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Reviewed work(s):

Source: *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Spring, 1984), pp. 729-750

Published by: [The MIT Press](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/203463>

Accessed: 10/01/2013 09:44

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Leonard Hochberg

The English Civil War in Geographical Perspective

“I confess,” wrote one of [Archbishop] Laud’s informants early in 1640, “it is an honour to the kingdom to have such towns as Sunderland was, to come up and flourish from small beginnings. But . . . I think . . . that the King’s Majesty had better for awhile despise that honour and profit that accrues to him that way . . . than to suffer little towns to grow big and anti-monarchy to boot; for where are all these pestilent nests of Puritans hatched, but in corporations, where they swarm and breed like hornets. . . .”¹

. . . the city of London and other great towns of trade, having in admiration the prosperity of the Low Countries after they had revolted from their monarch, the king of Spain, were inclined to think that the like change of government here, would to them produce the like prosperity.

But in the north and west, the king had much the better of Parliament.²

Political observers and historians have long proposed a geographical analysis of the causes of the English Civil War. Early commentators noted the spread of Puritanism through commercial England, and implied that an urban-rural cleavage was the root of the hostilities of 1642. Some contemporary historians have inferred socioeconomic causes of the Civil War from a regional

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The author wishes to thank James Boon, Wally Goldfrank, Nathan Schwartz, Paul Seaver, G. William Skinner, Robert Somers, and, above all, Edward Fox for commenting on earlier drafts. Financial support from the Center for the Study of Political Economy (Cornell University) and the Institute for Humane Studies is gratefully acknowledged.

0022-1953/84/040729-22 \$02.50/0

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1 Quoted by Mervyn James in *Family, Lineage, and Civil Society: A Study of Society, Politics, and Mentality in the Durham Region, 1500–1640* (Oxford, 1974), 89.

2 Thomas Hobbes, *Behemoth* (New York, 1969; orig. pub. 1682), 3–4, 126–127.

division of the political elite; but recent historical investigation calls into question the existence of the geographical factor and therefore its causal implications. To date no generally accepted geographical explanation for the Civil War has been established. Therefore, the purpose of this article is, in the context of the current debate, to reassess in quantitative terms the initial division of members in the House of Commons by demonstrating that the appropriate unit for a geographical analysis of the constituencies of the Royalist and Parliamentary parties was not the English county, but the proximity of waterborne transport.

The modern debate over the geographical causes of the Civil War began with a quantitative study by Brunton and Pennington, which analyzed the personal characteristics of the Long Parliament's members, in Namierite detail. To test geographical factors as an independent variable, they associated six regional groupings of parliamentary constituencies with the members' affiliation with the king or Commons (see Table 1). A majority of members returned from the county and borough constituencies located in the "North" and "West" became Royalist, a majority returned from the "East," "Midlands," and "Southeast" became Parliamentary; but a nearly even division occurred among those returned from the "Southwest." In an apparent effort to avoid the implication of these divisions, however, the authors warned that if, "the familiar geographic boundary between the predominantly Royalist north and west and the predominantly Parliamentary south and east has some economic significance . . . it was not a rigid line between two coherent and fundamentally different systems, with opposing political demands."³

In a review of Brunton and Pennington's work, Hill objected to their classification of members of parliament into two camps, thereby slighting personal motivation and intention. When Hill went on to discuss a geographical division of England, he presented two small sketch maps which would demonstrate at a "glance" that "support for Parliament came from the economically advanced south and east of England, the King's support from the economically backward areas of the north and west."

3 Douglas Brunton and Donald H. Pennington, *Members of the Long Parliament* (Hamden, Conn., 1968), 178.

Table 1 Constituency Location and Political Affiliation of Long Parliament Membership

REGION	AFFILIATION	
	PARLIAMENTARIAN	ROYALIST
East	80%	20%
S.E.	68%	27%
Midland	59%	37%
S.W.	48%	50%
North	42%	55%
West	31%	67%
Total	55%	43%

EAST	S. E.	MIDLANDS
Cambridgeshire	Hampshire	Bedfordshire
Essex	Kent	Berkshire
Hertfordshire	Middlesex	Buckinghamshire
Huntingdonshire	Surrey	Derbyshire
Lincolnshire	Sussex	Leicestershire
Norfolk	Cinque Ports	Northamptonshire
Suffolk		Nottinghamshire
		Oxfordshire
		Rutland
		Staffordshire
		Warwickshire
S. W.	NORTH	WEST
Cornwall	Cumberland	Cheshire
Devonshire	Lancashire	Herefordshire
Dorset	Northumberland	Monmouthshire
Gloucestershire	Westmorland	Shropshire
Somerset	Yorkshire	Worcestershire
Wiltshire		Wales

Hill, however, is ill at ease with his own geographical generalization, and immediately quotes a number of contemporary observations to the effect that the Civil War was a class conflict between gentlemen and aristocrats for the king, and tradesmen, yeomen, merchants, and a sprinkling of gentry for Parliament. There is no attempt at a synthesis of these explanations.⁴

4 Christopher Hill, "Recent Interpretations of the English Civil War," in *idem*, *Puritanism and Revolution* (New York, 1970), 17; *idem*, *The Century of Revolution, 1603–1714* (New York, 1966), 121.

By contrast Moore, in his Marxist explanation of the Civil War, suggests that economic forces manifested themselves regionally. Commenting on Brunton and Pennington's breakdown of the loyalties of members of parliament, Moore concludes that traces of economic change associated with this new world were located where the progressive gentry consolidated their land holdings. Specifically, where the enclosure of common fields was most recent and socially disruptive, in the "East" and "Midlands," a majority of returned members of parliament were Parliamentary. Moore uses the spatial incidence of enclosure as an indicator of an emerging capitalist economy, and as a correlate with parliamentary affiliation. But the widely divergent strength of Parliamentarians in the two areas—an overwhelming majority from the "East," and a narrow majority from the "Midlands"—suggests either that the incidence of enclosure was not uniform across the two regional groupings of county constituencies, or that enclosures in different areas resulted in different social structures and political outcomes. Thus, although Moore's regional formulation of the causes of the Civil War is superficially plausible, it fails to reveal how the incidence of enclosure affected the voting behavior of the enfranchised inhabitants of the parliamentary boroughs (of which most were market towns). As a result, the mechanisms of London's interaction with the towns of southern and eastern England remain insufficiently specific.⁵

Considering this plethora of possible explanations—ideological, social, economic, and political—for the Civil War, Stone argues that the observed geographical division occurred for reasons which must remain indeterminate. Specifically reacting to an ad hoc inference that class antagonisms were inherent in a geographical base, Stone warns that all inferences of individual characteristics fall within the ambit of the ecological fallacy, so that the geographical division becomes for him a residual effect of the social characteristics and political responses of individuals, rather than a challenge to develop a new geographical perspective

5 Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston, 1966), 512–514.

for ascertaining Durkheimian social facts about the participants in the conflict.⁶

This historiographical debate over the causes of the Civil War has not moved from dead center because of two unexamined (and untenable) assumptions: first, that the only appropriate geographical unit of analysis is the county; and second, that any influence exerted by the setting would produce an unvarying response from the indigenous population. Both of these questions go straight to the heart of the relationships between geography and history. When those two subjects were being transformed into academic disciplines in the mid-nineteenth century, it was widely assumed that the geographical setting of any people largely determined the lines of its development. Before long, however, historians began to find the concept of determination more and more troublesome. For one thing, the same geography would support very different institutions or cultures at different times, just as different individuals would react differently to the same setting. At first this variety seemed to suggest that no correlation between geography and human behavior was possible, but then it was noticed that for different people, the same geographical setting would provide a wholly different environment, because each would bring different objectives and abilities to its exploitation. Even within the population of a given geographical setting there would normally be some variation of response to the situation, with those who best gauged its potentialities enjoying the greatest success. Thus geography would not coerce aberrant individuals but reward the most responsive.⁷

6 For ideological explanations, see George Macauley Trevelyan, *England Under the Stuarts* (London, 1965), 219; for political explanations, see John S. Morrill, *The Revolt of the Provinces: Conservatives and Radicals in the English Civil War, 1603–1650* (New York, 1976), 51. Lawrence Stone, *The Causes of the English Revolution, 1529–1647* (New York, 1972), 56.

7 Critical reviews of the county community model may be found in David Underdown, "Community and Class: Theories of Local Politics in the English Revolution," in Barbara C. Malament (ed.), *After the Reformation* (Philadelphia, 1980), 146–166; Clive Holmes, "The County Community in Stuart Historiography," *Journal of British Studies*, XIX (1980), 54–73. For a discussion of the notion of the human environment, consult Carl Ortwin Sauer, "Foreword to Historical Geography," in John Leighly (ed.), *Land and Life* (Berkeley, 1963), 359.

The concept of the environment as the product of the human response to the physiographical setting also resolves the problem of the basic geographical units. One of the most widely held misapprehensions about this subject is the assumption that the habitable globe is divided into regions, and that these have frequently been institutionalized as administrative entities. But if each individual or society creates its own environment, then regions (within any segment of the globe) will vary with the capacities of its inhabitants.⁸

In other words—to return to the English Civil War—the counties which served a formal legal purpose may well have survived their original socioeconomic *raison d'être*. For medieval peasants, the environment would usually be the village and its fields, or at most the market town with its dependent villages. For the feudal knight it would be the manors lying within a day's ride (two at the most) of a castle or central strong point. Most of feudal Europe was divided into such entities known as counties or provinces. For centuries they represented the basic units of military-governmental organization of the subsistence economy; as a result social institutions grew up within their geographical framework. The medieval county was the working environment of local feudal authority; and although it continued to serve the interests of those landed elites without commercial ties to London, a quite different socioeconomic organization was, by the seventeenth century, making its appearance along the waterways and coasts of southeastern England. Unlike the counties, it did not integrate contiguous territory into self-contained areal units, but connected commercial farms with waterside corn markets which forwarded their grain to London in a linear pattern of waterborne transportation. The tentacles of this commercial society reached into all of the counties of southeastern England; but it remained a distinct and separate economic environment for its members.

This analysis depends on a theory of social organization which can hardly be elaborated here. Its character, however, can be suggested by establishing some key definitions. The first is that societies develop within patterns of the exchange of goods and

8 James W. Fesler, *Area and Administration* (University, Ala., 1949), 14–20.

messages, the former to provide the economic base and the latter, the organizational (administrative, military, etc.) structure. Further, goods in this context refers to the basic staples: fuel and building materials but especially food, which sustain any society. Because of their inherent bulk, the cost of moving these commodities more than very short distances over land strictly limited the territorial base of social units. At this point, however, it is necessary to introduce two critical distinctions, the first between transport and travel and the second between overland and waterborne communications. If the overland transport of heavy goods is prohibitively costly beyond a few miles, its movement across water can be relatively cheap even for long distances. At the same time it should be noted that unencumbered travel over land (where supplies are available en route) is subject to few serious logistical limitations, whereas over water it is much more cumbersome and limited.⁹

The implications of these distinctions govern the possibilities of social development. Given the obvious fact that all human societies depend first on food, the size and location of their supporting agricultural units limit their possibilities for action beyond mere subsistence. At least until the industrial revolution and the mechanization of transportation, farmland lying more than a few miles from navigable water could not be organized into units larger than a traditional village or market town (that is, within a radius of ten to twenty miles). Further, this limitation in size restricted the possibilities for specialization and increased production of surplus food to support whatever activities the society might wish to undertake. The relative facility of travel, however, meant that such basic subsistence units could be organized over

9 For a full discussion consult Edward Whiting Fox, *History in Geographic Perspective: The Other France* (New York, 1971), 19–71. *Idem*, “The Range of Communications and the Shape of Social Organization,” *Communication*, V (1980), 275–287; Colin Clark, “Transport—Maker or Breaker of Cities,” *Town Planning Review*, XXXVII (1957), 240–241. For England, consult Peter Bowden, “Agricultural Prices, Farm Profits, and Rents,” in Joan Thirsk (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, 1500–1640* (Cambridge, 1967), IV, 606, 610–616. Norman J. G. Pounds, *An Historical Geography of Western Europe, 1500–1840* (Cambridge, 1979), 58–59, 352–353; Robert A. Dodgshon, “A Spatial Perspective,” *Peasant Studies*, VI (1977), 12; C. Clark and Margaret Haswell, *The Economics of Subsistence Agriculture* (New York, 1964), 166–167; Clifford T. Smith, *An Historical Geography of Western Europe before 1800* (London, 1978), 344.

large areas for common social—frequently military or administrative—action which did not involve land transport. These, in short, were the elements of feudal and monarchical societies which dominated inland preindustrial social organization.

Where water transport was readily available, however, the relationship between the economic and governmental-military activity was often roughly reversed. The possibility of moving heavy goods indefinite distances enabled the specialized production of staple necessities in favorable circumstances and their exchange and concentration in population centers (ports) where the division of labor could be extended indefinitely. For such a system there were no hard and fast limits on its size comparable to those that operated in the hinterland, nor did the economic base involve contiguous territory but rather separate units connected by water transport. Such an economic system could be far ranging in extent and still inconsequential in terms of territory. That in turn made its military-governmental administration difficult. As a result, the basic (urban) units of a commercial society were frequently autonomous (i.e. originally city states) and their most congenial mode for common action was negotiation and accommodation.¹⁰

The commercial society of seventeenth-century England was characterized by the interdependent development of commercial farming in southeastern England and the urban agglomeration of London. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the population of the city and its immediate environs rose from 60,000 (in 1500) to 460,000 (in 1660), at least a sevenfold increase. Demand for provisions constantly threatened to outstrip the available supplies, thereby driving up prices. Land utilization within relatively short distances was converted to specialized agricultural production: “. . . corn-growing in Cambridgeshire, dairy-farming in Suffolk, cattle-fattening in Essex and Buckinghamshire, market gardening closer to the capital. . . .” The demand for foodstuffs stimulated the specialization of agricultural production in more distant regions as well.¹¹

10 Carlo M. Cipolla, *The Economic History of World Population* (New York, 1978), 49–54. For an example of negotiation among the cities of a commercial league, see Philippe Dollinger, *The German Hansa* (Stanford, 1970), 92–98.

11 Stone, “The Residential Development of the West End of London in the Seventeenth Century,” in Malament (ed.), *After the Reformation*, 168; Peter Clark and Paul Slack, *English Towns in Transition, 1500–1700* (Oxford, 1976), 78.

Only southeastern England's remarkable system of navigable rivers made it possible to provision London with bulk staples. Riverine and coastal port cities functioned as bulking and transshipment points for the grain that was destined for the London market. Commercial crops grown in the Thames valley were shipped to London along the river, and its two navigable tributaries, the Wey and Lea. Henley, Reading, Wallingford, and Abingdon were notable as Thames-side grain markets and transshipment points. In general, the geographical range of London's grain trade ". . . was largely determined by the availability of water transport, and its kaleidoscopic pattern varied much from year to year with local circumstances of weather and harvest." Despite local variation, the total amount of coastal exports reaching London steadily increased after 1600. For instance, King's Lynn on the Ouse increased its exports to London between 1550 and 1630 from 6 to 40 or 50 percent of its entire grain exports. Seventeenth-century Englishmen, in fact, regarded the east coast commerce in grain as an extension of the river system. Furthermore, the ratio of navigable coastline and rivers (in excess of 685 miles) to the total square miles of territory, which was greater than anywhere in Europe, facilitated widespread participation in the maritime commerce in grain. Those merchants engaged in its coastal traffic characteristically made occasional shipments of relatively small quantities. The overall economic effect was that ". . . the metropolitan market for grain approached that of a perfect economic market: no individual producer [or middleman] could control prices or rents."¹²

12 Alan Everitt, "The Marketing of Agricultural Produce," in Thirsk (ed.), *Agrarian History*, IV, 509; Frederick J. Fisher, "The Development of the London Food Market, 1540-1640," in Eleanora M. Carus-Wilson (ed.), *Essays in Economic History* (London, 1954), I, 139, 147; Norman S. B. Gras, *The Evolution of the English Corn Market* (Cambridge, Mass., 1915), 108-109; J. A. Chartres, *Internal Trade in England, 1500-1700* (Basingstoke, 1977), 43; Thomas S. Willan, *River Navigation in England, 1600-1750* (London, 1964), 133. John Patten claims that the Lark River was navigable to Bury St. Edmunds, the Stour to Sudbury, and the Waveney to Beccles (for an additional 50 miles of navigable waterways) in his *English Towns, 1500-1700* (Hamden, Conn., 1978), 291. Charles Wilson, *England's Apprenticeship, 1603-1763* (London, 1975), 44; Samuel Finer, "State Building and State Boundaries in Western Europe in Light of the Rokkan-Hirshman Model," *Social Science Information*, XIII (1974), 115; Donald Coleman, *The Economy of England, 1450-1750* (Oxford, 1977), 123.

The political consequences of this condition were even more startling. The relatively large number of head ports—twenty-one in all according to one economic historian—plus their associate ports and innumerable navigable coastal inlets, rendered administrative surveillance of this branch of commerce difficult. In 1619, justices of the peace from grain growing areas discouraged government proposals for the establishment of public granaries. When in 1631 the Privy Council sought to limit the transportation of grain beyond the locality of its production, officials, as in the Hastings rape of Sussex and in Essex, protested the central government's disruption of waterborne distribution. Some justices of the peace had undoubtedly found that their personal economic interests conflicted with the paternalistic and anti-commercial policies pursued by the early Stuarts.¹³

In at least one case, however, a large-scale commercial activity dependent on water transport became closely associated with monarchy, namely the shipment of coal from Newcastle to London and other east coast ports. Acute deforestation had created an energy shortage by the seventeenth century that was being met by the use of coal, particularly in London. Since any general trade in coal was closely restricted by the prohibitive costs of overland haulage to water transport (“... the price of the cargo doubled every two miles”), the limited number of navigable rivers and bulking points for transshipment presented the English monarchy with an opportunity to concentrate the coal trade in Newcastle Hostmen Company's hands to ensure the effective collection of the levy on coal shipments. Thus the privileged Hostmen were able to buy out independent collier operators on the Durham side of the Tyne. Meanwhile, their smaller competitors in Sunderland, on the Wear, maintained a precarious autonomy despite two unsuccessful attempts in 1610 and 1636 by the monarchy and the Hostmen to extend the Newcastle levy to coal shipped from Sunderland.¹⁴

13 Wilson, *England's Apprenticeship*, 44; Bowden, “Agricultural Prices,” 611, 619; Anthony Fletcher, *A County Community in Peace and War: Sussex, 1600–1660* (New York, 1975), 151; Pauline Croft, “Free Trade and the House of Commons, 1605–6,” *Economic History Review*, XXVIII (1975), 20–21.

14 Wilson, *England's Apprenticeship*, 82; M. James, *Family, Lineage, and Civil Society*, 88.

These market imperfections in the commerce in coal profoundly colored political sentiment and affiliation in the Civil War. In Sunderland, George Lilburne, a supporter of Parliament and former mayor of the city, was by April 1644 actively aiding the parliamentary “effort to establish Sunderland as a rival to Newcastle.” “The Hostmen, whose position as an attacked monopoly almost forced them to take up the King’s cause, agreed in September 1643 to pay an additional 3d. per chalder on coals loaded from the Tyne, and in January 1644 they established a committee to arrange the lending of coals outright to the King, to be exchanged for corn, powder and ammunition.” The position of the Hostmen was, however, unique among large-scale domestic concerns in thriving on royal control and support; despite the political advantages that the Newcastle Hostmen enjoyed, the Newcastle economy remained dependent on the demand of the coastal cities for fuel and, in return, on their grain exports.¹⁵

To pay for this cheap and ample supply of food and fuel on which it thrived and grew, London produced a number of distinctive goods and services. A wide variety of miscellaneous luxury items made up the outbound cargo of vessels leaving London. After the sack and blockade of Antwerp in the 1580s, London benefitted from the immigration of highly skilled Dutch and Flemish artisans. New industrial suburbs sprang up beyond London’s guilds’ jurisdiction, and goods formerly available solely as imports were suddenly supplemented by their domestic manufacture. During the sixty years prior to the Civil War the growth of manufacturing was one contributor to London’s economic expansion.¹⁶

A second factor was the location of Parliament, the Inns of Court, and the royal court itself. Many gentlemen traveled to London, the seat of the monarchy, to seek political preferment. And although some merchants and many artisans were dependent for their livelihood on the conspicuous consumption of the gentry and the court, London’s expansion depended primarily on its

15 Roger Howell, *Newcastle upon Tyne and the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford, 1967), 149, 152, 159.

16 Willan, *The Coasting Trade, 1600–1750* (Manchester, 1967), 111.

expanded wholesaling activities and commerce in bulk staples, not on its luxury retail trade.¹⁷

At least one contemporary observer recognized that London's sustained economic growth was not dependent on the presence of the ruling elite:

Stowe . . . an Alderman . . . who on being told that the Queen Mary Tudor intended to move Parliament and the courts of law to Oxford to show her displeasure with the city, asked whether she also intended to divert the Thames. On being told no, the Alderman replied in that event they would manage well enough in London, wherever Parliament and the law courts were held.¹⁸

Perhaps the most significant contribution to London's economic growth was made in the realm of so-called invisible goods. "Above all, it took the form of substituting the services of English ships and merchants for those of foreigners." Between 1582 and 1629, the amount of shipping owned by Londoners increased threefold, from 12.3 to 35.3 thousand tons. Rising domestic demand for ships stimulated the development of maritime industries. For instance, by 1590 the Ipswich sailcloth industry was considered to supply the best sails for small ketches and vessels under 100 tons which served the coastal trade. Because ". . . the only fixed capital goods that were being used [in the preindustrial period], and which absorbed any considerable quantity of resources, were buildings [such as warehouses] and vehicles (especially ships)," the construction of containers for the storage and waterborne transport of bulky goods was one key form of investment in commercial expansion.¹⁹

17 Fisher, "The Development of London as a Center of Conspicuous Consumption," in Carus-Wilson (ed.), *Essays in Economic History II*, 198.

18 Valerie Pearl, *London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution: City Government and National Politics, 1625-1643* (Oxford, 1961), 69, n. 1.

19 Fisher, "London as an Engine of Economic Growth," in John S. Bromley and Ernst Kossmann (eds.), *Britain and the Netherlands* (The Hague, 1971), IV, 9; Ralph Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Newton Abbott, 1972), 35, 46, 47; Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects: The Development of a Consumer Society in Early-Modern England* (Oxford, 1978), 41; John Hicks, *A Theory of Economic History* (Oxford, 1969), 42; Geoffrey V. Scammell, "Shipowning in the Economy and Politics of Early Modern England," *Historical Journal*, XV (1972), 388, 390, 394, 400.

The dramatic growth of shipping capacity reflected the mutually reinforcing economic processes of grain and coal import, and the concomitant explosive growth of London. Available coal fueled industrial expansion: breweries, soap and sugar boilers, and salt pans. More industrial activity meant more workers to feed and homes to heat, which in turn meant an increase in ship building and warehouse construction. This geographical division of labor increased in direct proportion to the concentration of population. Because urban population size is limited by the availability of staples, an increase in their supply would make possible further increases in the division of labor and productivity. Thus, the same waterborne transport which supplied the coal and grain that made London's growth possible also extended her commercial range.²⁰

Although no English port escaped London's influence, the Channel and the west coast ports had a distinctive character that is of significance to an understanding of the causes of the Civil War. First, in the case of the Channel, no single port had emerged by 1640 as a potential entrepôt for the import of food and fuel in exchange for manufactures and re-exports. Second, given the absence of readily available mines, coal was imported largely from Newcastle. Third, and perhaps most important, the lack of river transport feeding into the Channel effectively limited the extent of grain producing areas, thereby prompting merchants and ship owners to range as far as the Newfoundland fisheries or the Mediterranean for bulk commodities. Occasionally, outgoing cargoes shipped directly to London reflected the economic activity of the surrounding area—grain from Chichester or Wealden iron from Rye; but whether the pattern of commerce was bilateral or more complex, most southern ports were small in size, “. . . little more than marketing centres for a section of [the] countryside. . . .”²¹

Whereas the Channel ports imported fuel and miscellaneous wares from the east coast, the west coast commercial network

20 Wilson, *England's Apprenticeship*, 44, 84–85.

21 J. Richard Peet, “The Spatial Expansion of Commercial Agriculture in the Nineteenth Century: A Von Thunen Interpretation,” *Economic Geography*, XLV (1969), 283–301; Patten, *English Towns*, 224, 227; Davis, *Shipping Industry*, 4; Willan, *Coasting Trade*, 147, 149.

exhibited some striking, though superficial, similarities to the eastern network. Like the Thames for London, the Severn provided Bristol with efficient access to the coast. The Severn valley produced large quantities of wheat, barley, and malt for Bristol, and, in return, received a wide variety of goods. However, Bristol never attained the status of an unrivaled entrepôt for the west coast, as London did for the east. Because Bristol was virtually independent of London's commerce in finished products, and because Bristol merchants re-exported foreign goods in competition with London, the latter's merchants necessarily intruded on Bristol's traditional commercial ties with the west coast ports whenever they sought new outlets. Increasing competition and declining profits repeatedly drove the spokesmen for the outports, particularly Bristol, to protest in the House of Commons against the privileges conferred by Elizabeth and James I on London's import-export cartels. Although each of the coastal networks had a distinctive character, their representatives in Parliament made common cause with London's independent merchants over the right to engage in commerce unhampered by monarchical restraints and grants of privilege.²²

This analysis raises the general question of the possible relationship of the affiliation of members of the Long Parliament with the locations of their constituencies. Did these differences in coastal economic activity impinge upon the structure of affiliation among the members of the House of Commons at the outbreak of the English Civil War?²³

If one assumes that all towns engaged in waterborne commerce constituted the economically advanced part of the nation, then one might suppose that they returned an extremely high

22 Willan, *The Inland Trade: Studies in English Internal Trade in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Manchester, 1968), 20, 38, 40; *idem*, *Coasting Trade*, 95, 167; Coleman, *Economy of England*, 63; Wallace Notestein, *The House of Commons, 1604–1610* (New Haven, 1971), 110; Robert Ashton, *The City and the Court* (London, 1979), 113–114.

23 Brunton and Pennington, *Members of the Long Parliament*, 2; supplemented by biographical sketches in Mary Frear Keeler, *The Long Parliament, 1640–1641: A Biographical Study of its Members* (Philadelphia, 1954), 81–404. In the overwhelming majority of observations, I have followed the characterization of the member's affiliation provided by Brunton and Pennington in Appendix VI, 225–245. However, members who fought for Parliament or fought for the crown and then switched sides were classified by their initial military commitment.

percentage of Parliamentarians. In fact the evidence presented in Table 2 indicates merely a two to one incidence of Parliamentarians to Royalists returned from borough constituencies adjacent to coastal and riverine waterways, with close to a one to one split among the members returned from all other constituencies. However, as indicated above, the intensity and geographical orientation of commercial activity changed for each coast, with the west coast ports exhibiting the greatest economic autonomy and, in one instance, rivalry vis-à-vis London.

The breakdown of constituencies by coastal network in Table 3 reveals that Royalists were returned by a ratio of almost three to two from western coastal and riverine constituencies. In the case of Bristol, the city competing most closely with London, the first two members returned were expelled as monopolists, and the second two were not permitted to continue to sit in Parliament as Royalists. Constituencies located along the Channel returned Parliamentarians by a three to two margin. However, in the east

Table 2 Constituencies Defined by Access to Navigable Waterways and the Political Affiliation of Long Parliament Membership

LOCATION	AFFILIATION		TOTAL
	ROYALIST	PARLIAMENTARIAN	
Coastal and Riverine	70	130 (65%) ↑	200 (100%)
Other	166	180 (52%)	346 (100%)
Total, Nation-wide	236	310 (57%)	546 (100%)

$\chi^2 = 8.697$, $df = 1$, significant at .01

Table 3 Constituencies Defined by Coastal Orientation and the Political Affiliation of Long Parliament Membership

COASTAL ORIENTATION	AFFILIATION		TOTAL
	ROYALIST	PARLIAMENTARIAN	
West Coast	25	18 (42%)	43 (100%)
South Coast	29	43 (59%) ↓	72 (100%)
East Coast	16	69 (81%)	85 (100%)
Total, Coastal and Riverine	70	130 (65%)	200 (100%)

$\chi^2 = 20.78$, $df = 2$, significant at .001

coast constituencies, where the coastal commerce centered on London's food and fuel imports, 81 percent of the returned members were Parliamentarians.²⁴

A second major sociogeographical distinction suggests a means to refine the data further. Economic historians have recognized the interaction of geography with the agrarian economy of early seventeenth-century England and Wales. Some have argued that if a line were drawn from Teesmouth on the northeast coast to Weymouth on the southwest coast, the English land mass would be divided into two ecological zones: the highlands, with poor soils and a cool, wet climate to the north and west; and the lowlands, with richer soils, lower rainfall, and warmer summer temperatures to the south and east, with the former supporting a pastoral economy and the latter, mixed husbandry. Because the Teesmouth-Weymouth line is a heuristic device, it must be stressed that institutions and social structures associated with the highland zone persisted in the forested and geographically isolated areas located south and east of the Teesmouth-Weymouth line. The findings displayed in Table 4, nevertheless, suggest that the county constituencies located in the upland/pastoral zone returned future Royalists by a margin of two to one, whereas constituencies

Table 4 County Constituencies Defined by Ecological Zone and the Political Affiliation of Long Parliament Membership

REGION	AFFILIATION		TOTAL
	ROYALIST	PARLIAMENTARIAN	
Upland/Pastoral	23	12 (34%) ↓	35 (100%)
Lowland/Mixed Husbandry	14	34 (71%) ↓	48 (100%)
Total, Nation-wide ^a	37	46 (55%)	83 (100%)

$\chi^2 = 10.94$, $df = 1$, significant at .001

a The Teesmouth-Weymouth line divides Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Gloucestershire, and Dorset. The knights of these shires were therefore excluded from consideration in this table. Because Berwick and Newcastle were classified as east coast ports, the m.p.s from Northumberland (and from the counties divided by the Teesmouth-Weymouth line) were excluded from this test.

24 Brunton and Pennington, *Members of the Long Parliament*, 57, 222.

located in the lowland/mixed husbandry zone returned future Parliamentarians by a ratio of seven to three.²⁵

This division of England and Wales treats the two ecological zones as if they were uniform in their characteristics. A more complete picture emerges when such factors as altitude and distance of overland transport to market or navigable water are taken into account. To provide this more comprehensive view it is necessary to shift the geographical perspective from an (areal) aggregate of counties into ecological zones to a (linear) relationship between fixed points, specifically the location of English market towns and villages having the status of parliamentary boroughs. Within each of the two ecological zones (e.g., the upland/pastoral and the lowland/mixed husbandry) it is possible to discern three types of parliamentary boroughs: first, those situated immediately adjacent to navigable waterways (labeled hereafter coastal and riverine); second, those located within fifteen miles of navigable waterways (hereafter labeled extended littoral); and, third, boroughs located more than fifteen miles from the nearest navigable waterway, or at an altitude above 600 feet (labeled hereafter hinterland).²⁶

The data presented in Table 5 suggest a correlation between the degree of a constituency's geo-economic isolation and its tendency to return Royalists to Parliament, which reached 73 percent of the total from the hinterland constituencies of the upland/pastoral zone. The towns which had parliamentary borough status in these remote areas were a part of an urban network which was widely scattered across the countryside. The suppliers of these market towns in Wales and in England north of the Trent drew upon extensive agricultural hinterlands, frequently reaching twenty miles or more from the nearest town. The items marketed were limited, by and large, to occasional shipments of self-pro-

25 Joan Thirsk, "The Farming Regions of England," in *idem* (ed.), *Agrarian History*, IV, 5; Coleman, *Economy of England*, 32–34; Leslie A. Clarkson, *The Pre-Industrial Economy in England, 1500–1750* (New York, 1971), 50. For the sociological implications of this division consult Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development* (Berkeley, 1974), 57–59.

26 The two university constituencies were arbitrarily classified in the extended littoral of the lowland zone.

Table 5 Borough Constituencies Defined by Ecological Region and Proximity to Navigable Waterways and the Political Affiliation of Long Parliament Membership

CONSTITUENCY LOCATION	AFFILIATION		TOTAL
	ROYALIST	PARLIAMENTARIAN	
Upland/Pastoral			
Hinterland	36	14 (28%) ↓	50 (100%)
Extended Littoral	33	25 (43%)]	58 (100%)
Coastal and Riverine	39	33 (46%)]	72 (100%)
Lowland/Mixed Husbandry			
Hinterland	33	47 (59%) ↓	80 (100%)
Extended Littoral	19	41 (68%)]	60 (100%)
Coastal and Riverine	31	97 (76%) ↓	128 (100%)
Total, Nation-wide	191	257 (58%)	448 (100%)

$\chi^2 = 47.13$, $df = 5$, significant at .001

selling products—such as horses, sheep, or cattle—the profits from the commerce in livestock accruing to the middlemen and to the grazers who fattened the cattle (near the site of consumption) rather than to those who raised them. In general, these small, remote towns and villages were embedded within their area of food production and luxury goods consumption and, therefore, the electorate was apparently more susceptible to the economic pressure exerted by the local, oligopsonistic gentry elite.²⁷

Certain towns near these remote livestock rearing areas specialized in the processing of hides or wool into goods light or valuable enough to transport overland. Thus, tanners in Coventry, Worcester, and Northampton—towns adjacent to a navigable waterway in the upland/pastoral zone or lying within the hinterland of the lowland/mixed husbandry zone—were strategically placed to obtain cattle reared in the Pennines and Wales, and then to ship their gloves and other light leather products to the London market. According to Brunton and Pennington, the six members

27 Patten, *English Towns*, 19; Everitt, "Marketing," 498; Chartres, *Internal Trade*, 21. James R. Jones suggests in *The Revolution of 1688 in England* (New York, 1972), 141, n. 2, that local gentry, through their purchasing power, could exercise enormous influence over local retailers and tavern owners.

of parliament returned from these three boroughs all sided with Parliament.²⁸

Similarly, woolen and textile manufacture was generally associated with a relatively high incidence of parliamentary affiliation. In the hinterland area of the lowland/mixed husbandry zone, seven centers (Malmesbury, Chippenham, Devizes, Calne, Westbury, and Salisbury in Wiltshire, as well as Andover in Hampshire) of textile manufacture had parliamentary borough status. These seven boroughs returned a total of three Royalists and eleven Parliamentarians, as compared with a region-wide ratio of approximately two Royalists for every three Parliamentarians returned. Likewise, the ratio of Royalists to Parliamentarians favored the latter among those members of parliament returned from the textile centers in the hinterland and extended littoral areas of the upland/pastoral region. Slightly more than 50 percent of the eleven members returned from Tiverton, Honiton, Ashburton, Totnes, and Tavistock were Parliamentarians. Other major hinterland centers of textile manufacture, located for instance in the Salford Hundred or in Yorkshire's West Riding, were of relatively recent origin and were without borough status; nevertheless, it has been noted that the inhabitants of Bolton, Manchester, Bradford, and Leeds were partial to the parliamentary cause.²⁹

In general, the cottage woolen and textile industry benefitted economically from its location in the more remote pastoral and woodland areas. This activity required cheap labor, and the densely settled wood-pasture areas of small subsistence farms were an ideal environment for the growth of the rural cottage industry. Areas of surplus grain growing were frequently located immediately adjacent to these cloth manufacturing areas, thereby permitting a local grain trade to the market towns that were specialized centers for the production, bulking, and transshipment

28 Chartres, *Internal Trade*, 21; Patten, *English Towns*, 29, 218; Clarkson *Pre-Industrial Economy*, 122. Brunton and Pennington in *Members of the Long Parliament*, 210, indicate that a seventh m.p., Simon Norton (Coventry), died before his affiliation was established.

29 Bowden, *The Wool Trade in Tudor and Stuart England* (London, 1971), 46, 49. I have compared Bowden's maps for an identification of the textile centers in 1640. B. G. Blackwood, *The Lancashire Gentry and the Great Rebellion, 1640-1660* (Manchester, 1978), 9; John T. Cliffe, *The Yorkshire Gentry from the Reformation to the Civil War* (London, 1969), 340.

of textiles. Guild masters and middlemen, because they were a part of the London economy, had the financial edge over the sheep grazers and the cottage workers who operated within a subsistence society. Thus, the sites for tanning, cloth production, and other manufacturing activities may be viewed as the far-flung urban outposts of London and the commercial society.³⁰

What many historical analysts have ignored is how, in the pre-industrial world, the availability of waterborne transport delineated the geographical range of the market. This simple alteration of economists' aspatial ideal type has significant implications for the study of the causes of constitutional change in England. What is important to recognize here is that the English constitutional crisis prior to the outbreak of the Civil War was ultimately the result of a conflict among elites who represented the interests of distinct and incompatible societies that were developing within the territorial jurisdiction of the English crown.

The commercial society that was emerging in the context of English affairs was actually a subsidiary of the Atlantic community of which London, challenged briefly by Amsterdam, was becoming the center. London owed its pre-eminence to a number of factors, the first of which was its insular base which separated it from the territorial monarchies across the Channel. The second was its location at the head of the Thames estuary which brought it into direct contact with both overseas shipping and river traffic from the valley. The commercial aristocrats and gentlemen who were involved in the production of surplus grain for London or who invested their profits in Puritan ventures in transoceanic piracy and migration were thus oriented toward London and the Atlantic rather than the counties.³¹

30 Thirsk, "Industries in the Countryside," in Fisher, *Essays in the Economic and Social History of Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1961), 70–88; Franklin F. Mendels, "The Origins of Proto-Industrialization," 3, paper presented at the Social Science History Association meeting (1977), cited with the author's permission. Thomas Mendenhall, *The Shrewsbury Drapers and the Welsh Wool Trade in the XVI and XVII Centuries* (Oxford, 1953), 200; Bowden, *Wool Trade*, 95–106; Clarkson, *Pre-Industrial Economy*, 122.

31 For a comparison with Amsterdam see Jonathan I. Israel, "A Conflict of Empires: Spain and the Netherlands, 1618–1648," *Past & Present*, 76 (1977), 40–53. Everitt, *The Community of Kent and the Great Rebellion, 1640–1660* (Leicester, 1966), 37; C. G. Durston, "London and the Provinces: The Association between the Capital and the Berkshire County Gentry of the Early Seventeenth Century," *Southern History*, III (1981), 40, 46.

To defend their interests against the development of a territorial administration by a central military authority, the leaders of the commercial society—the Earl of Bedford and Baron Saye and Sale, John Pym, Oliver St. John, and their circle—sought a negotiated settlement with Charles I that would have completely refashioned the English polity along lines compatible with the future expansion of commerce. Bedford's undertaking was promoted as a solution to three overlapping problems: one institutional, the second fiscal, and the third political. Because the royal administration functioned constantly while Parliament was convened at the pleasure of the crown, Bedford supported a triennial act which provided the calling of a new Parliament once every three years. This “revolutionary” alteration of the fundamental law was designed to check what the Commons viewed as the capricious and preemptory will of the king.³²

According to Roberts, the earl and his allies also proposed that “. . . the King of his own accord name to high office those who possessed the confidence of the kingdom,” namely themselves. In addition, Bedford's associate, Sir John Harrison, introduced legislation in the Commons granting tonnage and poundage to Charles for three years, thus assuring “. . . that his right to customs would expire whenever a new Parliament was due.” Their plan was “nearly foolproof,” argues Russell, because they also intended “to take over the farming of customs themselves, so that if Charles failed to call a Parliament, they would be able to refuse to pay him his customs.” Essentially Bedford offered to manage Parliament for Charles in exchange for high office on the Privy Council, which would have given himself and his allies effective control over national policy through a government responsible to Parliament.³³

The relationship between marketing patterns and gentry political affiliation needs further exploration. Arthur Percival Newton, *The Colonizing Activities of the English Puritans* (New Haven, 1914), 40–79; W. Frank Craven, “The Earl of Warwick, A Speculator in Piracy,” *Hispanic American Historic Review*, X (1930), 465–468; Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy* (Oxford, 1965), 376.

32 Caroline Hibbard, *Charles I and the Popish Plot* (Chapel Hill, 1983), 96–109, 148; Jack Hexter, “Power Struggle, Parliament, and Liberty in Early Stuart England,” *Journal of Modern History*, L (1978), 46–47.

33 Clayton Roberts, “The Earl of Bedford and the Coming of the English Revolution,” *Journal of Modern History*, XLIX (1977), 609; Conrad Russell, “Parliament and the King's Finances,” in *idem* (ed.), *Origins of the English Civil War* (London, 1965), 114.

What happened instead was that the king attempted to organize a military base for his authority in 1641 to which Pym responded by metaphorically identifying the monarchy and the Arminian episcopacy with Spain, the papacy, and the antichrist. The local circulation of root and branch petitions (for the abolition of episcopacy) inflamed popular discontent in many localities associated with the commercial society, even as it drove many members of parliament returned from the more remote boroughs in the upland/pastoral zone to support the monarchy as the traditional guarantor of social order. Although Pym dramatized and explained the emerging conflict between the monarchy and the commercial society by articulating an apocalyptic vision, it is well to remember that what the leaders of the commercial society wanted was the continuing opportunity to discuss and negotiate their mutual interests unhindered by the discretionary powers of the king, and for this a reformed Privy Council and Parliament would have served marvelously well.³⁴

34 Hibbard, *Popish Plot*, 169–170. For Pym's early concern over the religious question, see Russell, "The Parliamentary Career of John Pym, 1621–1629," in Peter Clark, Alan G. R. Smith, and Nicholas Tyacke (eds.), *The English Commonwealth, 1547–1640* (Leicester, 1979), 158–159. Fletcher argues that southern and eastern counties "predominated" in the petitioning of Parliament in 1641 for the abolition of the episcopacy. See his maps in *The Outbreak of the English Civil War* (London, 1981), 92–93. Solidarity between the crowd and the commercial aristocracy was enhanced by the rhetoric of Puritanism. See William Hunt, *The Puritan Moment: The Coming of Revolution in an English County* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), 241–243, 309. B. H. G. Wormald, "How Hyde Became a Royalist," *Cambridge Historical Journal*, VIII (1945), 78–79; Derek Hirst, "The Defection of Sir Edward Dering, 1640–1641," *Historical Journal*, XV (1972), 206–207.