

Shinsuke Satsuma

BRITAIN AND COLONIAL MARITIME WAR IN THE EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Silver, Seapower and the Atlantic



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Shinsuke Satsuma

THE BOYDELL PRESS

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First published 2013

The Boydell Press, Woodbridge

ISBN 978 1 84383 862 3

The Boydell Press is an imprint of Boydell & Brewer Ltd
PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3DF, UK

and of Boydell & Brewer Inc.
668 Mt Hope Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620-2731, USA

website: www.boydellandbrewer.com

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A CIP catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library

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Typeset in Adobe Caslon by Avocet Typeset, Somerton, Somerset
Printed and bound in Great Britain by
CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

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For My Parents

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During the course of my research, I have been helped and encouraged by a number of individuals and institutions. Without their assistance, I could not have accomplished this long and arduous voyage. First and foremost, I would like to thank Professor N.A.M. Rodger. In the vast ocean of naval history, he directed me in a right direction and patiently guided me throughout my research. It was an immense honour for me to have worked with him. I am also deeply indebted to Professor Shin Matsuzono, who first ushered me into the world of British political history. His generous assistance and in-depth knowledge of eighteenth-century British politics have hugely contributed in improving the quality of my work. I also wish to express my gratitude to Professor Bill Speck and Professor Harry T. Dickinson, both of whom have kindly helped me since I first met them in Japan. Their warm encouragement has been strong moral support in carrying on my research.

Many other scholars in Britain and Japan also gave me valuable comments and assistance. In particular, I would like to thank Professor Jeremy Black, Professor Alan Downie, Dr Michael Duffy, Dr Philip Woodfine, Professor Yasushi Aoki, Professor Shusaku Kanazawa, Professor Mariko Mizui and Professor Yuko Takemoto. I am also grateful to Professor Steven Pincus for kindly letting me see two manuscripts of his unpublished articles. Thanks also to the staff of the libraries and archives that I have visited, particularly those at the British Library and The National Archives. At the production stage, I have to thank Peter Sowden, my editor at Boydell & Brewer. The faults and errors that remain are entirely my own responsibility.

My research was supported by a scholarship from the University of Exeter and a travel grant from the Royal Historical Society. A large portion of Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 originally appeared in *Parliamentary History* and *Historical Research*, respectively. I am grateful to the Trustees of the Parliamentary History Yearbook Trust and the Institute of Historical Research for their permission to reproduce the materials. In addition, I would like to thank the Old Royal Naval College for generously allowing me to use the image of part of the Painted Hall for this book.

Many friends also helped me throughout my research. In particular, I would like to thank Edmund Clipson, Trevor Hagen and Anette Dujisin-Muharay, Joshua Newton, Manu Sehgal and Samiksha Sehrawat, Satoshi Tsujimoto, Hideki Nakamaru and Hiraku Yabuki. Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to my parents, Junkichi and Akiko Satsuma. Without their support, I would have never been able to pursue my career as a historian so far. This book is dedicated to them.

ABBREVIATIONS

Add MS	Additional Manuscript
ADM	Records of the Admiralty
AHR	<i>American Historical Review</i>
BIHR	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research</i>
BL	British Library
Bolingbroke Correspondence	Viscount Bolingbroke, <i>Henry St. John, Letters and Correspondence, Public and Private, of the Right Honourable Henry St. John, Lord Visc. Bolingbroke ...</i> (4 vols, London, 1798)
Chandler	Richard Chandler, <i>The History and Proceedings of the House of Commons from the Restoration to the Present time</i> (14 vols, London, 1742–44)
Ch (H) MSS	Cholmondeley (Houghton) Manuscripts
C.J.	<i>Journals of the House of Commons</i>
CO	Records of the 'Colonial Office' [Colonial State Papers and records of the Old Board of Trade]
Cobbett	<i>Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066, to the Year, 1803</i> (36 vols, London, 1810)
EcHR	<i>Economic History Review</i>
EHR	<i>English Historical Review</i>
FH MSS	Finch Hatton Manuscripts
HAHR	<i>Hispanic American Historical Review</i>
HJ	<i>Historical Journal</i>
HLQ	<i>Huntington Library Quarterly</i>
H.M.C. Carlisle	<i>Manuscripts of the Earl of Carlisle, Preserved at Castle Howard</i> (London, 1897)
H.M.C. Egmont Diary	<i>Manuscripts of the Earl of Egmont: Diary of the First Earl of Egmont (Viscount Percival)</i> (3 vols, London, 1923)
H.M.C. Portland	<i>Report on the Manuscripts of the Duke of Portland, preserved at Welbeck Abbey</i> (8 vols, London, 1891–1931)
H.M.C. Stuart	<i>Calendar of the Stuart Papers belonging to His Majesty the King, Preserved at Windsor Castle</i> (7 vols, London, 1902–23)
House of Commons, 1690–1715	David Hayton, Eveline Cruickshanks and Stuart Handley, <i>The House of Commons, 1690–1715 (History of Parliament)</i> (5 vols, London, 2002)

Abbreviations

JEBH	<i>Journal of Economic and Business History</i>
JICH	<i>Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History</i>
JMH	<i>Journal of Modern History</i>
Knatchbull Diary	Aubrey Newman, ed., <i>The Parliamentary Diary of Sir Edward Knatchbull, 1722–30</i> (London, 1963)
<i>Letters of William III and Louis XIV</i>	Grimblot, Paul, ed., <i>Letters of William III and Louis XIV and Their Ministers (1697–1700)</i> (2 vols, London, 1848)
L.J.	<i>Journals of the House of Lords</i>
Marlborough–Godolphin Correspondence	Henry L. Snyder, ed., <i>The Marlborough–Godolphin Correspondence</i> (3 vols, Oxford, 1975)
Marlborough–Heinsius Correspondence	B. Van 't Hoff, ed., <i>The Correspondence 1701–1711 of John Churchill, First Duke of Marlborough and Anthonie Heinsius, Grand Pensionary of Holland</i> (The Hague, 1951)
MM	<i>Mariner's Mirror</i>
MSS Eng. Hist.	Manuscripts English History
NMM	National Maritime Museum
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
PO	Portland Papers
Review	Daniel Defoe, <i>Defoe's Review: Reproduced from the Original Editions, with an Introduction and Bibliographical Notes by Arthur Wellesley Secord</i> (New York, 1938)
SP	State Papers
<i>Statutes at Large</i>	<i>The Statutes at Large, of England and of Great Britain: From Magna Carta to the Union of the Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland</i> , ed. Thomas E. Tomlins (10 vols, London, 1811)
T	Treasury Papers
TNA	The National Archives
TRHS	<i>Transactions of Royal Historical Society</i>
Vernon–Wager MSS	Vernon–Wager Manuscripts [microfilm]
WMQ	<i>William and Mary Quarterly</i>

A Note on Dates

In this book, all dates are given in the Old style of the Julian calendar except where the New Style is indicated or both dates are used (e.g. 6/17 August). The new year is taken to have begun on 1 January, not 25 March.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

In early modern England (after the Union with Scotland in 1707, Britain), there was an argument supporting war at sea, especially in Spanish America, as a suitable means of warfare. As N.A.M. Rodger has pointed out, this argument's origin can be traced back to a joint struggle at sea involving English and Huguenot seamen against Catholic powers in the 1560s.¹ This idea recurrently appeared in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when conflicts with Spain occurred, and continued to exist until the early nineteenth century.

Several historians have dealt with the argument supporting maritime war. Richard Pares has referred to a 'maritime and American policy' as one of the major policies in the debates on British war aim and war strategy in the mid eighteenth century.² Also, Philip Woodfine has analysed a popular idea about the omnipotence of the British navy, especially against allegedly impotent Spain, which was strengthened by the memories of the Elizabethan and Cromwellian maritime wars. The idea of the British navy's omnipotence was current in the late 1730s and early 1740s among the public and many politicians.³ More recently, Rodger has examined the English 'national myth' of sea power in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. According to him, this was composed of three tenets. First, English sea power was essentially Protestant and exercised for the defence of religious freedom. Second, exercising English sea power also could defend the liberties of Englishmen from foreign and domestic threats. Third, the exercise of this power could bring profit to the English nation, especially seamen and merchants, in the form of plunder and, later, trade.⁴ Thus, several historians have pointed out the existence of an idea supporting maritime war, not least, colonial maritime war, in early modern Britain, especially in England.⁵

¹ N.A.M. Rodger, 'Queen Elizabeth and the Myth of Sea-Power in English History', *TRHS* 14 (2004), 153–4.

² Richard Pares, 'American versus Continental Warfare, 1739–63', *EHR* 51, no. 203 (1936), 430. It should be noted that Pares has divided the upholders of this 'maritime and American policy' into those who supported conquest in North America and those for conquests in the West Indies.

³ Philip Woodfine, 'Ideas of Naval Power and the Conflict with Spain, 1737–1742', *The British Navy and the Use of Naval Power in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Jeremy Black and Philip Woodfine (Leicester, 1988), pp. 71–2.

⁴ Rodger, 'Queen Elizabeth and the Myth of Sea-Power', 157–8.

⁵ Exertion of maritime force against the Spanish American colonies, combined with economic motives, was also seen among some other countries that arrived in the 'New

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In British political and naval history, this idea is often loosely called 'blue water policy' (or 'blue water strategy'), which Daniel Baugh used in an article in 1988.⁶ However, there seems to be some confusion in the usage of this term. What Baugh means by 'blue water policy' appears to be a policy that gradually developed from the mid seventeenth century and eventually became part of Britain's national defence strategy, based on the nation's navy, trade and financial system and supported by her maritime empire. Baugh explains that the basic rationale of this 'blue water policy' was 'defence of the realm against foreign invasion', and its central point was 'naval command of the English Channel and North Sea'. This policy rested upon a particular system to sustain the cost of the naval force, in which trade supplied funds and a source of government revenue and where the shipping industry provided valuables, such as shipbuilding skills and seamen. Also, this policy entailed a concept of cost-effectiveness that aimed to minimise internal taxes. According to Baugh, the 'blue water policy' was 'cost effective, practical, and mundane', and 'it installed a calculating commercialism at the heart of the most important task of government'. Thus, Baugh claims, in line with these principles, Britain's grand strategy was 'essentially defensive in Europe (and European waters) and aggressive overseas'.⁷

The 'blue water policy' described by Baugh seems to be somewhat different from what is referred to by political historians of the early eighteenth century or

World' after the Iberian powers and tried to obtain a slice of its wealth. For example, interception of the Spanish silver fleet, which was often proposed in the English pro-maritime war argument as an effective means of depriving the enemy of its sinews of war, was also attempted by the Netherlands. In 1628, a fleet of the Dutch West India Company under Piet Heyn succeeded in this. Arthur P. Newton, *The European Nations in the West Indies, 1493–1688* (London, 1933), pp. 152–4. On the other hand, interception of the silver fleet also was proposed or actually attempted by the French during the Franco-Dutch War (1672–78) and the Nine Years War (1689–97). Also, one of the main aims of the expedition against Cartagena under the command of Baron de Pointis in 1697, which will be explained in Chapter 1, was plunder of the Spanish colonies and the capture of prizes and booties. James Pritchard, *In Search of Empire: The French in the Americas* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 290, 321–30. Thus, exertion of maritime forces in America motivated by the expectation of gaining riches was not unique to England. Nevertheless, it can be conjectured that influence of the argument was more pervasive in England than in other countries, given that the pro-maritime war argument was accepted as sort of a 'national myth', as Rodger has stated, and that the argument appeared in almost all wars in the 'long eighteenth century'. However, further research will be necessary regarding this point. Also, how this idea was accepted or not accepted in other parts of the British Isles, such as Scotland, Wales and Ireland needs further examination.

⁶ Daniel Baugh, 'Great Britain's 'Blue Water' Policy, 1689–1815', *International History Review* 10, no. 1 (1988), 36.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 40–1. In another article, he also describes the policy as 'a uniquely successful mode of national defence, heavily dependent on financial and naval means'; the policy developed during the period between 1650 and 1750. Daniel A. Baugh, 'Maritime Strength and Atlantic Commerce', *An Imperial State at War: Britain from 1689 to 1815*, ed. Lawrence Stone (London and New York, 1994), pp. 185–6.

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historians who study the mid eighteenth century as a discourse on ideal war policy, which appeared in the press and in parliamentary debates in those periods. Various political groups sometimes used this discourse to criticise rival groups or for other political purposes, and the discourse was not always in accord with the actual policy of the government, especially in the early eighteenth century, although, as this study reveals, it had some influence on the domestic politics and naval policy. This discourse is close to what Rodger describes as an 'English national myth about sea-power'.

This is not to say that the two were irrelevant to each other. Baugh's 'blue water policy' was, to a certain extent, the realisation of a part (though not all) of the latter political discourse that had existed since the later sixteenth century. However, it is problematic to use the same term to refer to both the discourse on maritime war, often based on exaggerated ideas about the wealth of Spanish America, and the soberer strategy of national defence actually adopted by the British government, not least for the period of the early eighteenth century, when a large discrepancy still existed between them. Therefore, in this book, I use the phrase 'pro-maritime war argument' instead of 'blue water policy' to refer to the ideology in favour of war at sea, which existed since the sixteenth century.⁸ It can be said that this 'pro-maritime war argument', a discourse supporting maritime war that existed since the sixteenth century, is a broader concept encompassing Baugh's 'blue water policy', the naval policy actually adopted by the British government, especially after the mid eighteenth century. What this book examines is not the latter 'blue water policy' but the former pro-maritime war argument, which was not necessarily identical to the actual policy of the government but still had a certain influence on politics and naval policy.

This pro-maritime war argument, which appeared in the political discourse in early modern England (later Britain), has been referred to mainly by political and naval historians. However, some problems exist in the approaches that these historians have taken. The first is a tendency to analyse this argument within the dichotomous conceptual framework of party politics or war strategy, especially in considering the question of its supporters. The pro-maritime war argument tends to be attributed to either of two opposing political groups such as the Tories and the Whigs, the Court and the Country in 1689–1713, and the government (the Walpole ministry) and the opposition in the 1730s. This political dichotomy is often connected with another division – between the continental strategy, which involved commitment to the land war on the continent, and maritime strategy, which favoured war at sea, especially in the American waters, by the navy and privateers.

⁸ The reason I do not use the word 'naval' is because privateers were also regarded as an important, albeit not the main, player. Moreover, I use the term 'colonial maritime war' in a broad sense, and it is not strictly confined to battles between ships but also includes amphibious operations against the enemy colonies, which often entailed the use of land forces.

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As far as the period of the War of the Spanish Succession is concerned, the pro-maritime war argument has been construed by political historians such as Geoffrey Holmes and naval historians, such as Sir Herbert W. Richmond, as a Country or Tory ideology, which was opposed to the continental war policy of the Marlborough–Godolphin ministry.⁹ This customary view, however, is questioned by T.J. Denman, who has pointed out that there was support for maritime war also on the Whig side.¹⁰ For the period of the Anglo-Spanish war of 1739–40 (what is called the ‘War of Jenkins’ Ear’), Kathleen Wilson has attributed this pro-maritime war argument to the opposition composed of the ‘patriot’ Whigs and the Tories, which severely criticised the Walpole ministry for its pro-Hanoverian policy and demanded colonial expansion in Spanish America, with support from overseas merchants.¹¹ Nevertheless, as Woodfine has revealed, in this period, there were supporters of maritime war also within the ministry.¹²

The pro-maritime war argument has also been dealt with in the dichotomous framework regarding British war strategy. Pares denies the correlation between political allegiance and support for each strategy in the mid eighteenth century, placing much importance on the division between the continental and maritime war strategy.¹³ However, Richard Harding argues that even this distinction between the two strategies as well as the ‘Whig–Tory’ or ‘Court–Country’ political division was not necessarily important, at least in the actual decision-making in the 1740s, and that politicians adopted either policy in response to the changing circumstances.¹⁴ Likewise, Baugh maintains that the role of the ‘maritime’ and ‘continental’ schools of thought should be seen as ‘setting limits on what kind of diplomatic and strategic plans would be allowable’. The plans that were favoured depended on domestic political and diplomatic circumstances as well as strategic opportunities.¹⁵

Instead of the dichotomous view, recent studies came to stress the interrelation

⁹ Geoffrey S. Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne* (London, 1967, repr., London and Ronceverte, 1987), pp. 73–5; Sir Herbert W. Richmond, *The Navy as an Instrument of Policy, 1558–1727*, ed. E.A. Hughes (Cambridge, 1953), p. 283.

¹⁰ T.J. Denman, ‘The Political Debate over War Strategy, 1689–1712’ (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge University, 1985), pp. 38–9.

¹¹ Kathleen Wilson, ‘Empire, Trade and Popular Politics in Mid-Hanoverian Britain: The Case of Admiral Vernon’, *Past and Present* 121 (1988), 96–9.

¹² Woodfine, ‘Ideas of Naval Power’, pp. 84–6.

¹³ Pares, ‘American versus Continental Warfare’, 429–30. It should be noted that, in terms of the British objects of war, Pares has further divided policy supporting continental commitment into a ‘continental policy’ and a ‘Hanover policy’. While the former policy aimed to maintain European balance of power in alliance with a continental power such as Austria or Prussia, or to defend certain parts of Europe in which Britain had a vital interest (such as Portugal and the Low Countries), the latter policy had defence of Hanover as its main priority.

¹⁴ Richard Harding, *Amphibious Warfare in the Eighteenth Century: The British Expedition to the West Indies, 1740–1742* (Woodbridge, 1991), pp. 185–6, 192–3.

¹⁵ Baugh, ‘Great Britain’s ‘Blue Water’ Policy’, p. 34.

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between the two strategies. Harding has emphasised a close interconnection between the continental war, especially battles over Flanders and the defence of Hanover, and maritime war in America, pointing out that colonial conquests gained by the latter could be returned in peace negotiations to offset the enemy's territorial acquisition in Europe.¹⁶ Likewise, Brendan Simms argues that many of the British statesmen recognised the close link between war on the continent and colonial maritime war in that the continental commitment helped Britain to maintain her naval superiority and to secure her colonies, while denial of overseas resources to the enemy would contribute to keeping the European balance of power.¹⁷ Thus, the clear-cut division between political groups or two schools of war strategy has been questioned, although it cannot be denied that they had some influence on the pro-maritime war argument.

Moving beyond the political and strategic dichotomy view, Rodger has recently examined the argument in a new light. By investigating the process of how the belief in the English sea power developed, Rodger reveals how this ideology, which was often used by the opposition to criticise the government in the seventeenth century and most of the eighteenth century, came to be appropriated by the government of William Pitt the Younger. By the end of the eighteenth century, this ideology was turned into the 'national myth' of sea power in a true sense.¹⁸ This is a more synthetic approach that transcends the existing dichotomy framework. However, some questions still remain. Why was this pro-maritime war argument endorsed by various political groups? What allowed this argument to continue to exist for more than two centuries in different political and diplomatic situations?

In order to answer these questions, we need to examine the argument from a new perspective: that is, the emphasis on the economic advantages of maritime war – a feature that was constantly present in the pro-maritime war arguments of the various periods, irrespective of the political background of their supporters. This ideological connection between maritime war and economic advantage has been pointed out by historians who have examined this argument, such as Pares, Denman, Baugh, Woodfine and Rodger.¹⁹ However, there is still no study that delves deeply into this aspect. This book focuses on this ideological connection between maritime war and profit as the core element of the pro-maritime war

¹⁶ Richard Harding, 'British Maritime Strategy and Hanover 1714–1763', *The Hanoverian Dimension in British History, 1714–1837*, ed. Brendan Simms and Torsten Rott (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 267, 272–3.

¹⁷ Brendan Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat: The Rise and Fall of the First British Empire, 1714–1783* (London, 2007), pp. 672–3.

¹⁸ Rodger, 'Queen Elizabeth and the Myth of Sea-Power'.

¹⁹ Pares, 'American versus Continental Warfare', 453–4; Denman, 'Political Debate', pp. 301–5; Baugh, 'Great Britain's 'Blue Water' Policy', pp. 40–2; Philip Woodfine, *Britannia's Glories: The Walpole Ministry and the 1739 War with Spain* (Woodbridge, 1998), pp. 174–5; Rodger, 'Queen Elizabeth and the Myth of Sea-Power', 158.

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argument, and it examines exactly why colonial maritime war was believed to be economically advantageous.²⁰

The second problem with the preceding studies on the pro-maritime war argument is a tendency to regard the argument as a single ideology and to overlook its diversity. As mentioned, the dichotomy between Whig internationalists and Tory 'blue water' isolationists has been rejected by Denman, who points out that some of the Whigs supported maritime war and colonial expeditions as well.²¹ However, he does not seem to consider fully the difference between the two pro-maritime war arguments. This book makes clear the variation within the pro-maritime war argument and examines its background and political functions. In particular, the book points out the existence of two different pro-maritime war arguments during the War of the Spanish Succession. In addition to the well-known Tory pro-maritime war argument, which became dominant in the late stage of the war, there was another pro-maritime war argument with a 'Whiggish' tone that appeared in the period just before the war.

The third problem with previous studies on this topic concerns the relationship between the pro-maritime war argument and reality. In regard to the period of the War of the Spanish Succession, the focus of political historians such as Holmes and Denman is mainly on its relationship with party politics; these political historians do not examine its impact on actual naval policy. Likewise, the influence of the pro-maritime war argument on legislation during the war has not been fully appreciated. J.A. Johnston, who has investigated how naval affairs were dealt with in Parliament in the period from 1688 to 1714, has stated that Parliament 'had little interest in or insight into the strategic functions of the navy, outside considerations of security', and this need for security 'provided the argument most frequently put forward against a Blue Sea strategy [*sic*]'.²²

Consequently, the impact of the pro-maritime war argument during the War of the Spanish Succession tends to be downgraded by historians. Denman has claimed that 'Blue-water' ideas were simply 'a negative and isolationist reaction to England's changing European role'. According to Denman, the Tory maritime strategy was 'merely an external reflection of their domestic obsession with low taxation, abhorrence of placemen and government bureaucrats, and for rectitude in

²⁰ As already mentioned, Rodger also points out two other elements in the 'national myth' of sea power that were associated with maritime war: 'Protestantism' and 'political freedom'. These two elements were also often, though not always, present in the pro-maritime war argument and were often interconnected with one another. In particular, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the defence of Protestantism was closely associated with colonial maritime war. Although this study does not deny the affinity of the pro-maritime war argument in England with Protestantism and political freedom, it focuses on the emphasis on the economic advantages of maritime war. This is done in order to shed light on ideological as well as actual connections between early modern warfare and profit, which will be explained later.

²¹ Denman, 'Political Debate', pp. 38–9.

²² J.A. Johnston, 'Parliament and the Navy, 1688–1714' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Sheffield, 1968), pp. 25–6.

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government finance', which had been the agenda of the Country politicians – an agenda that was taken over by the Tories after 1688.²³ Likewise, Johnston has asserted that, 'There was only spasmodic and minority interest in the merits or demerits of a Blue Sea strategy in parliament' in the reign of William III and in the early years of Anne's reign.²⁴

It is probable that this negative evaluation of the effects of the pro-maritime war argument on actual policy in our period partly results from the fact that there were few colonial maritime expeditions actually carried out during the war in contrast to the wars in the mid eighteenth century, which saw several successful expeditions. It might also be due to the fact that by the late 1730s, the argument had mainly become the opposition's tool to criticise the government's policy of continental commitment. However, these facts do not necessarily mean that the argument had no influence on the leading politicians in the ministry and on the government's policy during the War of the Spanish Succession. The effects of the argument on reality, especially its influence on government policy, should be re-examined.

This book investigates how much influence the pro-maritime war argument had on actual naval policy and legislation during the War of the Spanish Succession. As for the impact on naval policy, it examines how seriously the government was committed to maritime war in Spanish America during the war years. It also analyses why the attempted colonial maritime expeditions, one of the main measures of colonial maritime war, were unsuccessful, and why the support for the expeditions survived despite the repeated failures. As to its impact on legislation, the book focuses on the process of the enactment of the American Act of 1708, which is a culmination of the attempts to support maritime war by legislation during the war.

Moreover, through the analysis of the impact of the pro-maritime war argument on the naval policy and legislation, this book also reveals what kind of political groups and vested interests were behind the promotions of colonial maritime war. In particular, the relations between the pro-maritime war argument and British commercial interests have not been fully examined. It is true that the issue of trade protection, one of the components of the pro-maritime war argument that directly concerned mercantile community, has been referred to by some historians. For example, Denman has mentioned the attempts of the opponents of the continental strategy to exploit the merchants' anger over trade protection, especially during the Nine Years War.²⁵ This concern over trade protection was certainly an important aspect of maritime war in the War of the Spanish Succession as well as in the other wars in the eighteenth century.²⁶ Still, the relation between overseas

²³ Denman, 'Political Debate', p. 302.

²⁴ Johnston, 'Parliament and the Navy', pp. 22–3.

²⁵ Denman, 'Political Debate', pp. 78–9.

²⁶ For the problem of attacks on British sea-borne trade by French privateers in the eighteenth century, the British merchants' concern about them and the navy's effort to protect the trade by the convoy system, see Patrick Crowhurst, *The Defence of British Trade 1689–1815* (Folkestone, 1977), Chapters 1 and 2.

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merchants and a more aggressive aspect of maritime war, especially colonial expeditions, remains unclear. Therefore, this study investigates the attitudes of the British mercantile and colonial interests – not least, those engaged in the Spanish-American trade – towards colonial expeditions, as well as the conflict that existed between them. In particular, the study casts light on the clash of interests among the West Indian merchants who traded with Spanish America via the British West Indian colonies, privateers based in Jamaica, and the South Sea Company.

The fourth problem with preceding studies concerns the continuity and changes in the pro-maritime war argument in the period between 1714 and 1729. As already stated, the pro-maritime war argument during the War of the Spanish Succession has been mentioned by political historians such as Holmes and Denman, whereas the argument in the mid eighteenth century, especially the Anglo-Spanish War of 1739–40, has been dealt with by Pares and Woodfine.²⁷ By contrast, the argument in the interim period has attracted far less attention. The reason is probably because this was a relatively peaceful period, which only saw the two short conflicts with Spain: the War of the Quadruple Alliance of 1718–20 and the Anglo-Spanish War of 1726–29. Nevertheless, this period was important in understanding the characteristics of the pro-maritime war argument, which revived in the years before the War of Jenkins' Ear. This book also deals with this interim period and investigates how the pro-maritime war argument changed or did not change during the period. In particular, it examines how Britain's acquisition of legal access to the Spanish-American market through the Asiento Treaty of 1713, one of the main prizes of the war for Britain, affected the pro-maritime war argument and also the British naval policy towards the Spanish American colonies.

In short, the aim of this book is, first, to analyse the pro-maritime war argument from a new perspective, focusing on the ideological connection between the argument and its supposed economic advantages, instead of using the existing dichotomy framework of party politics and war strategy. Second, the book also examines variation within the argument and its different political functions. Third, it reveals the relationship between the argument and reality, such as its impact on naval policy and legislation, in addition to the type of political and commercial interests that were involved in the promotion of maritime war. Lastly, this book analyses the transformation of the argument and change in the naval policy towards Spanish America in the period after the War of the Spanish Succession.

In a wider historical context, this analysis of discourse on maritime war and its alleged economic advantages will provide new insights into the relations between war, especially maritime war, and profit in early modern Europe. Rodger has divided medieval naval warfare into two broad categories: public, military warfare and private, commercial warfare. In the former type of warfare, ships played just a subsidiary role and were mainly used for transportation of the troops or for the assistance of the operations of the armies on land. This type of warfare was

²⁷ Pares, 'American versus Continental Warfare'; Woodfine, 'Ideas of Naval Power'; Woodfine, *Britannia's Glories*.

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normally conducted during a declared war between kingdoms. By contrast, the latter type of warfare – private and commercial naval warfare – was carried out against vessels of other nations or ports with the purpose of making profit by seizing their cargoes, sometimes under a legal cover of the doctrine of ‘reprisal’.²⁸ This could take place at all times. The latter type of naval warfare combined with the economic motives was a normal form of war at sea up to the sixteenth century. However, as the seventeenth century went on and as war increasingly became an exclusive activity of state that was fought for a limited period, this type of warfare was reorganised into privateering – an attack conducted by privately owned ships on the enemy vessels with licences from the state, but confined to war time.²⁹

Thus, in the medieval period, war at sea was fought not only for public ends but also for private profit, and this characteristic was passed down to privateering, a more regularised form of commerce raiding in the early modern period. Yet, one thing should not be forgotten: in early modern maritime war, the private and commercial character of the medieval maritime war was inherited not only by privateers but also by the naval vessels, which is shown by the fact that men of war as well as privateers had the right to capture enemy vessels as legitimate prizes in war time. Thus, the private and commercial character of the medieval maritime war still had resonance in early modern maritime war, and it can be argued that, to a certain extent, the idea of the economically advantageous maritime war reflected this medieval concept of private and commercial warfare conducted with the purpose of making profit.

It should also be noted that this ideological tie between maritime war and profit inherited from the medieval age was given a new life in a new setting: the Atlantic. The medieval private and commercial warfare in peace time had mostly disappeared in European waters by the mid seventeenth century. However, as Rodger has pointed out, the expansion of the South and North Western European powers into the Americas allowed this form of warfare to survive in the Atlantic. There, Spain attempted not only to limit her colonial trade to her own shipping, as other colonial powers were to do, but also to ban all foreign presence. This Spanish policy provoked the Dutch and English to engage in plunder, which was sometimes combined with illicit trade.³⁰ As the following chapters will show, the ideological connection between maritime war and profit was often most clearly observable in the argument for maritime war in America. This was partly because this particular circumstance surrounded Spanish America and its wealth. Thus, the pro-maritime war argument with an emphasis on the economic advantages of

²⁸ The ‘reprisal’ was a customary practice that was seen in early modern Europe. This allowed a ship owner who had been a victim of the attack by foreign vessels to make a retaliatory capture on ships belonging to the same nations as that of the aggressor in order to recoup his losses.

²⁹ N.A.M. Rodger, ‘The New Atlantic: Naval Warfare in the Sixteenth Century’, *War at Sea in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. John B. Hattendorf and Richard W. Unger (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 237–8, 240–1.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 241–3.

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war at sea, which was seen in the early modern period, was an idea that had part of its origin in the medieval concept but was transplanted in a new theatre: the Atlantic world.

This ideological connection between war at sea and profit, however, has not attracted sufficient attention from naval historians. This might be partly due to a tendency in the study of the eighteenth-century British naval history to focus on institutional and administrative development, which contributed to the success of the British navy in the eighteenth century, especially in the latter half of the century. This tendency is still noticeable in recent writing.³¹ This is understandable given the achievement of the British navy in the Seven Years War and, later, in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. Yet, it also entails a certain weakness, because it could underestimate the importance of such an aspect that historians have not regarded as a contributing factor to the success of the British navy, such as pursuit of profit at sea.³² To make little contribution to the navy's success, however, does not mean that the aspect was historically insignificant. Sometimes it could have and did have influence on the course of history. Therefore, the connection between maritime war and profit is well worth examining as a significant aspect of early modern maritime war.

Through the analysis of the pro-maritime war argument in early eighteenth-century Britain, this book attempts to reveal how war at sea and economic considerations were interrelated, and what impact the concept of economically advantageous war had on reality. It can give us further insight into the ideological as well as the actual relationships between violence, the economy and colonies in the early modern Atlantic world.

Sources

Some explanation is necessary about the nature of the sources used in this study, especially pamphlets and periodicals. It goes without saying that these sources should always be treated with some caution. First of all, there is a question of the accuracy of their content. In many cases, what was written in these publications was not an accurate analysis of reality, or proposals based on solid evidence. As William A. Speck states, the purpose of these publications was to convince contemporary citizens; in gauging their effectiveness, we must not evaluate it according to the modern standard of 'objectivity' but according to how far they convinced their

³¹ For example, see Roger Morriss, *The Foundations of British Maritime Ascendancy: Resources, Logistics and the States, 1755–1815* (Cambridge, 2011).

³² It should be noted that, in economic history, there have recently appeared studies that see prize money as part of the incentive system in the British navy, which contributed to the success of the British navy in the eighteenth century. This is in tandem with other systems for governance on ships, such as the articles of war that regulated the behaviour of captains and the hierarchical structure of the navy. For example, see Douglas W. Allen, 'The British Navy Rules: Monitoring and Incompatible Incentives in the Age of Fighting Sail', *Explorations in Economic History* 39 (2002), 204–31.

audience.³³ Because of this characteristic as propaganda, these sources are not necessarily useful in knowing the reality of maritime affairs at that time. However, they at least reveal the contemporary perception of maritime war and its supposed economic advantages.

The second problem with these sources is the difficulty in discerning whose opinions these publications actually represented. It would be dangerous to equate the ideas that appeared in the publications with what we call 'public opinion' at that time. Pamphlets and periodicals could be a tool for politicians and, as was exemplified in the relationships between Robert Harley and pamphleteers such as Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift, they were often produced under the strong influence of politicians on both the government's and opposition's side.³⁴ Therefore, we should not naively regard the pro-maritime war argument stated in the pamphlets and periodicals as an expression of 'public opinion'. Nevertheless, given the very fact that they were used in contemporary political campaigns, it is also extreme to say that these ideas were completely irrelevant to their perception. It would be more appropriate to think that the support for maritime war expressed in these sources reflected the opinion of at least part of contemporary society that was receptive to these discourses.

Thirdly, even if these publications reflected 'public opinion' to a certain degree, there is another tricky question regarding the impact of 'public opinion' on politics in the first half of the eighteenth century, whether or not that 'public opinion' was manipulated by political elites. According to Jeremy Black, regarding the extent of public interest in politics, there has been no consensus yet between the view that places emphasis on radicalism and modernity and the view that stresses deference and conservatism.³⁵ The evaluation of the extent of the influence that 'public opinion' could exert upon politics seems to vary according to historians. For example, for the age of Walpole, Black is somewhat sceptical about its impact, and argues that, 'Popular opinion could only be effective if harnessed by powerful parliamentary or ministerial groups, and the absence of an effective representative system meant that these groups were not obliged to respond to popular campaigns.'³⁶ On the other hand, some admit its significance with reservations. Hannah Barker claims that, although the impact of popular sentiment on government policy was limited in the first half of the eighteenth century, popular protests and newspapers had a decisive impact on government policy on a few occasions.³⁷

³³ William A. Speck, 'Political Propaganda in Augustan England', *TRHS*, 5th ser, 22 (1972), 27.

³⁴ For relationships between Harley and the writers, see James A. Downie, *Robert Harley and the Press: Propaganda and Public Opinion in the Age of Swift and Defoe* (Cambridge, 1979).

³⁵ Jeremy Black, *The English Press in the Eighteenth Century* (London and Sydney, 1987), p. 303.

³⁶ Jeremy Black, 'Foreign Policy in the Age of Walpole', *Britain in the Age of Walpole*, ed. Jeremy Black (London, 1984), pp. 162–3.

³⁷ Hannah Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society, 1695–1855* (Harlow, 2000), p. 128.

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To be sure, we cannot ignore the fact that the electorate (which overlapped with 'public opinion' to a certain degree) could exert influence upon politics through Members of Parliament, especially for the period up to the early 1720s. As Holmes has pointed out, in the period between the Glorious Revolution and the early 1720s, the electorate as well as political parties increasingly emerged as a decisive force in politics. This was also a period in which the English electorate grew exceedingly rapidly in relation to the growth of the population.³⁸ Frequent elections that were held in accordance with the Triennial Act also provided political elites with opportunities to make use of the influence of the electorate through propaganda campaigns. From the large floating vote between elections in this period, Speck has guessed that electoral propaganda had some impact on the outcome of the election under the Triennial Act, at least in large constituencies.³⁹ Even for the period of the Walpole ministry, which showed a tendency towards oligarchy under conditions of growing political stability, Harry T. Dickinson warns against neglecting the influence that extra-parliamentary groups and public opinion could have on the ruling oligarchy through several means such as lobbying, petitioning and instruction campaigns, riots and the press.⁴⁰

Nevertheless, as far as strategic issues are concerned, it would be more difficult to say that public opinion or the electorate could have a direct impact in the early eighteenth century. During this period, decisions concerning war strategy were still made by a small group including the king, the secretaries of state and other chief ministers, although Parliament's control over financial matters also began to increase at the same time. This limitation of the influence of public opinion on strategic issues was also true for the period of the War of the Spanish Succession. In his detailed study of the War of the Spanish Succession, John B. Hattendorf denies the impact of the public debate on the government's broad concept of war strategy in that period.⁴¹

³⁸ Geoffrey S. Holmes, *The Electorate and the National Will in the First Age of Party* (Lancaster, 1976), pp. 2, 14–15.

³⁹ Speck, 'Political Propaganda', 28.

⁴⁰ Harry T. Dickinson, 'Popular Politics in the Age of Walpole', *Britain in the Age of Walpole*, ed. Jeremy Black (London, 1984), pp. 45–8.

⁴¹ John B. Hattendorf, *England in the War of the Spanish Succession: A Study of the English View and Conduct of Grand Strategy, 1702–1712* (New York and London, 1987), p. 219. It is true that, in some instances, pressure from the extra-parliamentary groups had a certain impact on politics even in this period, as was seen in the case of the Kentish Petition and Defoe's 'Legion's memorial', which called for more vigorous actions against France and was submitted to the House of Commons in May 1701. This prompted the Tory-dominated Commons, which had been reluctant to enter the war, to make a resolution that demonstrated its support for the alliance with the emperor and the Dutch against France, as Baron Godolphin proposed. Henry Horwitz, *Parliament, Policy and Politics in the Reign of William III* (Manchester, 1977), pp. 289–1. This can be regarded as an example of how pressure from extra-parliamentary groups – in this case, possibly incited by the Junto Whigs – had some influence on war policy. However, even in this case, it would be difficult to say that this had a decisive impact on the government's war policy.

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It should be noted, however, that it was not only 'public opinion' that these pamphlets and periodicals targeted. As Downie has pointed out, the audiences with which Robert Harley was concerned in his propaganda campaign during the War of the Spanish Succession were MPs as well as 'public opinion'.⁴² Some publications on foreign affairs or war, such as *The Conduct of the Allies* written by Swift, obviously targeted a wider audience than MPs, as is shown by the fact that *The Conduct of the Allies* sold 11,000 copies in a month. It should be remembered that politicians were among the readership of those pamphlets. In particular, as Johnston has stated, many of the pamphlets about naval matters were specifically addressed to Parliament, not least the members of the House of Commons, and were certainly distributed and read by MPs.⁴³ Those politicians also could be swayed by the publications. For instance, in 1739, the Duke of Newcastle became a supporter of West Indian expeditions after reading Swift's *Conduct of the Allies*.⁴⁴ For most politicians in those days, who had little knowledge of the practicalities of naval operations, these publications on war policy or maritime affairs could be valuable sources of information.

With these points in mind, this book is not concerned with how widely the pro-maritime war argument was accepted by 'public opinion' and how 'public opinion' tried to exert influence upon government policy, which is difficult to gauge and was probably more limited in strategic issues than in domestic issues in the early eighteenth century. Instead, what it examines is the impact of the pro-maritime war argument on those who were in a position to have influence on decision-making in maritime affairs and legislation, such as leading politicians within and outside the government, administrators, some flag officers and leading West Indian merchants. The book also investigates the extent to which they tried to put the ideas of the pro-maritime war argument into practice.

In order to examine the attitudes of these people in power towards the pro-maritime war argument, this book uses the correspondence of politicians and naval officers along with the pamphlets and periodicals. Moreover, to investigate how the pro-maritime war argument was translated into the reality of naval operations and legislation, administrative sources and the parliamentary sources are used. By combining these different types of sources, this book analyses not only the discourses on maritime war but also its relationship with reality – especially its influence on actual politics and naval policy and its relationship with the political and commercial interests.

Structure

The structure of the book is as follows: Chapter 1 places the pro-maritime war argument in a longer historical context. It examines the history of the English penetration into the Americas from the sixteenth century to the late seventeenth

⁴² Downie, *Harley and the Press*, p. 7.

⁴³ Johnston, 'Parliament and the Navy', p. 59.

⁴⁴ Woodfine, 'Ideas of Naval Power', pp. 85–6.

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century and describes how the pro-maritime war argument developed under the political and economic situations of each period.

Part I (Chapters 2 and 3) examines the content of the pro-maritime war argument during the War of the Spanish Succession. Chapter 2 analyses the relationship between maritime war and its economic advantages in the pro-maritime war argument, especially its connection with the struggle with France over the Spanish-American market. Chapter 3 examines several types of the pro-maritime war arguments and points out their differences in terms of content and political functions.

Part II (Chapters 4, 5 and 6) examines the interaction between the pro-maritime war argument and reality. Chapter 4 focuses on the impact on naval policy during the war. In particular, it examines the government's commitment to two major means of maritime war in Spanish America: the interception of Spanish silver fleets and colonial expeditions. Chapter 5 deals with the impact on legislation, with special reference to the enactment of the American Act of 1708. Through the analysis of the process of the legislation, it also reveals relationships between political and vested interests and the pro-maritime war policy. Chapter 6 examines a plan for a naval expedition of 1712 by the South Sea Company as the last attempt of a colonial expedition to recover the Spanish-American trade during the war. It also sheds light on conflict of interests between the West Indian merchants and the directors of the South Sea Company over the Spanish-American trade.

Part III (Chapters 7 and 8) analyses the transformation of the argument after the War of the Spanish Succession. It examines the pro-maritime war arguments during the period between 1714 and 1729, particularly the argument regarding two conflicts with Spain in which Britain was involved: the War of the Quadruple Alliance of 1718–20 and the Anglo-Spanish War of 1726–29. Chapter 7 analyses debates in the press and Parliament over the two conflicts and reveals how the role of the government and the opposition in using the pro-maritime war argument alternated in the 1710s and 1720s. Chapter 8 examines how Britain's naval policy in Spanish America changed, especially in consideration of the trade of the South Sea Company, which started on the basis of the Asiento Treaty of 1713.

English Expansion into Spanish America and the Development of a Pro-maritime War Argument

Elizabethan Ventures into the 'New World': The Starting Point

The pro-maritime war argument that this book examines can be placed in the wider context of the history of English expansion into the Americas, especially Spanish America, which is one of the most important aspects of English expansion into the world outside Europe. From the early sixteenth century, several European powers, such as the French, English and Dutch, intruded into South America to obtain a slice of the wealth produced in the 'New World', first by depredation and illicit trade, and later by also establishing new colonies in the Caribbean and North America.¹ In the case of England, this undertaking began in the early sixteenth century. The English had established a commercial link with Spanish America by the 1520s, and were engaged in trans-Atlantic trade with Spanish American colonies through Seville. In the 1530s, some of those with Iberian interests, such as William Hawkins of Plymouth, also initiated direct trade with Guinea and Brazil, though this often caused tension with the Portuguese. This direct trade was undertaken again in the 1550s and 1560s, when English traders, such as John Hawkins of Plymouth – a son of William – and the Fenners of Sussex, conducted slaving voyages to West Africa and Spanish America.²

Hawkins made two successful voyages in the first half of the 1560s, but in his third voyage, he met with a severe setback. In September 1568, Hawkins' vessels

¹ A large number of books have been written about the history of intrusion of the European powers into Spanish America. For overviews, see Kris E. Lane, *Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas, 1500–1750* (New York, 1998) and Peter T. Bradley, *British Maritime Enterprise in the New World: From the Late Fifteenth to the Mid-Eighteenth Century* (Lewiston, NY, 1999).

² The account in this section mainly draws on works by Kenneth Andrews, such as *Elizabethan Privateering: English Privateering during the Spanish War 1585–1603* (Cambridge, 1964); *The Spanish Caribbean: The Trade and Plunder 1530–1630* (New Haven and London, 1978); and *Trade, Plunder and Settlement, Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire, 1480–1630* (Cambridge, 1984). For English maritime activities in the Americas in the Tudor period, see also Neville Williams, *The Sea Dogs: Privateers, Plunder & Piracy in the Elizabethan Age* (London, 1975), Chapters 4–5, 7–8; and David B. Quinn and A.N. Ryan, *England's Sea Empire, 1550–1642* (London, 1983), Chapters 1, 3–5.

encountered the Spanish silver fleet at San Juan de Ulúa (the port for Vera Cruz), which roundly defeated his vessels. After this event, the English gradually withdrew from trade with Spanish colonies. The reason was economic as well as political. The increasing costs of armament for protection and competition with other rivals, such as the Portuguese and French, made the trade less profitable for investors and merchants. Moreover, by this time, Anglo-Spanish relations had deteriorated owing to events, such as the exile of Mary Stuart to England and suppression of the rebels in the Netherlands by the Spanish forces under the command of the Duke of Alba, and these relations were worsened by the defeat of Hawkins' fleet at San Juan de Ulúa.³

Under these circumstances, some English seamen switched their activities from smuggling to plundering Spanish colonies and vessels. Among them was Francis Drake, a cousin of John Hawkins, who had experienced a humiliating defeat at San Juan de Ulúa. In collaboration with the Huguenot privateers and *cimarrones*, a group of runaway African slaves, Drake launched a series of raiding expeditions against Spanish American colonies. The most noted one was his circumnavigation between 1577 and 1580 in which he succeeded in capturing the *Nuestra Señora de Concepción*, a rich Spanish vessel laden with silver and gold. Legally speaking, these activities were piracy, as they were conducted without any official commission to authorise the attacks. However, Queen Elizabeth and some of her courtiers with anti-Spanish and Protestant inclinations, such as Sir Francis Walsingham, Sir Christopher Hatton and the Earls of Leicester and Lincoln, tacitly backed them by conniving at their actions or by investing in the ventures.

Closely connected with this unauthorised plunder against Spain's overseas possession was a plan for creating an English settlement in South America in the 1570s.⁴ In 1574, Richard Grenville, with other gentlemen of the West Country, submitted to the queen a plan to establish a colony in the area in South America that was not yet effectively occupied by the Spaniards and Portuguese.⁵ Although this plan was not adopted, the idea of colonisation was partly inherited by Drake in his plan for circumnavigation in 1577–80, as Andrews has suggested.⁶ Elizabeth, however, was not enthusiastic about a new territorial acquisition in the area under Spanish influence, for fear of offending Philip II of Spain, so she did not openly support such schemes.

Instead, from around 1583, the focus of the English colonising attempt shifted to North America, an area outside Spanish influence. The best-known example of such schemes is Walter Raleigh's project to establish a colony in Virginia between

³ Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement*, pp. 127–9.

⁴ On the English interest in South America in this period, see Kenneth R. Andrews, 'Beyond the Equinoctial: England and South America in the Sixteenth Century', *JICH* 10:1 (1981), 4–24; Andrews, *Elizabethan Privateering*, Chapter 9; Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement*, Chapter 7.

⁵ Andrews, 'Beyond the Equinoctial', 8–10. Although Grenville did not specify his objectives in his proposal, Andrews guesses that Grenville's targets were the River Plate and Chile.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 11–12, 20–1.

Development of a Pro-maritime War Argument

1584 and 1590, which was intended to be used as a privateering base against the Spaniards as well as a colony for producing commodities that had been hitherto imported from the Iberian countries, such as oils, fruits and dyestuffs. Although he received ideological support from Richard Hakluyt the younger, who wrote *Discourse of Western Planting* for him in 1584, Raleigh could not obtain the queen's financial support, and this sealed the fate of the colony.⁷ In 1595, he also attempted a colonising project in Guiana, but this did not bear fruit either. All in all, the primary concern of Elizabeth and her government in those days was the defence of the realm and the power politics of Western Europe, and they were not interested in obtaining a new territory in America. As in the similar attempts in the early Stuart period, colonising projects at that time were conducted on a private initiative, and even when the crown backed such plans, its support was limited.⁸

The deteriorating relations with Spain made war inevitable, and in the summer of 1585, tension finally turned into open hostility. From this time onwards, piracy gave way to privateering, and a number of private expeditions were fitted out with letters of reprisal or other official commissions, while semi-official expeditions were sent both to the Iberian Peninsula and American waters. After the battle with the Spanish Armada in 1588 and the failure of expeditions under Drake and Sir John Norris in 1589, privateering ventures became a dominant form of war at sea. Although its main theatre during the war was in the eastern Atlantic and around the British Isles, at least 150 privateering expeditions were also dispatched to American waters with the aim of intercepting Spanish and Portuguese ships and attacking their American possessions.⁹ These expeditionary forces, which sometimes included several royal warships, were led by experienced seamen and gentry, such as Drake, Hawkins, Thomas Cavendish (the second English circumnavigator), Christopher Newport and even prominent aristocrats, such as George Clifford, the third Earl of Cumberland.¹⁰ In addition to the prospect of a hefty prize, widespread anti-Spanish and Protestant sentiments, as well as nationalistic attitude, encouraged these ventures.¹¹

It was not only seamen and landowning gentry who participated in privateering. As war continued, overseas merchants, especially great London merchants became deeply involved in the business as promoters. In particular, those who traded with the Iberian Peninsula and the Mediterranean played an important role. Even after some of those with Iberian interests, such as Hawkins and Drake, turned to plunder, the majority of the leading Iberian merchants desired to maintain good relations with Spain, as they preferred safe and steady trade to plunder. However, the outbreak of the war forced those merchants to abandon their business, while also giving them a chance to gain by force the commodities they had been importing. As a result,

⁷ On this project, see Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement*, Chapter 10.

⁸ Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement*, pp. 10–11.

⁹ N.A.M. Rodger, *The Safeguard of the Sea: A Naval History of Britain, 660–1649* (New York and London, 1998), pp. 294–5.

¹⁰ On the Earl of Cumberland, see Richard T. Spence, *The Privateering Earl: George Clifford, 3rd Earl of Cumberland, 1558–1605* (Stroud, 1995), Chapters 5–10.

¹¹ Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement*, pp. 247–8.