



Conclusion

Out of a desire to regulate the behaviour of their personnel and people in their jurisdictions across the world, overseas trading companies developed models of religious governance that connected and divided the formation of English government outside England. These models highlight the similarities in the experiences and expectations of the development of English corporate governance across the globe, connecting England's overseas companies from Bombay to Boston. They also emphasise the impact local circumstances and changing priorities had on dividing corporate identity and the character of English expansion in differing geographies. Each company sought to police the daily behaviour of those under their jurisdiction, with the members and leaders devising varying models of religious governance to secure their religious, commercial, diplomatic and political missions. Through figures such as the company chaplain, England's overseas companies shared a desire for basic religious care across the globe. However, they would autonomously develop governmental identities using pastoral, theocratic or ecumenical models to deal with the local challenges that affected each company, in doing so illustrating how religious governance, although sometimes divisive, also connected them. Through these models, they aimed to maintain their autonomy and achieve their individual missions, by policing the religious

and political behaviour of not only their English personnel but also the numerous peoples, cultures and faiths that fell under their expanding jurisdictions. Over the seventeenth century, the diverse models of overseas government that policed the character of English global expansion were connected through shared corporate frameworks. The variety of models of religious governance that England's seventeenth-century companies adopted and the methods they employed have been explored in this book to examine the early formation of governmental identity in the English expansion.

Companies established religious, social and political identities for non-English communities that would lay the foundations for imperial perceptions of indigenous peoples and their governmental positions for centuries to come. Through the overseas companies, Native Americans, Hindus, Muslims, Armenians and Catholics, along with many other faiths, developed an intimate understanding of the English legal and governmental frameworks. This knowledge provided these communities with the ability to strengthen their positions in support for, or opposition to, the models of governance that companies adopted. One repercussion was the weakening of the companies' autonomy, as by the end of the century they either faced growing criticism from England for being too theocratic or began neglecting their duty through a policy of religious sufferance.

Overseas companies, through religious governance, framed the character of English government abroad by attempting to regulate the political and religious behaviour of English and indigenous peoples. Tracing the development of religious governance in several companies highlights the connectivity of attempts to monitor behaviour by English corporations through an assessment of the evolution of pastoral, theocratic and ecumenical models of corporate governance. From preventing English peoples from becoming apostates in the Ottoman and Mughal Empires, to monitoring the conversion of Native Americans such as Matoaka and James Printer, English overseas companies sought to both secure and expand their governmental control by regulating religious behaviour.

Influenced by multiple factors, including internal denominational pressures, a desire to evangelise, or promote religiously cosmopolitan environments abroad, religious governance helped form models of governance that developed distinct governmental identities to control religious and political life in the jurisdiction of the companies. Whether through the

theocratic imposition of the MBC's strict moral codes and aggressive annexation of indigenous peoples' lands, or the policies of political and legal and ecumenical inclusion of Hindu, Muslim and Catholic peoples under the EIC, the models of religious governance established by companies abroad regulated the behaviour of various religious groups and individuals within them.

Trading corporations were vehicles that not only advanced religious governance but also created it. In doing so, the models they established impacted the character and identity of English overseas expansion in the seventeenth century. Although at opposing ends of the spectrum, the MBC's theocratic governance and the EIC's ecumenical governance connect the character of English corporate expansion. They exemplify the importance of religious governance as a foundational tool in regulating and advancing the companies' authority over peoples who came under their governmental control. In the case of the MBC's theocratic governance, not only enforced religious uniformity, but also justified its leaders' aggressive expansion into other English Quaker and Baptist, as well as Native American, settlements. For the EIC, its ecumenical governance through the moderate use of political and legal inclusion regulated the religious and political behaviour of numerous peoples of varying faiths, and through it was also able to encourage migration and secure the corporation's commercial and governmental aims in the subcontinent. Both companies illustrate how the same driving principle of regulating behaviour developed distinctive forms of governmental identities, based in corporate ideas of exclusivity and inclusivity. However, this not only emphasises the variation of English corporate governance in the seventeenth century but also how the various forms were connected. Notwithstanding the differences in their finished governmental structures, this assessment of religious governance underlines the shared aims of England's overseas companies, focusing on how they developed models of governance to ensure governmental and commercial success through monitoring religious and political behaviour.

An investigation into the involvement in the development of religious governance of individuals such as John Winthrop, Patrick Copland and Streysham Master as well as communities such as Narragansett petitioners, Armenian middlemen, Arabic Tutors and Hindu merchants illustrates the connected development of models of governance in England's

emerging colonial empire. This firstly helps us to understand how communities, both inside and outside the corporate sphere, English and indigenous, helped to influence the development of these models of governance. For example, in the EIC, Muslim, Hindu, Catholic and orthodox and cultural Armenian communities obtained inclusion in the government of Bombay, ensuring their autonomy by employing English legal and political means, whilst conversely reinforcing the ecumenical governance of the company. At the same time, the development of theocratic governance in the MBC was influenced by the religious necessity to not embrace diversity, but instead enforce uniformity. This provided further justification for the company's Congregationalist community to support aggressive territorial evangelism, forcing English settlers and indigenous communities to either adopt their theocratic governance or face persecution and ostracism from their government. Secondly, the influence of corporate individuals in connecting the development of religious governance across the English world in the seventeenth century is highlighted. The role of corporate chaplains in establishing networks of knowledge exchange influenced political, religious and academic debates across the Atlantic and Indian oceans, as well as the Mediterranean. Chaplains such as Patrick Copland, through their evangelical aims and experiences, developed connections across companies, influencing the evolution of religious governance in multiple corporate environments. However, influential individuals who were not chaplains but were connected to the geographic development of religious governance, such as Henry Vane Jr, Thomas Roe and Josiah Child, have also been assessed in order to illustrate the connectivity and far-reaching implications of corporate religious governance.

By the end of the seventeenth century, England's overseas companies had adapted various models of religious governance to stamp their authority over peoples and faiths across the globe, thereby securing their governmental autonomy. However, as a new century approached, the English metropole took steps to centralise the role of religion, evangelism and overseas expansion. Consequently, this changed the character of English imperial expansion and the relationship between English corporate governance and religion forever. Despite the success of England's overseas companies at establishing visible forms of English religious governance from Cape Cod to the Coromandel Coast, there was mounting

pressure within England to do more to advance English Christian government abroad.

In 1687, John Dryden commented dryly, ‘with my country’s pardon, it’s said, “Religion is the least of all our Trade”’.¹ Eight years later, Humphrey Prideaux, the future dean of Norwich, decried the fact that the EIC ‘had done nothing to instruct’ the many Hindus and Muslims within their jurisdictions in the Christian faith and they had not been given the ‘means whereby they may be sav’d.’² Prideaux would also go on to state, in a report of religion in the company’s factories in India, that the company had ‘failed to propagate the Gospel among the Natives’, whilst claiming that it was in the ‘secular interests’ of the company ‘as well as Spiritual’ for them to focus on evangelism.³ As criticism mounted over the EIC’s corporate religious governance, and its ‘inability’ to actively evangelise, Parliament, the Crown and leaders in the established Church took steps to formally impose strict codes for religious governance in these companies, through their charters. Moreover, the establishment of evangelical corporations such as the NEC, SPCK and the Society for Promoting the Gospel in Foreign Parts weakened the incentives to establish forms of corporate religious governance in England’s commercial companies, as it transferred much of the religious responsibility away from them. By removing this responsibility, corporations were unshackled from the constraints of having to be religiously mindful in their government, allowing a new era of aggressive imperial expansion to take shape that differed greatly from the corporate overseas expansion of the seventeenth century.

¹ John Dryden, *The hind and the panther a poem, in three parts* (London: 1687), p. 63.

² Humphrey Prideaux to Thomas Tenscion, March 27, 1695, Lambeth Palace Library Archives (LPRA) MS 933, no. 1; Stern, *The Company-State*, p. 116.

³ Lambeth Palace Archives, MS 933, no. 2.

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