stark contrast to historians' depictions of cities in Spanish America that have portrayed them as a recreation of the Aristotelian polis that emphasized the virtue of civic order, or *policía*.[8] In English America it is only the puritan colonies of New England that have seen careful scholarly attention paid to town development and urban civic practices; even there the foundational work of Kenneth Lockridge inaugurated a depiction of these towns as throwbacks to a medieval feudal world of communitarianism, which has held sway until recent work by Barry Levy and Mark Peterson.[9] Most of English America, then, has been portrayed as straightforwardly rural, liberal, and acquisitive, and urban citizenship has been dismissed as an irrelevant remnant of a feudal order withering away. This has had profound implications for understanding the region's subsequent political development.

In fact, urban self-governing communities were just as vital a part of the political and legal structures of the early English state as they were in the Iberian world. As Martin Praak has argued, cities and towns across early modern Europe understood themselves to be inheritors of the classical tradition of the polis, practicing a coherent ideology of what he terms "urban republicanism."[10] From the Italian city-states, to the city republics of the Netherlands, the reconquest

7 HORN, James. Adapting to a New World: English Society in the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake. Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1994; GAMES, Alison F. Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999. On free-trade, see BRENNER, Robert. Merchants and Revolution: Commercial Change, Political Conflict, and London's Overseas Traders, 1550-1653. London: Verso, 2003.

8 KAGAN, Richard. Urban Images of the Hispanic World, 1493-1793. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000.

9 LOCKRIDGE, Kenneth. A New England Town, The First Hundred Years: Dedham, Massachusetts, 1636-1736. New York: Norton, 1970. LEVY, Barry. Town Born: The Political Economy of New England from Its Founding to the Revolution. Philadelphia: Penn Press, 2009. PETERSON, Mark. The City State of Boston: The Rise and Fall of an Atlantic Power, 1630-1865. Princeton, NJ. Princeton University Press, 2018.

10 PRAK, Maarten. Citizens without Nations: Urban Citizenship in Europe and the World, c.1000-1789. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press, 2018.

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towns of the Iberian peninsula, and the incorporated towns of early modern England, they were semi-autonomous communities governed by exclusive groups of residents who claimed the status of freeman and who understood themselves to be citizens, endowed with both rights and responsibilities for the common good. It was this classical vision of the city as a new polis – a community capable of nurturing civility and exercising legitimate jurisdiction – that made it such a potent tool for colonization. The Spanish monarchs had made city-founding a central part of American colonization for precisely this reason, and they saw the *cabildo* as a source of sovereignty in the New World.[11] Phil Withington has demonstrated that urban republicanism had also firmly taken root in England during the sixteenth century, supported by new royal charters that incorporated towns and cities as distinct legal entities in the realm.[12] Rather than acting as conservative bastions of tradition, English urban communities saw themselves as new models of society. They particularly emphasized their civic role in the regulation of the kingdom's commerce, which had long been perceived in the republican tradition as a threat to the common good. This vision of proactive urban citizenship in England was particularly appealing to radical Protestants (puritans) who saw clear parallels between the exclusive self-governing community of citizens and the exclusive community of the elect, and who saw civic institutions as ideal tools for imposing moral reform on their communities.[13]

11 DYM, Jordana. From Sovereign Villages to Nation States: City, State, and Federation in Central America, 1759-1839. Albuquerque, NM: UNM Press, 2006. chap. 1. KINSBRUNER, Jay. The Colonial Spanish-American City: Urban Life in the Age of Atlantic Capitalism. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2005. MCALISTER, Lyle N. Spain and Portugal in the New World, 1492-1700. Minneapolis, MN. University of Minnesota Press, 1984. chap. 7.

12 WITHINGTON, Phil. The Politics of Commonwealth: Citizens and Freemen in Early Modern England. Cambridge: CUP 2005; TITTLER, Robert. Townspeople and Nation: English Urban Experiences, 1540-1640. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002.

13 WITHINGTON, Op. Cit. chap. 8. UNDERDOWN, David. Fire from Heaven: Life in an English Town in the Seventeenth Century. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994. WALZER, Mi-

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It is unsurprising, therefore, that urban citizenship was a critical and dynamic element of political identity in the English Atlantic, but it operated in ways that were distinct from the Iberian world. Because the English crown took a cautious approach to colonization, English urban corporate communities such as London and Bristol, with their commitment to regulate commerce and sponsor civic projects, were essential to sustaining fledgling colonies. They contributed the capital, labor, and expertise to facilitate expansion. Colonists also saw themselves as operating in an English Atlantic world defined by networks of urban citizens from these colonizing communities. They frequently built the political legitimacy of their new communities upon links to particular urban corporations. Unlike Spanish America, then, where conquest meant the establishment of new cities and towns with their own *cabildos* and their own connections to the crown, in English America communities of urban citizens were the colonizers and not the tools of colonialism. Puritans affinity with the urban republican model did lead them to establish new towns across New England, but elsewhere the bonds of transatlantic urban citizenship hindered the development of major new cities with their own identities and jurisdictions on the western side of the Atlantic. However, this did not mean that English America was a liberal world of free-wheeling merchants and private landholders. The idea of urban citizenship, and the particular obligations and connections that it cemented, still framed their understanding of their place within the English realm.

During the second half of the seventeenth century the relationship between colonists and citizenship changed. Colonists' ties to particular English urban communities became looser as imperial bureaucracy and established merchant firms systematized governance and trade and consolidated commerce in large protective markets overseen by the central state. Urban citizenship, though, retained po-

chael. The Revolution of the Saints: A Study in the Origins of Radical Politics. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965.

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tent symbolic political meaning in English America. Many colonists saw clear links between their tense relationship with the centralizing commercial empire and the struggles of many domestic English towns and cities to preserve their own corporate autonomy in the face of the same growing state power. The struggles over urban autonomy and the role of the urban citizen within the English state during the second half of the seventeenth century therefore played a critical role in shaping colonists' ideas about the structure of the English empire, and particularly about how and where its economy should be regulated. This process led them to translate the ideal of urban citizenship and the defense of urban freedom to their provincial circumstances. Colonists asserted their place within the English commercial empire by co-opting the ideology of urban republicanism and its civic rhetoric about management of the economy and applying it to their colonial polities. As a result, urban citizenship was vital to infusing civic republican thought into eighteenth-century English American political ideology. Historians have long known that ideals of republican civic virtue were profoundly important in inspiring the American Revolution, but they have largely attributed this to the influence of English thinkers such as James Harrington and eighteenth-century English publications from the opposition tradition.[14] Uncovering the importance of urban citizenship in the seventeenth-century Atlantic offers a more experiential origin for the republican ideas of the early United States, grounded in local political traditions and practices. It also helps us to see how the structures and institutions of citizenship

14 Most famously BAILYN, Bernard. The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution. Cambridge, MA: Belknap, Harvard, 1967. For the genealogy of republican thought in English society that overlooks the urban republican tradition, see ROBBINS, Caroline, The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman: Studies in the Transmission, Development and Circumstances of English Liberal Thought from the Restoration of Charles II until the War with the Thirteen Colonies. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959. POCOCK, J. G. A. The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1975.

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diverged across the Americas, with dramatic implications for divergent revolutionary experiences.

Empire of Citizens: How Urban Citizens Built Early English America

Urban citizens were at the vanguard of English colonial expansion in the Americas. Early English forays into colonization were famously decentralized. Rather than relying upon direct sponsorship, Elizabeth I and James I initially farmed out the project of settling new colonies to joint-stock companies. Scholars have traditionally seen these companies as vehicles for merchant investment; while this is technically correct, it gives a mistaken impression that these companies functioned like modern corporations driven by a single-minded profit motive. The companies that led English colonization, though, were intimately connected with the flourishing culture of corporations and civic societies in contemporary English towns and cities, especially in London. The predominantly merchant membership of colonizing companies viewed them as offshoots of this tradition, designed to make money for investors but also to extend their civic duty to regulate new commercial opportunities for the common good. As a result, urban citizens were understood to have special duties and rights within the colonial sphere because they were uniquely experienced at utilizing the corporate form for civic governance. Throughout the first half of the seventeenth century, English colonies retained ties to particular towns and cities and colonists maintained their formal connections with the status of urban citizenship within those communities.

The joint-stock companies that led early English colonization were intimately tied to cities and urban institutions in early Stuart England. The structure of the joint-stock company was developed in the early seventeenth century as a way for large groups of investors to combine their interests in pursuit of large commercial projects. These companies were based in towns (particularly London) and their leadership consisted of merchants and gentlemen who had experience

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in urban governance. This shared leadership was no coincidence. It reflected the fact that the joint-stock companies were based upon the same logic as urban corporations. They received charters that granted an exclusive and self-regulated group of individuals particular commercial privileges in exchange for responsibilities to regulate trade and establish orderly colonial settlements. Although they ostensibly existed to return a profit to shareholders, colonial companies emerged from the same tap-root of civic republicanism that succored urban corporate communities and they understood their structure and authority as analogous to a new commonwealth in which members had civic responsibilities. They were therefore viewed as ideal tools for colonialism not because they offloaded responsibilities that the state could not or would not take on, but rather because they were intimately connected to English urban institutions that had brought more civic order to trade and governance and were considered well positioned to help fashion new colonial societies. In contrast to the Spanish model, where the Adelantado was charged with establishing new urban communities to cultivate civil society in the New World, in the English case the domestic urban corporations (primarily via their merchant citizens) did the colonizing.[15]

One of the clearest examples of this logic was James I's 1613 decision to directly charge London's corporation and the livery companies that composed it with organizing the colonization of part of the Irish province of Ulster. The city's companies were each required to

15 WITHINGTON, Phil. Society in Early Modern England: The Vernacular Origins of Some Powerful Ideas. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010. chap. 8; STERN, Philip J. Companies: Monopoly, Sovereignty, and the East Indies. In STERN, Philip J.; WENNERLIND, Carl (orgs.). Mercantilism Reimagined: Political Economy in Early Modern Britain and its Empire. Oxford: OUP, 2014. TURNER, Henry S. The Corporate Commonwealth: Pluralism and Political Fictions in England, 1516-1651. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016. chap.4; FITZMAURICE, Andrew. The Company-Commonwealth. In MUSSELWHITE, Paul; MANCALL, Peter C.; HORN, James (orgs.) Virginia 1619: Slavery and Freedom in the Making of English America. Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2019. For older scholarship emphasizing corporations as profit-focused, see CRAVEN, Wesley Frank. The Dissolution of the Virginia Company: The Failure of a Colonial Experiment. Oxford: OUP 1932.RABB, Theodore K. Enterprise and Empire: Merchant and Gentry Investment in the Expansion of England, 1575-1630. Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1967.

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take ownership and responsibility for a parcel of land in County Derry and for the redevelopment of the rechristened town of Londonderry, recruiting colonists and managing economic development in their particular community as an extension of their civic duty to the realm. Although most joint-stock companies for American colonization were not directly bound to specific English urban corporations in the same way as the Ulster project, their shared corporate structure and membership made the connections between English citizenship and colonization clear.[16]

The Virginia Company of London was directly bound up with urban corporate identity. It was led by former London mayor, Sir Thomas Smith, and Alderman Robert Johnson, and drew investors primarily from the city. Rather than appealing exclusively to merchants with a promise of private profit, though, the Virginia Company also rhetorically linked its project to the whole city of London, borrowing much of the language of active citizenship to encourage investment and participation in the venture. They even employed the civic spaces of the city; in 1609 the Company sponsored a sermon at Paul's Cross, a central venue for the city's religious culture that drew together merchants, artisans, and urban professionals. Preached by Daniel Price, the sermon combined a plea for "willing, liberal contributions" to the Virginia Company with a lengthy discussion of the need for a moral and civic revival in London itself.[17]

Nor was this mere rhetoric. The Virginia Company's plans sought to put into practice this dual project of colonial development and urban civic reform; the Company leadership pushed the mayor and aldermen of London to fund the transportation of orphans to the co-

16 MOODY, T. W. The Londonderry Plantation, 1609-1641: The City of London and the Plantation in Ulster. Belfast: William Mullan and Son, 1939. HORNING, Audrey. Ireland in the Virginian Sea: Colonialism in the British Atlantic. Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press, 2017.

17 PRICE, Daniel. Sauls Prohibition Staide… London, 1609. p. F2v. FITZMAURICE, Andrew. Humanism and America: An Intellectual History of English Colonization, 1500-1625. Cambridge: CUP, 2003. HASKELL, Alexander B. For God, King, and People: Forging Commonwealth Bonds in Renaissance Virginia. Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2017.

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lony, and they encouraged "each Cittie Towne and Burrough" in England to emulate the scheme as a way to alleviate urban poverty while supplying labor for the colony.[18] The institution of bound white labor, then, rather than simply emerging out of individual merchants' pursuit of profit, was initially rooted in an appeal to whole corporate towns to fulfil the duties of citizenship for their communities and for the wider realm. Also, just as in Spanish America, English colonial planners initially envisioned the development of urban spaces in America, but unlike their Iberian counterparts they saw them as extensions of existing English corporate communities. When colonists got to Virginia they were to be accommodated in "Cities or Boroughs" that were each endowed with common land and granted their own corporate charters; notably, these charters were to be modelled upon English urban corporations and they were to be drafted not by royal officials but by the Recorder (chief legal officer) of the City of London.[19] Colonial joint-stock companies, therefore, were more than simply conglomerations of merchants seeking to spread risk. They had more in common with urban corporations. They shared personnel, spaces, and an overall civic vision for regulating commerce and society in pursuit of the common good.

In the early 1620s James I and his son Charles I shifted away from the joint-stock model of colonization. This did not mean, though, that the role of urban citizenship in English expansion diminished. Concerned about the independent civic identity that corporate entities were claiming over colonization and Atlantic trade, the crown began to favor instead proprietary grants, which gave trusted nobles the right to organize and govern colonial settlements as quasi-feu-

18 KINGSBURY, Susan M. The Records of the Virginia Company of London. Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1906-1935. p. 479, 489, v.2. For the London transportation and its civic foundations, see EWEN, Misha. "Poor Souls": Servitude and Visions for Commonwealth in Virginia. In MUSSELWHITE, Paul; MANCALL, Peter C.; HORN, James. Op. Cit. p. 133-49.

19 MUSSELWHITE, Paul. Urban Dreams, Rural Commonwealth: The Rise of Plantation Society in the Chesapeake. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2018. chap. 1.

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dal fiefdoms.[20] Leading citizens in England's port cities, though, maintained strong ties to colonial ventures through their corporate institutions. The towns of southwest England, especially Bristol, Plymouth, and Exeter, retained a particular interest in colonial ventures in New England and Newfoundland because of their connections to fisheries in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence. The leaders of these communities frequently still petitioned the Crown, asserting their corporate authority to regulate trade and settlement in the region. The corporate borough of Barnstaple in Devon, for example, petitioned the crown in 1623 for permission to establish a plantation in New England. Colonial development clearly remained a sphere of action that was perceived to be particularly suited to urban citizens.[21]

Urban citizenship played an especially critical role in the settlement of puritan New England through the 1630s, precisely because it seemed to offer an alternative to the growing royal interest in a more directly controlled and hierarchical model of empire. This phenomenon has escaped our attention because historians have tended to see the town-based society of New England as a novel product of puritan theology, rather than a stubborn allegiance to a broader urban republican tradition. Recent work, though, has documented the way puritan plans for town-based colonization in New England were influenced by English urban civic culture. Many urban corporate communities in early seventeenth century England had come under the influence of radical Protestants who saw clear connections between the corporation's consensual structure of governance among a select group of freemen and their own gathered congregations of self-anointed saints. In the English town of Dorchester, for example,

20 BLISS, Robert M. Revolution and Empire: English Politics and the American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990. p. 23-28.

21 SAINSBURY, W. Noel (org.). Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series. London: Longman, Green, Longman, & Roberts, 1860. 1: 33, 46 (for Barnstaple), 214; DASENT, John Roche. Acts of the Privy Council, Colonial Series. London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1890. 1:46-7. For Bristol's strong colonial connections, see SACKS, David Harris, The Widening Gate: Bristol and the Atlantic, 1450-1700. Berkeley, Calif., 1993.

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the puritan minister John White had spearheaded radical reform by encouraging his congregants to assume roles in the town's government and to use their positions to promote moral reforms and the establishment of a hospital. It was radical puritan utopian projects, such as the corporation of Dorchester, that proved to be a crucial source of migrants to the New England colonies during the 1630s; these migrants took with them the town-based model of governance that viewed each community as a miniature commonwealth and a gathered religious congregation bound by a shared covenant, naming many of their towns after the places they had left. New England communities used their town-based authority to manage labor and police community morals and they also saw themselves as city-states fraternally connected to the community of English towns and cities. Ultimately, though, the fact that the town model worked in New England was a function of the family-based migration patterns and small-scale subsistence agriculture, which facilitated stable communities capable of developing their own civic identities. But it was a model that was not exclusively puritan. It closely resembled earlier visions for Virginia and contemporary plans for English settlement in parts of the Caribbean. It represented a new intensive application of urban citizenship for colonization, but one that was rooted in broader and deeper ideas about urban republicanism that had influenced English colonization from its outset.[22]

Underlining this point, urban citizenship also remained a focus elsewhere in the English Atlantic during these years, albeit in different forms than those that developed in New England. English corporate communities remained critical in the Chesapeake long after the dissolution of the Virginia Company. In the 1620s the colony experienced a boom in tobacco agriculture, but colonists were also at war with the Powhatan Empire. Trade for basic supplies was therefore essential but also lucrative. Historians have suggested that this

22 UNDERDOWN, David. Op. Cit. LEVY, Barry. Op. Cit. PETERSON, Mark Op. Cit. HALL, David. A Reforming People: Puritanism and the Transformation of Public Life in New England. New York: Knopf, 2011.

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unleashed an influx of unregulated profit-seeking merchants in search of quick returns. In fact, though, groups of self-conscious urban citizens remained in the forefront of efforts to regulate this trade, albeit often with conflicting visions grounded in local corporate institutions. In 1625 the Mayor and Aldermen of Southampton planned a supply fleet for Virginia, looking to capitalize on the tobacco trade but framing their endeavor in civic terms as a special duty of the community to provide for the fledgling colony. Just down the Solent, the corporate elders of Portsmouth were preparing their own petition, requesting that the town's urban privileges be extended to specify that "all Tobaccoe brought into this Kingdome may be unladed there," and that all New England trade be directed through their port. This was a bold and unsuccessful petition. However, the city leaders' petition demonstrates that they still saw the regulation of colonial trade as a natural part of their exclusive corporate rights, predicated upon their particular civic care for England's new colonies.[23]

Even in the early English Caribbean, which was ostensibly settled under the auspices of new royal proprietary grants, urban citizens remained critical to funding and governance. In contrast to the Spanish model in which individual conquistadors, such as Pedrarias Dávila, were charged with establishing new cities, English noble grantees continued to rely upon urban merchant communities. After asserting his claim to Barbados, the Earl of Carlisle granted 10,000 acres of the island to a society of nine London merchants, giving them power to organize their own government. Carlisle's grant was made to a private consortium, rather than through the city's corporate institutions, but this did not mean it was a purely pecuniary venture; the merchants almost certainly assumed that they would form a society to manage the construction of communities and the allocation of tenancies to free farmers, just as London's Ulster plantations and

23 DASENT, John Roche. Op. Cit. 1: 91-92. SAINSBURY, W. Noel. Op. Cit. 1: 76. For the circumstances in Virginia at this time, see HORN, James. Op. Cit.

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Virginia's early corporate plantations had been administered.[24] Rival schemes for the region cleaved even more closely to the traditional civic vision of urban citizenship. One 1634 proposal for colonization in the new proprietary colony of Carolina was addressed directly to the corporation of London rather than a subgroup of merchants. It suggested that the citizens establish a charitable subscription, akin to those raised by domestic urban corporations in the aftermath of fires, to fund the transportation of the urban poor. The authors believed that London's civic action would "give good example to other Cittys" to sponsor their own colonial ventures. Three years later in 1637 another proposal for a West India Company was organized around governing boards in London, Bristol, Exeter, Yarmouth, and Hull, which would draw upon the civic energy and financial resources of citizens from around the realm.[25]

Beyond these new plans for citizen-led colonization, most planters already in America also remained dependent upon networks of urban citizens in English cities. Merchants from London and Bristol came to dominate colonial trade. Many of these individuals, such as influential merchant Maurice Thompson, did not come from those cities' prestigious trading companies; rather, they spent parts of their youth in the Americas working as planters or factors, building networks through personal connections with leading colonists before returning to English towns and establishing mercantile operations, thereby deepening the ties between particular colonial communities and English port cities.[26] Because these colonial networks were established in such ad hoc ways by individuals outside the commercial elite, historians such as Robert Brenner have tended to portray them as a liberal challenge to traditional oligarchic urban institutions. As

24 WILLIAMSON, James A. The Caribbee Islands Under the Proprietary Patents. Oxford: OUP, 1926. SHERIDAN, Richard B. Sugar and Slavery: An Economic History of the British West Indies, 1623-1775. Kingston: 1994. p. 82-4.

25 PETITION of P.D.L. to the King, June 26, 1634. National Archives of the UK. CO 1/8, No. 19. PROPOSITION for a West India Company, Sept. 1637. National Archives of the UK. CO 1/9, No. 61.

26 BRENNER, Robert, Op. Cit. chap. 4; SACKS, David Harris, Op. Cit. Chap. 8.

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a result, they have downplayed the way that these so-called "interloping" merchants still saw themselves as members of English urban communities and believed in the ideology of urban republicanism. There is no doubt that many colonial merchants were opposed to narrow commercial monopolies granted by the monarch in these years, but this was primarily because they saw them as a betrayal of the civic ideals of urban citizenship, which dictated that trade privileges should be granted to larger corporate groups explicitly designed to promote virtue and the common good. In fact, following the outbreak of the Civil War in England in the 1640s, colonial merchants in London were extremely politically active not in dismantling urban corporate governance but in seeking to reform city government, increase civic participation, and defend citizens rights in the context of the conflict between the King and Parliament. Some, such as Chesapeake merchants Matthew Craddock and Samuel Vassal, increasingly took up offices within the corporation. Given the puritan proclivities of these merchants it is even more understandable that they revived the vision of the city as a participatory, reformed citizen community, just as they had in New England. Colonial merchant networks, therefore, were in the vanguard of the fight to assert a more radical republican vision of urban citizenship in England and bolster its standing within the kingdom against the creep of royal patronage and control.[27]

This was also how many English merchants were perceived in the colonies. Particular networks of merchants were referred to as Londoners, or Bristol Men, and colonists connected to particular networks expected to receive news and goods through their specific port cities. Thomas Hothersall was not alone in claiming to be a "late zitysone." Miles Cary, son of the former Bristol Mayor John Cary, emigrated to Virginia in the 1640s to pursue the tobacco trade,

27 BRENNER, Robert, Op. Cit. chaps. 10-11. For specific plans to reform London, see JENNER, Mark. "Another epocha"? Hartlib, John Lanyon and the improvement of London in the 1650s. In GREENGRASS, Mark; LESLIE, Michael; RAYLOR, Timothy (orgs.). Samuel Hartlib and Universal Reformation: Studies in Intellectual Communication. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. 343-56.

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where he was identified as "a Bristoll man."[28] When civil war broke out in the British Isles in the 1640s many colonists experienced it as a conflict between merchant networks representing urban communities and those representing royal clients. St. Christopher's royalist governor Sir Thomas Warner famously insisted that the island would welcome "noe Londoners," because of the city's perceived disloyalty to the king. After the execution of Charles I, Virginia's royalist governor, Sir William Berkeley warned the colony's General Assembly that they should "onely feare the Londoners, who would faine bring us to… poverty" by imposing restrictions upon trade. The fact that London, rather than Parliament, was at the heart of the cleavages in the English Atlantic during the wars of the 1640s vividly illustrated the way that the English colonial sphere was shaped by a network of bonds linking English corporate towns and cities with new colonial commonwealths.[29]

It was also this vision of English Atlantic citizen networks that underpinned the initial development of mercantilist trade laws in the English empire. After executing Charles I in 1649, the English Commonwealth regime faced having to assert their authority across England's Atlantic possessions, especially in regions, such as the Chesapeake and the Caribbean, where many colonists had supported the late king. The challenge was compounded by the fact that through the 1640s many of these communities had survived the mercantile disruption of civil war by becoming increasingly dependent upon Dutch merchants. Commonwealth leaders sought a way to bring English colonies under their control and channel their trade back into the hands of English merchants. Given the strong tradition of urban republicanism that we have identified binding the English Atlantic

28 For the Cary family, see BEARSS, Sara B. Bearss (org.). Dictionary of Virginia Biography. Richmond, Va., 1998. 3: 111-12. CARY Family Papers. Bristol Records Office, Bristol, UK. Info Box 13/2. SACKS, David Harris, Op. Cit. p. 339-43.

29 PESTANA, Carla Gardina. The English Atlantic in an Age of Revolution, 1640-1661. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Press, 2009. p. 33. BILLINGS, Warren M. (org.). Papers of Sir William Berkeley. Richmond, VA: Virginia State Library 2007. p. 97.

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together, it is hardly surprising that their first instinct was to strengthen the linkages between the colonies and English urban communities. Commonwealth writers emphasized the virtues of urban development and corporate citizenship. The leading republican merchant Henry Robinson, for example, published widely on the need to encourage urban development in order that Englishmen might be able to "live together" and thereby "accommodate and help themselves" through active citizenship.[30] Benjamin Worsley, a self-proclaimed "Londoner," religious radical, and the main architect of Commonwealth commercial policy, extended this vision to the colonies by promoting a plan to establish new corporate towns in the Chesapeake region in order to reform Virginia's political and economic culture.[31]

Counter-intuitively, it was this urban corporate vision that underpinned the first major centralization of the English commercial empire. In the early 1650s, faced with the need to quickly hit back against perceived Dutch competition, these Commonwealth officials resorted to using parliamentary statutes to force English colonies to trade exclusively with domestic merchants, drafting the first of the so-called Navigation Acts in 1651. Building upon their interest in promoting urban corporate communities around the Atlantic, the Navigation Act actually began as a plan to establish a network of free ports to manage England's trade. Only in the face of growing conflict with the Dutch and ongoing resistance from royalists in the American colonies, did the Commonwealth shift to plans for imperial state control over commerce.[32] Although historians have often portrayed the Navigation Act as the foundation of a new state-centric mercan-

30 ROBINSON Henry. Briefe Considerations, Concerning the advancement of Trade and Navigation. London, 1649. p. 4, 9. Idem. Certain Proposalls In order to the Peoples Freedome and Accomodation in some Particulars. London, 1652. p. 8.

31 MUSSELWHITE, Paul. Op. Cit. chap. 3. LENG, Thomas. Commercial Conflict and Regulation in the Discourse of Trade in Seventeenth-Century England. Historical Journal, Cambridge. n. 48, p. 933-954. 2005.

32 LENG, Thomas. Benjamin Worsley (1618-1677): Trade, Interest and the Spirit in Revolutionary England. London: Boydell. 2008.

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tilist policy for the English Empire[33] – and it did ultimately provide a blueprint for control over colonial trade – the initial plan for the legislation in 1651 had emerged from the ideas of thinkers such as Robinson and Worsley, and their vision for expanding English urban citizen networks across the Atlantic.

The Navigation Act began a process of binding the colonies more closely within an English commercial empire. However, its roots lay in the half-century-old idea that the citizens of England's port towns had particular privileges and duties that linked them to the colonies. The merchants who shipped goods and people across the Atlantic were always understood as part of communities that sponsored their ventures, regulated their trade, and therefore defined the rights and responsibilities of English colonies. The institutions and ideals of English urban citizenship gave structure to the decentralized English colonial world of the early seventeenth century. After the execution of the monarch who was symbolically holding this whole system together, it seemed natural to the republican thinkers of the English Commonwealth that strengthening and formalizing the civic ties between English corporate urban communities and the colonies would, in the words of Worsley's correspondent John Drury, encourage "an inclination" rather than a compulsion "to depend upon this State." In the second half of the seventeenth-century, though, when English imperial officials increasingly sought to compel more direct dependence upon the state, claims to urban citizenship became a controversial and contested political identity in the English Atlantic.[34]

33 BRENNER, Robert. Op. Cit. p. 584-98; HASKELL, Alexander B. Op. Cit. chap. 5.

34 "John Dury? To Benjamin Worsley?, Aug. 17, 1649," The Hartlib Papers, University of Sheffield. Online at https://www.dhi.ac.uk/hartlib. 1/2/11A.

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Citizens of Empire: How the English battle for urban autonomy informed the colonial constitution

Although the Navigation Act grew out of an effort to promote Atlantic urban citizenship, it was seized upon by the restored King Charles II as the foundation for a mercantilist empire. Following his restoration in 1660, Charles's need for revenue encouraged him to embrace the idea that colonies existed for the economic benefit of the kingdom, and he gradually expanded the commercial restrictions begun under Parliamentary control. Over the next three decades imperial officials authored new commercial regulations and restructured colonial governance as part of a plan to make the English empire a single, self-contained economic system policed by state apparatus.[35] In keeping with this new centralizing vision, the restored Stuarts also had a distinctly negative view of independent corporate towns and cities on both sides of the Atlantic. Urban corporate institutions that had been critical to political order and colonial expansion in the early seventeenth century were increasingly viewed by royal officials as dangerous rival sources of authority in the realm. King Charles's trusted advisor, the Marquess of Newcastle, warned him that "every Corporation, is a petty free state, Againest monarkey," and that in order to assert central authority the king needed to keep urban institutions and citizens "in their due subjection."[36] The main assault on urban citizens and their corporate autonomy came in the British Isles. However, because of their longstanding connections to England's port cities and their identities rooted in urban citizenship, English American colonists saw clear connections between the efforts to limit urban autonomy and the project of imperial centralization. This

35 BLISS, Robert, Op. Cit. Chaps.5-6. WEBB, Stephen Saunders. 1676: The End of American Independence. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995.

36 SLAUGHTER, Thomas P. Ideology and Politics on the Eve of Restoration: Newcastle's Advice to Charles II. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1984. p. 44. HALLIDAY, Paul D. Dismembering the Body Politic: Partisan Politics in England's Towns, 1650-1730. Cambridge: CUP, 1998. p. 149-262.

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reshaped the relationship between English urban citizens and the American colonies. Therefore, although state commercial regulations diminished the importance of ties between colonists and particular corporate communities, the struggles over urban citizenship back in England resonated with colonists and helped them conceptualize their resistance to imperial centralization. Urban republicanism became the foundation of colonial political ideology in English America.

As the scale of English colonization in the Americas grew in the second half of the seventeenth century the particular bonds between colonial beachheads and the kingdom's urban corporations weakened. By the 1660s colonial trade had become incredibly valuable, both to merchants and to the crown, and it was consolidating on an imperial scale. English sugar production in the Caribbean grew dramatically from the 1650s (at huge human cost to the enslaved laborers) reaching 372,000 hundredweight by the early 1680s. This level of output not only made vast profits for well-placed networks of merchants but also generated new sources of customs revenue for the state. Similarly, by 1676 the expanding tobacco trade in the English Atlantic was in the hands of sixty merchants who each imported more than 50,000lb a year and controlled 70% of the trade, and by 1686 only forty merchants of a similar size controlled an 80% stake.[37] Increasing imperial control accelerated this process because it limited competition and spawned bureaucracy and customs payments that raised barriers to entry. Leading merchants also became critical advisors to the state. They sat on newly established councils of trade and plantations that gave them influence over imperial policy, diminishing their need to work through urban institutions such as Aldermen's Courts and market halls.[38] Leading colonists were also consolidating by buying

37 PRICE, Jacob M.; CLEMENS, Paul G. E. A Revolution of Scale in Overseas Trade: British Firms in the Chesapeake Trade, 1675-1775. Journal of Economic History, Cambridge. n. 47, p. 1-43. 1987. SHERIDAN, Richard B. Op. Cit. Chaps. 12, 13, 17.

38 LENG, Thomas. Epistemology: Expertise and Knowledge in the World of Commerce." STERN, Philip J.; WENNERLIND, Carl (orgs.). Op. Cit. p. 97-116. GAUCI, Perry. The Politics of Trade: The

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up land and laborers, and developing close connections to particular merchant houses.[39] In this context social and commercial bonds became more reified between elites. These ties were less likely to rest upon shared connections to a particular community of citizens. The crown now received petitions from "the Merchants of London" or the "Sugar Merchants" rather than from mayors and aldermen. Colonists also recognized that they were working within a broader commercial empire. They directed petitions for adjustments to the rules of trade through established networks of lobbyists in the halls of imperial power.[40]

This did not mean, though, that urban identities had lost all meaning for colonists. Many individuals continued to emigrate to America from English towns and cities. Even in the 1680s nearly a quarter of Virginia's legislative assembly delegates were transplants from English boroughs and in more recently settled colonies the numbers were likely higher.[41] Unsurprisingly, urban culture retained resonance. Among the possessions of colonial planters were books about English cities and printed views of London intended for display.[42] The most striking evidence of the persistent importance of urban ties was the pattern of names that colonists gave to their estates. In Maryland, where systematic records survive, British town and city names were extremely popular. Analysis of records from a cross-section of four

Overseas Merchant in State and Society, 1660-1720. Oxford: OUP, 2001.

39 WALSH, Lorena S. Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607-1763. Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press, 2010. chap. 3.

40 KOOT, Christian J. Empire at the Periphery: British Colonists, Anglo-Dutch Trade, and the Development of the British Atlantic, 1621-1713. New York: NYU Press, 2011. SWINGEN, Abigail, Competing Visions of Empire: Labor, Slavery, and the Origins of the British Atlantic Empire. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015.

41 Statistics drawn from a database of Virginia burgesses, constructed with information drawn from TYLER, Lyon Gardiner. Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing. SWEM, Earl G. Virginia Historical Index. Roanoke, Va., 1934.

42 TYLER, Lyon G. Libraries in Colonial Virginia. William and Mary Quarterly, Williamsburg, VA, 1st Ser., n. 2, p. 169-75. 1894. DAVIS, Richard Beale, William Fitzhugh and His Chesapeake World, 1676-1701. Chapel Hill, N.C., 1963. p. 161.

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counties shows that as many as 230 estates (7.45% of all named land tracts) between 1650 and 1710 were named after a European town or city. Naming plantations was critical to the construction of the colonial landscape, and the prevalence of urban placenames suggests the perceived importance of urban identity to that process of colonial appropriation. Even after the importance of concrete economic ties between colonies and specific English cities had diminished, then, the idea of urban identity retained powerful cultural resonance for colonists.[43]

This broader cultural attachment to English urban communities, though, had pointedly political overtones during the Restoration era, as corporate cities and towns struggled against state encroachment. Many colonists who arrived in America from the 1650s came with direct experience of the purges and counter-purges that wracked English boroughs during the Protectorate and the Restoration. As both Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell and the restored Charles II sought to impose their authority on independent urban communities they rescinded and reissued corporate charters, limiting autonomy and restricting local power to trusted allies. Tensions over urban autonomy became increasingly heated in the late 1670s and early 1680s as Charles II sought to head off growing opposition to his policies through a new effort to recall and reissue corporate charters with more restrictive provisions and new loyal personnel. Most famously, the king squared off with the city of London, eventually nullifying its charter, abolishing its system of self-government, and establishing direct authority over the metropolis in 1683. Colonists were well informed about these repeated re-chartering processes through which urban leaders were becoming more beholden to the state.[44]

It was also easy for colonists to equate the struggles of corporate boroughs with their own experience of Restoration empire. Most

43 MUSSELWHITE, Paul. Naming Plantations: Toponyms and the Construction of the Plantation System. Journal of Social History (forthcoming, 2020).

44 DEKREY, Gary S. London and the Restoration, 1659-1683. Cambridge, 2005.

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obviously, growing royal resistance to urban self-government was also influencing colonial towns and cities. It was clearly on display in newly-conquered New York. After the city's capture from the Dutch in 1664, the corporation of New York City (formerly New Amsterdam) was initially granted a significant measure of autonomy, with the city's governance and trade regulations accommodated. During the 1670s, however, the new imperial governor Edmund Andros began to erode corporate independence and ally with elite merchants to weaken the city's institutional structures. He sponsored new infrastructure that served the political economic interests of the crown rather than the common interests of the community. New Stuart governors in other parts of the empire looked with admiration at what one described as the "methodiseing" of New York City "for the honor of the Government." Even in new colonies where governance had been devolved by the state into the hands of wealthy proprietors, such as Pennsylvania and Carolina, these colonial planners avoided establishing new corporate towns and cities with autonomous civic identities, preferring to keep urban centers under tight proprietary control.[45]

Imperial efforts to exert increasing control over towns and cities were also relevant to colonists because they were part of a broader plan to centralize colonial administration more generally. Charles II's efforts at imperial reform were halting at first, including dispatching a royal commission to the puritan colonies of New England and establishing direct royal authority over the recently conquered island of Jamaica in the early 1660s.[46] With the establishment of a new committee charged with administering the English colonies in 1675, the Crown took a much more direct role. The new imperial administration sent a royal commission to Virginia following the major colo-

45 MIDDLETON, Simon. From Privileges to Rights: Work and Politics in Colonial New York City. Philadelphia, PA: Penn Press, 2006. MATSON, Cathy. Merchants and Empire: Trading in Colonial New York City. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997. BILLINGS, Warren M. (org.). Papers of Francis Howard. Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1989. p. 155.

46 BLISS, Robert. Op. Cit. 152-59, 182-87. Thornton, A. P. West-India Policy Under the Restoration. Oxford: OUP, 1956. Chaps. 4-5.

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nial rebellion there led by Nathaniel Bacon Jr. in 1676, which recommended major changes to the colony's governance. They also sought to weaken the power of the colonial legislative assembly in Jamaica by exerting new oversight over provincial legislation. Most dramatically, crown officials frustrated by the resistance of New England puritans to imperial policies began a concerted effort to rescind the royal charters of these colonies and establish a single authoritarian government styled the "Dominion of New England." Significantly, to achieve this they used precisely the same legal method (the common law writ of *quo warranto*) employed to remove English borough charters.[47] When combined with the restructuring of colonial town governments and the growing centralization of trade through large merchant houses and stricter customs enforcement, this added up to a dramatic reformulation of empire that seemed to parallel the restrictions being placed upon English urban citizens by the centralizing state.

Given these associations and experiences, it is unsurprising that colonists regularly expressed their rival opinions about imperial centralization with reference to the framework of urban republicanism. The first sign of this pattern came with news of the Great Fire of London in 1666. The conflagration was noted as a lamentable accident, but colonists were also receptive to readings of the fire that emphasized it as a lesson for the city's citizens and, by extension, for colonists themselves. The royal governor of Virginia Sir William Berkeley, who was fiercely loyal to the restored crown, suggested that the fire may have reflected "the anger of god" for the capital city's leading role in "the murther of the late blessed master [Charles I]." The unmistakable message was that urban citizens, and by extension colonists, ought to be unswervingly loyal to the restored Stuart regime.[48] Boston's puritans, with their deep-rooted attachment to English urban republi-

47 WEBB, Stephen Saunders, Op. Cit. HAFFENDEN, Philip S. The Crown and the Colonial Charters, 1675– 1688. William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., n. 15, p. 298-311, 452-66. 1958.

48 BILLINGS, Warren M. Papers of Sir William Berkeley... Op. Cit. p. 309.

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canism and their tense relationship with representatives of the restored king since 1660, saw a different lesson from the conflagration. Boston printers quickly circulated a sermon by outlawed English Presbyterian John Flavel, which pronounced the fire as God's judgement on London for turning away from the principles of the English Revolution. Flavel's sermon became an early model for the emerging jeremiad sermon form in New England, which warned puritan congregants in the increasingly centralized Anglican empire about the danger of falling away from their radical faith; critically, though, it did so by underlining that, in the political sphere, this meant reviving the ideals of corporate citizenship.[49]

Even within a single colony, distinct prior experiences with urban civic republicanism seem to have informed rival attitudes toward, and responses to, imperial centralization. The stories of two Virginia planters illustrate this point. Robert Beverley, who became a successful planter in Middlesex County, Virginia, descended from an established family in the port city of Hull on England's northeast coast. He reached maturity in Hull just as the Civil War gripped the city, resulting in bitter divisions. Beverley married and had a child in the city in the 1650s while it was a bastion of urban republicanism under the English Commonwealth regime. At the end of the decade, however, he suddenly emigrated to Virginia when the Restoration brought an abrupt change in the political climate in the city. There is no surviving evidence that Beverley, who was then still a young man, served in Hull's radical leadership during these years, but his pattern of residence and migration hints at his affinity with the city's independent corporate identity. After arriving in Virginia, Beverley made a fortune as a tobacco planter and gained office in the colonial government. However, he was highly skeptical of imperial impositions on the colony's autonomy. When the king sent new royal officials to the colony in 1677, with the intention of centralizing governance and trade regulation, Beverley became a leader of the colonial gentry's

49 FLAVEL, John. Tydings from Rome. Cambridge, MA: 1668.

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resistance, getting himself repeatedly dismissed from provincial offices for his efforts to undermine imperial plans. Almost none of Beverley's papers survive, and so it is impossible to know if he explicitly connected his battles against Stuart imperialism with the struggles for urban autonomy he had witnessed as a young man in Hull. However, it is very suggestive that throughout the 1680s Beverley's primary means of pushing back against imperial control in the Chesapeake was a concerted effort to establish a network of new towns across the colony. These towns were to have commercial and political privileges that would safeguard local control over the tobacco trade against imperial interference. It seems highly likely that Beverley's prior experiences informed his belief in the critical role of urban institutions for asserting local civic control in the face of the expanding state.[50]

Fellow Virginia planter William Fitzhugh had a contrasting experience. He was born the youngest son of a draper in Bedford, a market town north of London. Although a comparatively small town, Bedford was tightly ensnared in the politics of Civil War England. Fitzhugh's father Henry was mayor of the town in 1649, but he was marginalized when he resisted a radical push for a new parliamentary charter that meant breaking with royal authority. By the time of the Restoration Henry was heavily indebted, and when he died suddenly he left William with no inheritance and few options other than to migrate to Virginia. Even after arriving in the colony, though, Fitzhugh maintained a correspondence with his uncle who served as royalist mayor of Bedford when the corporation was reorganized after the Restoration. He also named his large plantation on the banks of the Potomac "Bedford." Given this strong association with resistance to urban republicanism, then, it is unsurprising that Fitzhugh became one of the most reliable allies of the royal officials sent to Virginia to consolidate imperial authority during the 1680s. While he named his estate after the English borough of his youth, he pointedly refused

50 TARTER, Brent. Major Robert Beverley (1635-1687) and His Immediate Family. Magazine of Virginia Genealogy. n. 31, p. 163-67. 1993.

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to invest in the towns that Beverley sought to establish in Virginia during the decade.[51]

Both Fitzhugh and Beverley were well established planters in an increasingly complex English empire of the late seventeenth century. They traded and corresponded with leading tobacco merchants who dominated the Atlantic market and their connections were no longer limited to the particular English citizen networks of their youth. However, they had taken from their prior experience conflicting lessons about local civic autonomy and the importance of citizen governance, particularly in the management of the economy. It is significant, then, that both men played prominent and conflicting roles in Virginia politics during the 1670s and 1680s – Beverley as a Secretary of the colony who squared off with imperial officials, and Fitzhugh as a Speaker of the provincial legislature who encouraged loyalty to the Stuart empire. In these roles they shaped the battle over colonial autonomy in the Stuart empire around debates – fundamentally drawn from urban republicanism – about colonists' role as active citizens capable of organizing and regulating their own society and trade.[52]

Circumstances in Virginia were not unique. In the late 1670s, as Stuart efforts to impose authority on England's boroughs and the broader empire grew in parallel, the connections between urban and imperial citizenship blossomed among those resisting imperial centralization. The citizens of London, who led resistance to Charles II, became a rallying symbol for colonists. For example, in 1676 a group of Maryland colonists were stirred to anger against Lord Baltimore, the colony's Catholic proprietor, because of his efforts, at the behest of imperial officials, to centralize control over the province and extract greater revenue from the colony's tobacco trade. They wrote a lengthy denunciation of his leadership entitled *A Complaint from*

51 FITZHUGH, Henry A.; FITZHUGH, Terrick V. H. The History of the FitzHugh Family: In Two Volumes. London: H. A. Fitzhugh, 2008.

52 BILLINGS, Warren M. Virginia's Viceroy, Their Majesties' Governor General: Francis Howard, Baron Howard of Effingham. Fairfax, VA: George Mason University Press, 1991.

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Heaven with a Huy and crye…, which purported to unmask Baltimore's role in a Catholic plot against his Protestant subjects. Critically, though, they ended the polemic with an appeal to "the magnificent Lord Mayor and Aldermen with all the good citizens and merchants in London and elsewhere in England, whoes off spring wee are."[53] Urban citizenship was the framework through which they legitimized their resistance to Baltimore within the English constitution. It was as "off spring" of London's citizenry, rather than as simply deracinated Englishmen, that they asserted their rights within the empire.[54]

Invocations of urban citizenship were not only used to bolster opposition to the Stuarts, though; they were also important for other colonial voices in articulating a vision of loyalty. In 1686 a group of Virginians established an annual "Cockney Feast" for colonists "of and belonging to London." The gathering, though, was about more than simply socializing. The inaugural meeting was held on the anniversary of James II's coronation. The assembled "Londoners" heard a sermon by the Anglican clergyman Duell Pead, in which he described London as "our Jerusalem," but lamented its record of resistance to the crown. Pead's sermon emphasized the importance of traditional urban civic virtues rooted in the classical tradition of Athens and Rome, but he also implored his listeners to "pray that all the citizens of our city… may like good Christians walk in the way of truth," and remain "sincerely loyal without the least tincture of sedition, stubbornness or faction." Then he applied these lessons to the tense relationship between Virginians and the king's governor Lord Effingham, noting that the sermon should "refresh our memorys" and encourage them to pursue "the same peace for ourselves as for the place of our nativity." For royalists such as Pead, as much as for their opponents, urban

53ARCHIVES of Maryland Online. http://aomol.msa.maryland.gov. 5:134-54 (quote, 148).

54 SUTTO, Antoinette. Loyal Protestants and Dangerous Papists: Maryland and the Politics of Religion in the English Atlantic, 1630-1690. Charlottesville, Va.: UVA Press, 2015.

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citizenship seemed like an appropriate and effective analogy when framing the colonists' relationship to the empire.[55]

Given all of these conscious parallels, it is unsurprising that when the Glorious Revolution of 1689 wracked the empire, colonists fell back upon urban conceptions of citizenship to justify their rebellions in favor of the new monarchs William and Mary. In New York City, townspeople, hearing news of the coup in England and the consequent declaration of war against France, were whipped up by anti-Catholic fears of a French attack and turned on the colony's acting lieutenant governor. Under the leadership of city merchant Jacob Leisler, they used the traditional structure of the town militia to seize control of the city's governance structures in the name of the new Protestant monarchs. Simon Middleton has convincingly shown that this surprisingly orderly rebellion represented an effort on the part of a multi-ethnic alliance of ordinary city residents to reassert their "local rights and privileges."[56] This was a colonial rebellion rooted in the tradition of urban republicanism. Resistance to the Stuart-imposed Dominion of New England also centered on Boston, the city whose urban civic identity dominated the region. Even in Maryland, which lacked any major urban centers in the late 1680s, the uprising in favor of William and Mary was based upon a petitioning campaign reminiscent of the traditions of urban citizen petitioning in contemporary England; Maryland rebels also disproportionately gathered in the small port settlements that represented the nascent towns of the colony.[57] Everywhere in English America that colonists actively rose in rebellion against James II in 1689, they did so with reference to the language and institutional framework of urban citizenship.

Yet despite the fact that the Glorious Revolution severely limited royal authority in England, it did not slow the process of state cen-

55 DAVIS, Richard Beale (org.). A Sermon Preached at James City in Virginia the 23rd April 1686, Before the Loyal Society of Citizens Born in or About London and Inhabiting in Virginia. William and Mary Quarterly, Williamsburg, VA, 3rd Ser., n. 17, p.380-94 (quotes, 373, 378, 385, 386, 394). 1960.

56 MIDDLETON, Simon. Op. Cit. 88-95 (quote, 93).

57 MUSSELWHITE, Paul. Op. Cit. 2018. p. 176-78.

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tralization around the English empire. Consequently, colonists continued to see urban civic institutions as a potential bulwark against the ongoing build-up of central control. In Pennsylvania during the 1690s colonist who were increasingly worried about the authority claimed by the colony's proprietor, William Penn, pushed for their burgeoning city of Philadelphia to be incorporated as a self-governing community; Penn assented to the demand in 1701. In Virginia some leading tobacco planters also renewed their resistance to the growing power and influence of imperial officials and tobacco merchant networks; they drafted new and more elaborate plans to create seventeen new self-governing towns, each with a "merchant guild," legal jurisdiction over criminal and commercial cases, and "all customs and libertys belonging to a free burgh." Although the plan was vetoed by imperial officials in London, it demonstrated the continued appeal of urban republicanism as a defense against imperial encroachment.[58]

In the midst of the radical transformations in both state and empire during the Restoration, colonists in America saw clear connections between English urban citizenship and their own struggles with imperial officials. By naming their estates after towns and cities, by explicitly relating their rights and civic duties to those of citizens, and by attempting to build and strengthen new urban civic institutions in America, they defined colonies as political communities, and themselves as citizens, within the English empire.

Conclusion: The Deep Roots of US Citizenship

Eighteenth-century British America remained largely rural, with no cities and towns that competed, either for population or institu-

58 RONEY, Jessica Chopin, Governed by a Spirit of Opposition: The Origins of American Political Practice in Colonial Philadelphia. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 2014. p. 39-45. HENING, William Waller. Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of all the Laws of Virginia from the first session of the Legislature, in the Year 1619. Richmond, VA: Samuel Pleasants, 1809. v.3, p. 405-08. MUSSELWHITE, Paul. Op. Cit. 2018. 198-205.

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tional complexity, with those of Europe or Ibero-America. However, urban institutions and ideas about citizenship had been critical to English colonial development. In the first half of the seventeenth century urban citizenship networks had been the glue that held colonial projects together. Beginning in the 1660s, as those bonds were challenged by the growth of the state, urban citizenship became a powerful symbol for contesting imperial power in the English Atlantic. As a result, the political culture of English colonial society on the eve of the American Revolution was profoundly shaped by ideas of citizenship born in English urban communities.

Urban republicanism was a vital conduit for introducing and circulating republican ideas that would eventually influence British American colonists to rise in revolution against the empire in the 1770s. In the eighteenth century the British imperial state became increasingly complex. Imperial infrastructure intensified its control over the colonies, and interest groups within and between colonies lined up with different merchant lobbies to shape imperial policy in the metropole.[59] As colonists became enmeshed in these structures, and as overt conflict between cities and the state declined in England, explicit references to English urban citizenship diminished in colonial discourse. However, colonists remained particularly receptive to republican thought in the eighteenth-century British empire; rhetoric emphasizing civic virtue, active citizen militias, and the rejection of the corrupting influence of the centralized state held particular appeal for politically engaged colonists. Historians following the work of J. G. A. Pocock and Bernard Bailyn have attributed this republican thought to the influence of James Harrington and the English country opposition writers of the early eighteenth century; but these interpretations have sparked decades of debate, not least because colonist were never as agrarian and anti-commercial as the English thinkers of this tradition. However, the vernacular ideology of

59 OLSON, Alison Gilbert. Making the Empire Work: London and the American Interest Groups, 1690-1790. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992.

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urban republicanism that had much deeper roots in colonial British America had long been comfortable with commerce and profit, provided that it was regulated locally for the public good. The influence of eighteenth-century English opposition writers, whose works were frequently reprinted in the increasingly restive colonies, owed to the fact that they echoed this much older understanding of local urban citizenship. The long-overlooked influence of these urban traditions, therefore, better explains the Republican ideology that framed colonists increasingly confrontational responses to British imperial reforms and taxes in the 1760s. Colonists essentially still saw their communities as large versions of the urban corporate commonwealth resisting further impositions of state control.

Unsurprisingly, it was in the growing towns of British America that revolutionary republican ideology remained most clearly connected to particular corporate civic ideals. In Boston, where tensions with the empire were fiercest, the efforts by well-connected merchants and imperial agents to replace the town's egalitarian governance structure—the town meeting—with a narrower oligarchic form of governance were a key factor in raising republican fears and stoking resentment against the empire. Similarly, in the much smaller town of Annapolis in Maryland, opponents of imperial reforms in the 1760s galvanized their movement by seizing control of the corporate governance structure of the town and using it to assert their local autonomy. In the port city of Norfolk in Virginia the local leaders also framed new imperial taxes as an imposition upon their status as citizens not of Virginia but of their self-governing community, which they described as one of the "large commercial towns on this Continent."[60] In all of these cases republican resistance to the British

60 NASH, Gary B. The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979. p. 273-82. STRAWSER, Neil. Samuel Chase and the Annapolis Paper War. Maryland Historical Magazine, Baltimore, MD. n. 57, p. 177-194. 1962. MUSSELWHITE, Paul. "This Infant Borough": The Corporate Political Identity of Eighteenth-Century Norfolk. Early American Studies, Philadelphia, PA. 15, p. 801-34. 2017.

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empire drew strength from the older urban republican tradition of corporate self-governance.

The influence of urban republicanism in Anglo-America continued beyond the American Revolution and shaped the new nation's economy and constitution. After 1776 there was a rush of urban incorporations in the newly independent states. In 1779, with the Revolutionary War still ongoing, the new state government of Virginia incorporated the city of Alexandria, closely followed by five other cities. They envisioned that these new autonomous urban communities would encourage local merchants and artisans to exercise civic virtue by regulating commerce in the interests of the common good and policing labor in a world of servants and enslaved people. The new communities took this status seriously, with Fredericksburg's new corporate leaders referring to the city as a "little Common wealth." One of the new nation's largest port cities, Charleston, South Carolina, was also incorporated in the immediate aftermath of the American Revolution as a way to spur active citizenship and defense of the common good among the city's white population.[61] At a time when the nature of citizenship in the American republic was still being debated, new urban communities and corporations offered a concrete way to structure what it meant to contribute to the common good and exercise virtue in a commercial republic, and who got to do it. This model of urban corporate republicanism, though, did have its detractors in the new United States. The corporation of Philadelphia was dismantled at the time of the Revolution, the inhabitants of the growing city of Baltimore in Maryland resisted efforts to incorporate their city, and the new urban charters for Charleston and Alexandria encountered vocal opposition. These protests were centered on the

61 PETITION of the Mayor and Commonalty of Fredericksburg, May 30, 1782. In Legislative Peititons, Virginia Memory Collection. http://www.virginiamemory.com/collections/petitions. MUSSELWHITE, Paul. Op. Cit. 2018. p. 253-58. HART, Emma. City Government and the State in Eighteenth-Century South Carolina. Eighteenth-Century Studies. 50.2. 2017, p. 195-211. MAIER, Pauline, The Revolutionary Origins of the American Corporation. William and Mary Quarterly, Williamsburg. 3rd Ser., 50, p. 51–84. 1993.

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fact that urban corporations (and a growing number of business corporations) were exclusive communities with restrictive groups of citizens who received particular privileges and liberties from the state, which made them seem anathema to the new ethos of democratic equality.[62]

The critics were not wrong. Urban republicanism had always been predicated upon an exclusionary vision of citizenship. In this case it took the form of a select group that was exclusively white and male and that protected the interests of their own community. That, of course, was ultimately part of its appeal; from its inauguration in the foundation of new colonies it had served to protect the rights of self-selecting networks of individuals. Thomas Hothersall had been separating himself from his neighbors when he claimed to be a citizen of London. When the United States founders established new urban and business corporations and founded new states west of the Appalachian Mountains that were open only to certain groups of white migrants, they built on the most exclusionary elements of the urban citizenship tradition.[63] This marked a stark contrast with Spanish America. There the Bourbon Reforms of the late-eighteenth century challenged what had previously been much stronger local civic identities and scrambled the political geography of the empire. As a result, as Tamar Herzog and Jordana Dym have shown, Latin America's revolutions occurred in a world where traditional civic identities had lost some of their power and new ideas about citizenship became more inclusive while also helping to fracture the continent into new national units. The fact that citizenship and political ideology in early British America owed such a debt to English urban republica-

62 TEAFORD, Jon C. The Municipal Revolution in America: Origins of Modern Urban Government 1650-1825. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1975. MAIER, Pauline. The Debate over Incorporations: Massachusetts in the Early Republic. In WRIGHT, Conrad Edick (org.). Massachusetts in the New Nation. Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society. 1992. p. 73-117. HART, Emma. Op. Cit. p. 204-205.

63 BRADBURN, Douglas. The Citizenship Revolution: Politics and the Creation of the American Union, 1774-1804. Charlottesville, VA: UVA Press, 2009.

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nism played a critical role in making citizenship in the new United States starkly exclusionary.[64]

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64 HERZOG, Tamar. Op. Cit. DYM, Jordana. Op. Cit.

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