

# Political Representation in the Era of Britain's Expanding Overseas Trade

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And has largely done so in the post-19th century world.

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⇒ Changing *de facto* power.

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But the structure of new economic activity favored oligarchic concentration.

⇒ Shift in economic interests represented, but not a broader shift in the organization or social basis of power.

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## EVALUATING THE CAUSAL EFFECT OF EXPANDING TRADE

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My approach considers:

- (1) The differential consequences of an aggregate trend in trade,
- (2) By constituency characteristics → more/less involved in the commercial economy.

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For constituency  $i$  in parliament start-year  $t$ , I estimate (OLS)

$$y_{i,t} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \beta_1(\text{trade}_t \cdot \text{london}_i) + \beta_2(\text{trade}_t \cdot \text{borough}_i) + \beta_3(\text{trade}_t \cdot \text{outport}_i) + \beta_5(\text{trade}_t \cdot \mathbf{X}_i) + \epsilon_{i,t}$$

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Where

$y_{i,t}$	political outcome
$\alpha_i$	constituency fixed effects
$\gamma_i$	parliament fixed effects
$\text{trade}_t$	aggregate trade trend
$\text{london}_i$	indicator for City of London
$\text{borough}_i$	indicator for borough (vs. county)
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# MEASURING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATIVES

**Collect biographical data on >10,000 MPs over 200 years (1550-1750).**

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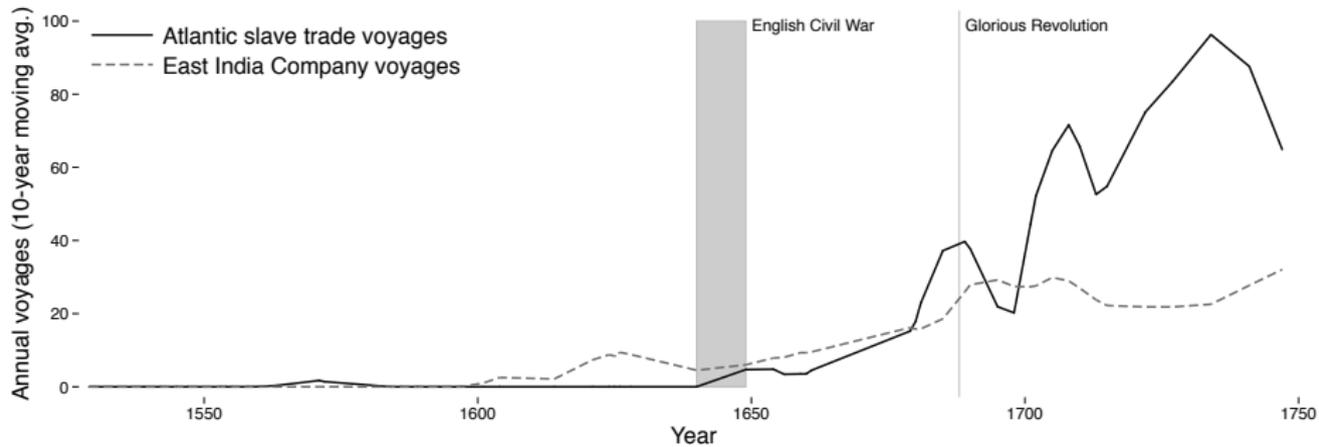
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Measure social backgrounds: family dynasties, aristocratic connections, first time MPs, family backgrounds

# MEASURE TRADE USING AGGREGATE TREND IN SLAVE TRADE VOYAGES



## CONSTITUENCIES INVOLVED IN TRADE (SEL)ECTED MORE COMMERCIAL MPs

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Table 1: Differential relationship between slave trade voyages and economic interests

	% Commercial (All)	% Merchant Adventurers	% Asia Merchants	% New World Merchants
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
London × Slave Voyages	0.0044*** (0.00044)	-0.0033*** (0.00013)	0.0040*** (0.00030)	0.00017 (0.00024)
Port × Slave Voyages	0.00082* (0.00045)	0.0000056 (0.00019)	0.0012*** (0.00035)	0.00019 (0.00028)
Borough × Slave Voyages	0.00082*** (0.00026)	0.0000076 (0.000028)	0.00049*** (0.00017)	0.00029*** (0.00011)
Constituency FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Parliament FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Controls x Voyages	✓	✓	✓	✓
Obsv. (Constit.-Parl.)	20355	20355	20355	20355
Mean of DV	0.15	0.0053	0.046	0.041
Avg. within- <i>i</i> SD of DV	0.25	0.047	0.15	0.14
P-Value Joint Test	0	0	0	0.067

Standard errors robust to 356 clusters at the geographic level of shared political history presented in parentheses.

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

## LITTLE DISRUPTION TO TRADITIONAL REPRESENTATIONAL FORMS

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Table 4: Differential relationship between slave trade voyages and social backgrounds

	% Dynastic	% Aristocratic	% New	% Merchant Family
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
London $\times$ Slave Voyages ( $\beta_1$ )	0.0019*** (0.00026)	-0.0017*** (0.00057)	0.0012*** (0.00037)	0.0074*** (0.00079)
Port $\times$ Slave Voyages ( $\beta_2$ )	0.00071*** (0.00023)	0.00075 (0.00049)	0.000059 (0.00033)	0.00044 (0.00052)
Borough $\times$ Slave Voyages ( $\beta_3$ )	0.00079*** (0.00014)	0.00084** (0.00038)	0.0000045 (0.00020)	0.00034 (0.00034)
Constituency FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Parliament FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Controls $\times$ Voyages	✓	✓	✓	✓
Obsv. (Constit.-Parl.)	21253	21245	21245	21245
Mean of DV	0.14	0.28	0.55	0.28
Avg. within- $i$ SD of DV	0.23	0.32	0.37	0.58
P-Value Joint Test	0	0	0.0060	0

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- (1) Evidence that trade increased the representation of commercial interests.
- (2) Little evidence that trade disrupted traditional bases of political power (i.e. dynasts and aristocrats).

⇒ Trade can disrupt the economic organization of political power—  
**but** not traditional and social ways political power is organized.

