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How Elites Gain, Maintain and Propagate Status 1770-2012: A Social Capital  
Perspective

Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
At the University of Northampton

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## **Abstract**

Recent studies on networking, social capital and elites have done much to expand academic knowledge in each of these topic areas. Elites are defined in several ways, including their attributes and their use of and access to power. However, far less research has been conducted on how those attributes and/or power are used by local political elites. A great deal of research has also been conducted on social capital, what it is and how it can benefit society, but less work has been done on the local politician's individual production and use of social capital. Despite the important role that networks and networking play in producing social capital, local elite networks thus remain largely unexplored. We know little of how their networks are constructed and used in the pursuance of status and less on how the elite adapt the use of their networks in response to socio-economic change.

In focusing on the construction and use of social capital networks by the Borough Aldermen and Councillors in Northampton over the *longue durée*, this work redresses those shortcomings. The research uses a large number and variety of sources which provide a wealth of qualitative and quantitative data with which to explore elite networking and social capital in the town. The work contributes towards furthering academic knowledge on how elites gain maintain and propagate status.

The research reveals that the elite use two different constructs of networks, each of which provides different benefits for the user. It is the symbiosis of these networks which enables the political elite to respond to socio-economic and political events. The research also finds that overlapping networks produce the largest exchange of social capital, which is translated into gaining and maintaining status. It is clear that, over the *longue durée*, the importance of business networks in producing social capital has drastically reduced, and has been replaced by the growing importance of political association membership. It is also evident in the research that the expansion of formal institutions in the business and political arenas has led to individual Councillors and Aldermen making strategic choices. Using a market mentality of returns, they decide which networks give greater social capital and are thus more valuable and useful in gaining and maintaining elite status.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis investigates how, from a social capital perspective, elites gain, maintain and propagate status. It examines the networks which were in operation at different points in history and how networks were used in response to socio-economic and political change.

There has been a plethora of research on elites. In the 1980s, L. and J. Stone examined how, through economic integration, the aristocracy were able to maintain status in the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> More recently, local elites have attracted more attention; H. French has considered social perceptions of the parish elite in Essex during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, whilst J. Stobart has examined the occupational makeup of the urban elite of Chester.<sup>2</sup> In the last few years, analysis has also centred on contemporary elites, A. Kakabadse, N. Kakabadse and A. Kouzmin exploring the lives of present day business and economic elite.<sup>3</sup> However, most of this research has considered the elite over a short period of historical time.

Much of the research has included theorising the elites: who they are and how they can be defined in relation to their attributes and/or power.<sup>4</sup> Elite theory has typically revolved around individuals and groups that are seen as the leaders within society, and this thesis is no exception. It became evident during the review of the literature that there were areas of theoretical agreement within the definitions of elites. The first area of agreement was that the elite are those with the greatest combination of economic,

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<sup>1</sup> L. Stone and J. Stone, *An Open Elite? England 1540 -1880*, abridged version (London: Clarendon Press, 1995).

<sup>2</sup> H. French, 'Ingenious and Learned Gentlemen: Social Perceptions and Self-Fashioning among Parish Elites', *Social History*, 25:1 (2002), pp. 44-66; A. Giddens, 'Elites in the British Class Structure', in *Elites and Power in British Society*, ed. by P. Stanworth and A. Giddens (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), pp. 1-21; J. Stobart, 'Who were the urban gentry? Social elites in an English provincial town c1680-1760', *Continuity and Change*, 26:1 (2011), pp. 89-112.

<sup>3</sup> A. Kakabadse, N. Kakabadse, and A. Kouzmin., 'From Local Elites to a Globally Convergent Class: A Historical Analytical Perspective', in *Global Elites: The Opaque Nature of Transnational Policy Determination*, ed. by A. Kakabadse and N. Kakabadse (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 1-37.

<sup>4</sup> See K. Mannheim, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction*, trans. by E. Shils (London: Routledge and Regan Paul, 1940); G. Mosca, *The Ruling Class*, trans. by H. Kahn (New York: McGraw Hill 1939); M. Woods, 'Rethinking Elites: networks, space and local politics', *Environmental Planning A*, 30 (1998), pp. 2101-2119; C. Wright-Mills, *The Power Elite* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2000).

social and political resources.<sup>5</sup> Second, the elites are able to achieve their aims through the marshalling and use of those resources.<sup>6</sup> Third, that status as elite is transitory and dependent upon exogenous socio-economic and political factors.<sup>7</sup> This same consensus can also be applied at lower levels of power and used to define and determine the identity of the elites.

The importance of networking has also received much attention. Research into network linkage and use has been undertaken by M. Granovetter and R. Burt respectively, both of whom examined the importance of various network ties and connections.<sup>8</sup> However, their theories are concentrated in the organisational and business world and were conducted over a short time frame and in the relatively modern age of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Nevertheless, historians have engaged with the importance of networks particularly in respect to business activity. This forms part of a wider engagement with the idea of social capital, often analysed in relation to business and trade with the aim of gaining a greater understanding of the business and trade networks which were in operation.<sup>9</sup> However the research has typically been conducted on specific types of business and business network behaviour. For example, D. Gaggio concentrated his research on Italian jewellery business networks, and S. Ogilvie investigated the guild networks of the worsted industry in Wurttemberg, Germany.<sup>10</sup> S. Haggerty examined transatlantic trade networks and J. Stobart explored the networks of merchants with business connections in Britain, Ireland and Scandinavia.<sup>11</sup> In analysing business networks historians have gained a greater understanding of how business networks have operated at different points in history, and a greater

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<sup>5</sup> P. Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge, 1979), p. 108; Mannheim, *Man and Society*, pp. 86-92; Wright-Mills, *The Power Elite*, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> P. Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital', in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. by J. Richardson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), pp. 241-58; Mannheim, *Man and Society*, pp. 86-92; Wright-Mills, *The Power Elite*, p. 9; Woods, 'Rethinking Elites', p. 2106.

<sup>7</sup> Mannheim, *Man and Society*, p. 86-92; Wright-Mills, *The Power Elite*, p. 9; Woods, 'Rethinking Elites', p. 2105.

<sup>8</sup> M. Granovetter, 'The Strength of Weak Ties', *American Journal of Sociology*, 78:6 (1973), pp. 1360-1380; R. Burt, 'The Social Structure of Competition', in *Networks and Organisations: Structure, Form and Action*, ed. by N. Noriah and R. Eccles (Boston: Harvard Business School, 1992), pp. 57-91.

<sup>9</sup> S. Haggerty, *The British-Atlantic Trading Community 1760-1810: Men, Women and the Distribution of Goods* (Linden: Brill, 2006); J. Stobart, 'Information, Trust and Reputation: Shaping the Merchant Elite in Eighteenth-Century England', *Scandinavian Journal of History*, Vol. 30:2 (2005), pp. 298-307.

<sup>10</sup> D. Gaggio, *In Gold We Trust: Social Capital and Economic change in the Italian Jewellery Towns* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); S. Ogilvie, 'Guilds, efficiency and social capital: evidence from German proto-industry', *Economic History Review*, 57:2 (2004), pp. 286-333.

<sup>11</sup> Haggerty, *The British-Atlantic Trading Community*; Stobart, 'Information, Trust and Reputation', pp. 298-307.

understanding of social capital and its use. Although the above mentioned research was concentrated on merchant and trade networks it showed that overlapping political, social and business network connections had contributed towards an individual gaining and using social capital.

As Stobart has noted in his research, the merchant elite in many towns often formed a political oligarchy within a town corporation during the eighteenth century.<sup>12</sup> It is a point to which both R. Pearson and D. Richardson, and S. Haggerty allude in their respective research.<sup>13</sup> Corporation membership was also a means of gaining status and becoming recognised as member of the local elite. However, the networks of local political elite, in particular the members of the borough corporations/councils have been under researched from a social capital perspective. How they gain, maintain and propagate status, has received little attention. There is therefore a knowledge gap which requires further examination. It is a gap which this thesis aims to fill.

P. Bachrach has suggested that legitimacy and authority are crucial for individuals, groups or organisations to exercise power.<sup>14</sup> One organisation in Northampton which maintained legitimacy, authority and power over the *longue durée* is Northampton Borough Corporation [Council]. Although as J. Gerrard has noted of Britain more generally, all Borough Corporations [councils] have transformed their internal structure and organisation; it is the longevity of their existence and their role within society as seats of local power which have produced what Bourdieu describes as a ‘cultural unconscious acceptance of knowing ones place’ and thus an acceptance of a power hierarchy.<sup>15</sup> Legitimacy gave authority for governance; the Borough Corporation not only held local power, but also provided a structure for social and political behavioural norms. It also provided the institutions which underpinned their legitimacy and entitlement to rule. The Borough Corporation [Council] to which the general public

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<sup>12</sup> Stobart, ‘Information, Trust and Reputation’, p. 300.

<sup>13</sup> S. Haggerty, ‘A link in the chain: Trade and the Transshipment of knowledge in the Late Eighteenth Century’, *International Journal of Maritime History*, 14:1 (2002), p.165; R. Pearson and D. Richardson, ‘Social Capital, institutional innovation and Atlantic trade before 1800’, *Business History*, 50:6 (2008), p. 767.

<sup>14</sup> P. Bachrach, *Political Elites in a Democracy* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, Paperback, 2010), p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. 141; J. Garrard, *Democratisation in Britain: Elites, Civil Society and Reform since 1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002) p. 8; Woods, ‘Rethinking Elites’, p. 2106.

had given a real and symbolic identification, also gave its members, the Aldermen and councillors, by association, identity and status.<sup>16</sup>

In his research of Chester, Stobart noted that becoming a member of the local corporation was one means of becoming a member of the local elite.<sup>17</sup> He added that the Aldermen were the political elite of the town.<sup>18</sup> Using V. Pareto's description of elite attributes, it is therefore the Aldermen of Northampton on which this thesis is based.<sup>19</sup>

The Aldermen formed the upper chamber of the Borough Corporation.<sup>20</sup> Some of their responsibilities and duties included setting local tax revenues, administration and setting of local bye-laws and maintaining corporation property.<sup>21</sup> They were the legitimate and recognised users of power for local governance. However, how they gained, maintained and propagated status using their social capital has been little explored, and certainly not over the *longue durée*. This thesis will fill a gap in historical knowledge on local elite social capital.

#### *Aims and objectives*

There are several objectives which this thesis addresses. First, it determines how the local political elite used their social capital networks to gain and maintain status and whether the importance of some networks diminished over the *longue durée*. The second objective is to examine the ways in which different networks interacted. Was there a convergence or divergence in membership and structure of those networks which political elites utilised to gain, maintain and propagate status? The third objective is to better understand the business networks of the political elite, the Aldermen and councillors and to determine the importance and employment (use) of their business networks.

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<sup>16</sup> Woods, 'Rethinking Elites', p. 2107.

<sup>17</sup> Stobart, 'Who were the urban gentry', p. 92.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>19</sup> V. Pareto, *The Rise and Fall of Elites*, introduction by H. L. Zetterberg (London: Transaction Publishers, 2008), p. 36.

<sup>20</sup> J. C. Cox, ed., *The Records of the Borough of Northampton Volume II* (Northampton: Northampton Corporation, Northampton, 1898), p. 20.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

The research also aimed to ascertain whether Pareto's theoretical definition of elite as the 'strongest, most capable and the most active' remained relevant over the *longue durée*.<sup>22</sup> Although Pareto suggested that the elite were continuously replaced he offered no empirical evidence as support. This thesis will address that shortcoming in Pareto's argument through the analysis of local elite networks over time and the changes in the composition of local elites. Building on this the thesis will expand our knowledge on social capital, how it was used and importantly whether there were limitations to its use. It is then possible to explore the constructs of different networks and the ways in which networks were used to produce social capital that could be translated into elite status.

### *Study contribution*

The thesis aims at filling gaps in historical knowledge and contributing towards the academic literature in several ways. First, by analysing the use of business, political and social networks and the importance of overlapping networks we gain a better understanding of how elites gain, maintain and propagate status. Second, analysis of elite networks at different points in history provides a 'snap shot' of elite networking behaviour at a given time and therefore contributes toward a greater understanding of the complexities of local society over time. Third, the analysis of local political elite networks enables us to better understand how socio-economic and political change affect network construct and use. This both fills existing gaps in historical knowledge and enables further research of elite social capital to be conducted in the future.

In reconstructing the networks of Northampton's elite at different points in history the study has been able to determine the change in use and importance of those networks to the acquisition of social capital and its means for gaining and maintaining status. This is important not only in producing a more informed history of Northampton, but by replicating the process of reconstructing elite networks it will be possible to chart the changes in other towns and regions. This will impact on how local elites can be researched in the future; it will be possible to chart the changes in social capital use over historical distance giving a better understanding of how individuals operate and cooperate, and greater awareness of the cohesiveness of local society at any given point

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<sup>22</sup> Pareto, *The Rise and Fall of Elites*, p. 36.

in history. The type of diagrammatic representations which show the networks and the network overlaps were designed so that they can be reproduced in any area of social research. In looking at a group and reproducing individual networks from that group we are able to determine the similarities and differences. It is from this that we can begin to establish the importance of some network links as opposed to others in producing social capital.

### *Study approach*

To enable the above, a case study approach is taken. The study is in the form of four separate case studies which each analyse the network interaction of the Aldermen and Councillors. Each study is set in a different period of history, over the duration of one decade, and examines the means through which social capital networks were acquired. This includes examining the educational, political, business and social networks which were in operation. Attention is paid to the overlapping of network membership which is assessed to determine the value and contribution they make towards gaining elite status within the community. The case study approach enables analysis into how elites have responded to economic and social change at a given point in history. Each case study can therefore stand alone as a representation of elite networking behaviour at a given period of time. The thesis also benefits from a case approach because it enables the four studies to be combined. By doing this the main themes within the thesis (social capital, elites and networks) can be explored contributing toward a better understanding of the ways in which they have been used over the *longue durée*.

The project has combined several aspects of social capital theory; the first is Bourdieu's suggestion that social capital is linked to economic, cultural and social forms of capital.<sup>23</sup> The second uses Putnam's three components of social capital - moral obligations and social norms, social values and social networks - to examine the networks at different points in history.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. 108; Bourdieu, 'Forms of Capital', pp. 241-258.

<sup>24</sup> R. Putnam, R. Leonardi, and R. Nannetti., *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).



### *Thesis Structure*

Each case study examined archival evidence relevant to the respective period of history to produce diagrammatical representations for some of the networks in operation from which further analysis was undertaken, and is discussed further in Chapter 3. The overall study analyses the responses to changing social, political and economic influences and conditions in the membership of the Aldermanic networks and the role those networks contributed to elite identity in Northampton. In reconstructing the networks which were in operation the project determined how social, economic and political networks contributed to elite status at a given point in time. The reconstruction of those networks enabled the study to determine that over the *long durée*, the importance of social and business networks in gaining and maintaining elite status had diminished.

Chapter 4 is the first case study and covers the period 1770-1780; the high point of the political 'old regime'. The Aldermen had a small and oligarchic power base which was maintained by the convergence of business, social and political networks. The study draws on Bourdieu's theories of social capital and Pareto's definition of elites to analyse the social capital of elites in Northampton during the eighteenth century.<sup>25</sup> The chapter shows how social capital was acquired, maintained and propagated and the networks which were used for that purpose. The evidence analysed reflects the main area of research examining local town elites and in particular the social, political and business networks of Northampton Aldermen.

The case study discussed in Chapter 5 is conducted over the period 1840-1850. The research remains concentrated upon the Aldermen of Northampton. The period was selected because new institutions created by the 1835 Corporation Act and the Joint Stock Companies Act, which affected the political and business arena, had been in operation for a short period of time. This enabled an examination of how the Aldermen and councillors adapted their networks in response to socio-economic and political change which accompanied the new institutions.

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<sup>25</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. 108; Bourdieu, 'Forms of Capital', pp. 241-258; Pareto, *The Rise and Fall of Elites*, p. 36.

Chapter 6, the third case study, covers the decade 1920-1930. This decade was selected because of the political and business changes after World War I. The chapter analyses how elites used their networks to gain social capital. This period is important because it is one where the composition of the elite altered. The elite were no longer recruited from those with the greatest combination of economic social and political capital. The political elite became more inclusive of those from lesser economic means and from the working class.

Chapter 7 is the last case study, covering 2000-2012. The period was selected because institutional changes, the Local Government Act of 1972, had altered the construct of the Borough Council. Those same institutional changes also placed limits on the influence and use of personal and business networks. For example, councillors were required to declare membership of groups where a conflict of interest between the council, group, organisation or individual may arise. This has had a direct effect on how the Borough Councillors use some networks to gain and maintain social capital. The use of technology, in particular the role and use of the telephone and Internet in gaining and maintaining and propagating elite status, and how those instruments of technology may enable knowledge exchange and contribute toward the councillors using social capital networks is also discussed within this chapter.

The final chapter brings together the four case studies and draws out general conclusions on the nature of elites, networking and social capital. It examined whether there were significant changes in the methods elites used to gained social capital and transformed it to produce elite status. Also forming part of the discussion are the changes in the importance of political, business and family networks, and the contribution of those networks towards the Aldermen and councillors gaining, maintaining and propagating status. This chapter also discusses whether Pareto's definition of 'elite attributes' and 'circulation of elites' remained relevant over the *longue durée*.

## Chapter 2: Literature review

### *Introduction*

During the 1960s academic work on elites began to suggest that the hegemony of the British aristocracy, as an individual and as a member of a socially recognised elite group, had begun to wane during the eighteenth century, as new groups of individuals such as merchants and bankers sought to gain social status and power.<sup>1</sup> The transition process from a hegemonic aristocratic society of the early eighteenth century to the more pluralist society and nation state of the twenty-first century ensured that the research about elites has necessitated a more inclusive definition of who constitutes the elite and their role within society.

Historical research has not neglected local and regional, county and town elites. For example, French's research of the parish elites in Braintree, Essex, discusses the importance of network contacts in relation to gaining status through education, knowledge and gentility during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries; and B. Doyle has conducted a study examining the networks of the power elite in early twentieth-century Norwich.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, research has underrepresented elites in terms of their importance in the development of business and community integration over the *longue durée*. In expanding the definition of elites, to include those within local communities, business and political arenas, it is also necessary to analyse the means through which individuals and groups utilise networks in the propagation of status. Social, political and business networks of local political elites require greater scrutiny over the *longue durée* than scholars have hitherto undertaken. The results of studying these networks will enable a greater understanding of the means and methods by which the local political elites integrated some networks and the importance of those interlocking and overlapping networks to elite status.

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<sup>1</sup> D. Cannadine, *Decline and Fall of the Aristocracy* (London: Vintage Publishing, 1999), pp. 139-181; R. Price, *British Society: Dynamism, Containment and Change 1680-1880* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 203.

<sup>2</sup> B. M. Doyle, 'The Structure of Elite Power in Early Twentieth-Century City: Norwich, 1900-35', *Urban History*, 24:2 (1979), pp. 179-199; French, 'Ingenious and Learned Gentlemen', pp. 44-66; See also F. J. Ruggiu, 'The Urban Gentry in England 1660-1780: A French Approach', *Historical Research*, 74:185 (2001), 249-271; Stobart, 'Who were the urban gentry', pp. 89-112.

The literature review considers three main themes central to the research project: elites, social capital, and networks and business. Section one discusses the literature relevant to elites and examines how political scientists and historians have defined and described them. The second section considers the definitions and the historiography of social capital and discusses the various methods which have been used to measure social capital. The section also considers the debate on whether social capital is a personal or community resource. Section three discusses networks which both Putnam and Bourdieu suggest are the resources through which elites gain and maintain social capital. The section briefly discusses network structures and the academic theory of network connection types and the problems which academics have found when measuring trust and reciprocity. The section briefly considers the role of technology and networking.

### *Elites*

Elites are difficult to define. Research conducted on the late nineteenth and early twentieth century tended to theorise the construct, nature and maintenance of elites within a socio-political framework. This period also saw a rise of academic interest in defining elites within business and organisational debates.<sup>3</sup> From the perspective of political scientists, historians and sociologists, one of the areas of contention is over whether we should define the elite by their power, wealth, class or ability; however, scholars primarily associate the elite with the holding and exercise of power, often through economic means. Sociological and political conceptualisations generally fit into one of three categories, classical, critical and democratic. Each theory's definition of elite contextually reflects the social and political conditions of society.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> D. J. Brass and D. Krackhardt, 'The Social Capital of Twenty-First-Century Leaders', in *Out of the Box Leadership Challenges for the 21st Century Army*, ed. by J. G. Hunt and R. L. Phillips (Greenwich: JAI Press, 1999), pp. 179-194; M. Casson, 'Leadership and Cultural Change: An Economic Analysis', *De Economist*, 150:4 (2002), pp. 409-438; M. Maclean, C. Harvey, and R. Chia, 'Dominant Corporate Agents and the Power Elite in France and Britain', *Organization Studies*, 31:3 (2010), pp. 327-348; M. Savage and K. Williams, *Remembering Elites*, ed. by M. Savage and K. Williams (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> H. D. Lasswell and D. Lerner, *World Revolutionary Elites: Studies in Coercive Ideological Movements* (Massachusetts: M. I. T. Press, 1966); Mannheim, *Man and Society*; Mosca, *The Ruling Class*; V. Pareto, *The Mind and Society*, trans. by A. Livingston (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co; 1935); Pareto, *The Rise and Fall of Elites*; Woods, 'Rethinking Elites', pp. 2102-2108; Wright-Mills, *The Power Elite*.

‘Classical theory’ is associated with Pareto and Mosca who define elites as having greater personal attributes which entitle them to rule, govern or lead others.<sup>5</sup> Important to this theory is that scholars view elites as consisting of a minority of individuals which require continuous replenishing from the lower orders within society as new social, industrial and economic technologies and conditions occur which threaten elite stability.<sup>6</sup> ‘Critical elite theory’ differs from the classical theory by focusing not on individual attributes, but on the function of institutions, organisations and groups, and the competition between those bodies for power. Importantly, this theory suggests that once established in positions of power it is difficult, without revolution or war, to replace them.<sup>7</sup> The focus of ‘democratic’ theorists is similar to that of the critical theory, in that elites should be defined by their function.<sup>8</sup> However, democratic theory recognises that the ‘circulation of elites’ in classical theory applies to the democratic practice within society.<sup>9</sup> Regular political elections can remove political elites whilst the competing organisations of government and business work as a balance against excessive power domination by any one group.<sup>10</sup>

M. Woods has reassessed the definitions of elites by suggesting that in present society their composition remains consistent with both classical and democratic statements of fluidity in the construct of elites.<sup>11</sup> In a similar vein to democratic theory, Woods suggests that the elite consists of competing power bodies; however, he goes further to suggest that the elite can include those who have no direct access to power, but who facilitate access and action towards outcomes.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, access to power appears to require some extent of direct or indirect economic support. The elite can therefore comprise of a variety of individuals and groups with diverse skills, and are both polymathic and polymorphic in their construct with some degree of economic access. Each of the concepts has contextual relevance; but, with the exception of Wood, the theories consider those elites at the upper echelons of society. The ‘circulation of

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<sup>5</sup> Mosca, *The Ruling Class*; Pareto, *The Mind and Society*.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Wright-Mills, *The Power Elite*.

<sup>8</sup> R. Dahl, *Who Governs: Democracy and Power in an American City*, 2nd edn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 1-10; Woods, ‘Rethinking Elites’, p. 2102; Lasswell and Lerner, *World Revolutionary Elites*; Mannheim, *Man and Society*, pp. 86-92.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Dahl, *Who Governs*.

<sup>11</sup> Woods, ‘Rethinking Elites’ p. 2105.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 2106.

elites' and power distribution theories, in particular, are reflected at local and regional levels and require further research over historical distance.

Pareto is an early exponent of 'classical elite theory'. Writing on the economy and society during the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century, Pareto, primarily an economist, examined the distribution of wealth within Italy. He produced what has become known as the 'Pareto Principle' which shows that eighty per cent of the wealth is owned by just twenty per cent of the people. Transferring the principle from economics to political theory, Pareto examined the exercise of political power in Italy, concluding that the distribution of power reflected the same percentages.<sup>13</sup>

Upon those results, Pareto examined which characteristics defined the elite and what methods they employed to maintain their positions. Comparing the similarities in ancient Greek and Roman history, which described elite composition and power distribution, he related his findings to the political and economic composition of the later nineteenth and early twentieth-century elites. Pareto concluded that the elite comprise those who are 'the strongest, the most energetic and the most capable'.<sup>14</sup> He further suggested that all elite groups, whether politically, socially or economically based, tended to construct a hierarchy with which those both within and without the group could easily identify. This enabled the elite to propagate their status as elites.<sup>15</sup> Important in Pareto's study is his recognition that elites are continuously replaced. For him, the continuous change in elite composition signalled the elite's transitory nature as a recognised group.<sup>16</sup> Although influential in the study of elites, Pareto produced no empirical evidence to support his arguments. Nevertheless, other researchers such as Dahl, Scott and Moran, do support Pareto's research of a 'circulation of elites'.<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, Mosca, a contemporary of Pareto, produced an analytical theory of the 'ruling elite' using historical examples from ancient periods of history until the early

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<sup>13</sup> Pareto, *The Rise and Fall of Elites*.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1 and p. 13.

<sup>17</sup> Dahl, *Who Governs*; M. Moran, 'Representing the Corporate Elite in Britain: Capitalist Solidarity and Capitalist Legitimacy', in *Remembering Elites*, ed. by M. Savage and K. Williams (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008); J. Scott, 'Modes of Power and the Re-conceptualization of Elites', in *Remembering Elites*, ed. by in Savage and Williams (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008).

twentieth century. Mosca concentrated his research on bureaucrats.<sup>18</sup> For Mosca, men who occupied the important positions within the growing bureaucratic state both at national and regional levels were those, with the exception of the aristocracy, whom he considered to be the elite within society. He suggests that such individuals held the greatest intellect and talent, and required more physical and moral strength than most, and were therefore more adept in the use of power and thus more capable of ruling society.<sup>19</sup>

Like Pareto, Mosca recognised a ‘circulation of elites’ which both renewed and stabilised the position of individuals as elites. Those able to adapt to political and economic change would have longevity of tenure, whilst those less able to adapt would become members of the non-elite, or in other words, ordinary members of society.<sup>20</sup> Differing from Pareto who suggested that the elite would be replenished from within, Mosca shows a more ‘liberal’ attitude towards the recruitment of elites. He suggests that, regardless of social position, a man could be recruited into the elite when he has acquired the necessary skills and knowledge. This has relevance for the social capital debates that have circulated in recent decades and suggest that those not recognised by birth status as natural elites, can nevertheless become a member of the elite.<sup>21</sup> Though Mosca did not ignore the importance of industry and business in the exercise of power, he never researched adequately their influence upon the corridors of power.<sup>22</sup>

Classical theory does not reflect the growth of interest bodies such as large corporations, or greater state intervention in society in its definition of elite. In determining those groups or types of individuals that can be considered elites, neither Pareto nor Mosca offered detailed statistical evidence, an absence that invited criticism from later theorists such as Mannheim, who recognised the growing influence of competing groups, including business enterprises and the military.<sup>23</sup> Mannheim agreed with Pareto in that he believed that the elite should come from recognised elite groups rather than from those within the masses, whom he refers to as ‘intellectually backward’

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<sup>18</sup> Mosca, *The Ruling Class*.

<sup>19</sup> Mosca, *The Ruling Class*, p. 414.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105 and p. 118.

<sup>21</sup> Kakabadse, *et al.*, ‘From Local Elites to a Globally Convergent Class’, p. 19.

<sup>22</sup> Mosca, *The Ruling Class*, pp. 266-270.

<sup>23</sup> Mannheim, *Man and Society*, p. 48.

and thus unable to play an influential role in the political and cultural life of society.<sup>24</sup> He is therefore suggesting that there is a 'natural' elite within society, a position which is counter to Mosca's theory of a meritocratic system of elite.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, Mannheim is also concerned that the growth of interest groups diffuses the power of the elites and produces interdependent agencies that will be unable to function and respond quickly to sudden changes either socially or economically. This is in contrast to Woods' interpretation of organisation and group active response capabilities.<sup>26</sup> However, the lack of empirical research in the definition and attributes of elites and the extent of interaction between social, political, institutional and business elites of the nineteenth and early twentieth century do suggest that further investigation could usefully be undertaken.

Critical elite theorists concur with Pareto in one aspect only: that elite structure is hierarchical.<sup>27</sup> This theory suggests that one should only address the term elite to those who rule or govern through the greatest access to wealth and power, and are able to utilise that power to establish and amass greater power over others. Wright-Mills' research reflects and expounds upon his 'cold war' theory of the period. Concentrating his research upon America's power elite; his empirical study analyses elite composition within three distinct groups: political, military and corporate.<sup>28</sup> Wright-Mills aimed to demonstrate the elite as a unified group, who through social and economic change had enlarged the spheres of their decision making activities which enhanced and consolidated their positions as elite. He defined the elite by what they do and the way in which they act; for Wright-Mills power was concentrated in the hands of a few: the military, the highest politicians and the largest business corporations. He suggests that, unlike in classical elite theory, their status as elites cannot be explained simply by their talent and abilities. Wright-Mills further suggests that the elite, once established in power, are not easy to remove.<sup>29</sup>

Defining power as 'those who are able to realise their will, even when others resist it', Wright-Mills compiled lists of the most influential individuals from rich lists, registers

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<sup>24</sup> Mannheim, *Man and Society*, p. 44.

<sup>25</sup> Mosca, *The Ruling Class*, pp. 244-270.

<sup>26</sup> Mannheim, *Man and Society*, p. 50; Woods, 'Rethinking Elites', p. 2106.

<sup>27</sup> Wright-Mills, *The Power Elite*, p. 5.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Lasswell and Lerner, *World Revolutionary Elites*, p. v; Wright-Mills, *The Power Elite*, pp. 298-324.



of executives and company directors.<sup>30</sup> He referenced newspapers and government reports, which revealed interaction and interdependency of the three major power establishments which governed America, the military, politics and corporate business. Within those three groups, he argued, power was concentrated in the hands of a minority of individuals; a viewpoint shared by Lasswell and Lerner.<sup>31</sup> Wright-Mills also suggested that the increasing role of corporations, in the political arena and the expansion of the national state into local affairs, produced an impotence which negated the position of local elites to that of ordinary citizens.<sup>32</sup> He concluded that the checks and balances of the democratic process had been eroded leaving the masses without any opposition to the elite. The condemnation of the American democratic process and in particular, that the government could not remove the power elite from their positions in society, brought criticism from many quarters. The result was that it further stimulated academic research into elites, business practice and political arenas and agendas.<sup>33</sup> In contrast, democratic theorists place importance upon the diffusion of power which suggests that society benefits from a polymathic elite, who through their networks are able to respond with speed to economic and social change and are thus able to maintain their elite status. Even so, Mannheim is also conscious that the diffusion of power can have negative consequences for the existing elite.<sup>34</sup>

Acknowledging that elites have accrued skills which they can utilise in specific tasks, democratic theory suggests that those skills and knowledge acquisitions are directed towards the good of the whole community rather than for the maintenance of elite status and wealth per se.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, the theory suggests that pressure from other interest groups places responsibility on the elites to produce an adequate outcome, which benefits both community and business interests.<sup>36</sup> Thus, democratic elite theorists

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<sup>30</sup> Wright Mills, p. 9.

<sup>31</sup> Lasswell and Lerner, *World Revolutionary Elites*, p. 298-324; Wright-Mills, *The Power Elite*, p. 9.

<sup>32</sup> Wright-Mills, *The Power Elite*, p. 39.

<sup>33</sup> T. Bottomore, *Elites and Society* (London: Routledge, 1993); Kakabadse and Kakabadse, *Global Elites*; S. Leach and D. Wilson, 'Urban Governance in England: New Models of Executive Governance', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 28:1 (2004), pp. 134-149; W. D. Rubinstein, 'Britain's Elite in the Interwar Period', in *The Making of the Middle Class: Studies in Regional and Cultural Diversity since the Eighteenth-century*, ed. by A. Kidd and D. Nicholls (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Ltd, 1998), pp. 186-202.

<sup>34</sup> Mannheim, *Man and Society*, p. 87.

<sup>35</sup> Lasswell and Lerner, *World Revolutionary Elites*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>36</sup> William K. Carroll, 'Modes of Power and the Re-conceptualization of Elites', in *Remembering Elites*, ed. by M. Savage and K. Williams (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), pp. 44-63; Dalh, *Who Governs*; Moran, 'Representing the Corporate Elite in Britain', pp. 64-79.

suggest the composition of the power elites has more plurality than critical theorists acknowledge. This then suggests that interests groups such as corporations, small businesses, pressure groups and other bodies play a vital role in the adoption and recognition of power elites. However, the role and interaction of those bodies and individual elites at local levels is underrepresented and thus requires further examination. This would provide a greater understanding of the means and methods which business, political and social elites employ in the propagation and maintenance of status.

Unlike Pareto, Wright-Mills, Lasswell and others, Woods limited his study to local power elites in Somerset rather than those with national power.<sup>37</sup> His research used a combination of interviews and borough council records to produce empirical and statistical analysis of economic, cultural and social capital of local elites. Woods' interpretation of the evidence suggests, similar to both critical and democratic theorists, that elite composition is 'fluid' and is constructed through 'network interaction'.<sup>38</sup> However, unlike them, Woods suggests that the definition of elites should include those who have access to social, political and economic resources rather than simply those who control resources, where these players can network with individuals and interest groups and direct their efforts towards a specific action, for an intended outcome.<sup>39</sup> For Woods, the elite comprise a 'cluster of individuals bound by strong social, political or professional ties'.<sup>40</sup> The greatest indications of an elite are, he suggests, the network webs to which an individual or group has access, and which they are able to mobilise.<sup>41</sup> His reassessment and interpretation of evidence suggests that elites are both polymathic and polymorphic in their construction and can contain both the recognised elite and the non-elite from a community. These conclusions have importance for the study of social capital, and whether there is a convergence or divergence in the methods which elites employ to propagate status.

Although the theoretical concepts primarily discuss those who hold and exercise the greatest amount of power in society (i.e. those governing at a national or international

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<sup>37</sup> See Lasswell and Lerner, *World Revolutionary Elites*; Mannheim, *Man and Society*; Pareto, *The Rise and Fall of Elites*; Wright-Mills, *The Power Elite*: Woods, 'Rethinking Elites'.

<sup>38</sup> Woods, 'Rethinking Elites', p. 2105.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2106.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2105.

<sup>41</sup> Woods, 'Rethinking Elites', p. 2105 and p. 2107.

level), these theories of elites can also apply to those who hold power at lower levels of governance, including borough corporations and town councils. There does appear to be a degree of consensus upon what constitutes elite within society. First, everyone appears to agree that elites are those with a combination of greater economic, social and political resources, or access to those resources, and that they are able to marshal those resources to achieve specific aims. Second, elite status is transitory and dependent upon socio-economic and political factors. Third, established elites are, to varying degrees and at different points in history, under assault by others in pursuit of elite status.

Historically, most societies recognise the aristocracy as elite. In the towns and cities of Britain the picture is more complicated when considering who comprises the urban elite. The degrees to which individuals enjoyed elite status depended very much upon the construct of the town and its inhabitants. The aristocracy, statistically small in number, less than two per cent of the British population, held the reins of power politically, economically and socially both at national and county levels of society.<sup>42</sup> People rarely questioned their right to elite status during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>43</sup> It was not until the twentieth century, and especially following the end of the First World War, that people began to challenge their elite status and the arenas in which they operated to any great degree. Even today, people in the UK show deference to the British aristocracy, although not to the same degree as in earlier periods of history.

As a group, the aristocracy were, until the latter half of the twentieth century, the greatest land owners and to a large degree the holders of great wealth, although since the eighteenth century their predominance in wealth has gradually reduced.<sup>44</sup> Today they still hold positions of influence and power, both directly, as members of the House of Lords and indirectly as chairmen or directors of large companies and or charities. They are nevertheless only one group of elite in British society. Since the eighteenth-century, trade, industry and members of the increasingly bureaucratic state have also

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<sup>42</sup> F. O’Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century: British Political and Social History 1688-1831* (London: Arnold, 1997); Pareto, *The Rise and Fall of Elites*; F. M. L. Thompson, *Gentrification and the Enterprise Culture: Britain 1780-1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>43</sup> L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1838* (London: Vintage, 1996), pp. 155-207.

<sup>44</sup> J. Innes, ‘Governing Diverse Societies’, in *Eighteenth Century 1688-1815*, ed. by P. Langford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 114.

become members of the British elite.<sup>45</sup> The expansion of the marketplace for status, from local and national to global, has ensured that the role of the aristocrat has diminished.<sup>46</sup> From necessity, the aristocracy have adapted to economic and social change and have maintained a recognised position as elite.<sup>47</sup>

There is a plethora of research on the changing role of aristocratic elites in the cities and counties.<sup>48</sup> However, historians recognise that during the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there was often an overlap of elite interests in all three areas.<sup>49</sup> Further research is required into the nature of those overlaps and in particular into the interweaving of the social, political and economic networks that have sustained individuals and groups in their elite status positions.

Having greater economic, political or social power does not necessarily ensure that an individual or group is or will become part of the local political elite in the present day any more than it did in the past.<sup>50</sup> However, economic status and business success was, as Morris has noted, an 'essential prerequisite to gaining a local political position' during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>51</sup> Focusing upon a fifty year period from 1776, Richardson and Pearson analysed business networks in Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, and the west of England.<sup>52</sup> Their research shows a high degree of emerging cooperation between businessmen based upon trust and reputation over the period.<sup>53</sup> Interestingly, it also confirms the growth of business interests in local civic organisations and the importance of trade associations from which civic and business elites were recruited.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, the status and position of elites is dependent upon acknowledgement and acceptance by the non-elite which requires good communication

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<sup>45</sup> Giddens, 'Elites in the British Class Structure', pp. 1-21; Innes, 'Governing Diverse Societies', p. 103.

<sup>46</sup> Cannadine, *Decline and Fall of the Aristocracy*, pp. 139-181; Kakabadse, *et al.* 'From Local Elites to a Globally Convergent Class', p. 4.

<sup>47</sup> Price, *British Society*, p. 301.

<sup>48</sup> P. Corfield, *Power and the Professions in Britain 1700-1850* (London: Routledge, 1995); Thompson, *Gentrification and the Enterprise Culture*; Stone and Stone, *An Open Elite*.

<sup>49</sup> R. Pearson and D. Richardson, 'Business Networking in the Industrial Revolution', *Economic History Review*, 54: 4 (2001), pp. 657-679; Stobart, 'Information, Trust and Reputation', pp. 298-307.

<sup>50</sup> Giddens, *Elites and Power in British Society*, p. 4.

<sup>51</sup> R. J. Morris, 'Governance: Two centuries of urban growth', in *Urban Governance: Britain and Beyond since 1750*, ed. by R. J. Morris and R. H. Trainor (Aldershot: Ashgate: 2000), p. 3.

<sup>52</sup> Pearson and Richardson, 'Business Networking in the Industrial Revolution', pp. 657-679.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

and the ability to negotiate successfully with others within the wider community, combined with a recognition of and conformity to social and business norms.<sup>55</sup>

Morris and Trainor researched the non-aristocratic local elite who held power and authority in urban areas by analysing the governance of towns since 1750. Morris has suggested that, from the mid-nineteenth century, a traditional elite comprising the aristocracy and gentry have retained positions in national government, but have gradually distanced themselves from multi-position holding in urban centres of local power.<sup>56</sup> Trainor also noted in his research that since 1850 those of lesser social standing had started to replace the wealthiest individuals, at local levels of governance.<sup>57</sup> Just as importantly, Mike Goldsmith and John Garrard also point out that those of lesser social standing were likely to be involved with voluntary associations and charities as a method of capitalising on and enhancing their status as local elite.<sup>58</sup> From the mid-eighteenth century, the urban elite were becoming increasingly diverse and complex, reflecting the developing polymathic society. Additionally, as many historians have noted, businessmen have for several centuries held positions of power within local communities and towns.<sup>59</sup> Whilst their status as elites does not match the extent and power of those at government or international levels, their influence and decision making opportunities as local politicians, justices of the peace, manufacturers and industrialists have had marked effects in the growth, development of towns and counties and the local citizenry.

Political, social and economic historians whose research has touched upon business and social networks have demonstrated various means through which the elite businessmen became part of the established society.<sup>60</sup> The role of organisations and business corporations has also become important in recent research of elites. Wright-Mills' research, although using very little empirical data in network data analysis, showed that

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<sup>55</sup> Morris, 'Governance: Two centuries of urban growth', p. 10.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-14.

<sup>57</sup> R. H. Trainor, 'The decline of British urban governance since 1850: a reassessment', in *Urban Governance: Britain and Beyond since 1750*, ed. by R. J. Morris and R. H. Trainor (Aldershot: Ashgate: 2000), p. 29.

<sup>58</sup> M. Goldsmith and J. Garrard, 'Urban Governance: some reflections', in *Urban Governance: Britain and Beyond since 1750*, ed. by R. J. Morris and R. H. Trainor (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp.15-27.

<sup>59</sup> Morris, 'Governance: Two centuries of urban growth', pp. 10-14.

<sup>60</sup> Y. Cassis, *Capital of Capitals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Giddens, 'Elites in the British Class Structure', pp. 1-21; Thompson, *Gentrification and the Enterprise Culture*, p. 19.

businesses, in particular large corporations, were intimately entwined with the political and social elite of America during the 1950s. They were able to access political and economic power and thus influence both political and economic policy at a national level.<sup>61</sup> Although Wright-Mills suggested that large corporations had mortally wounded the local social, economic and political elite in America, in Britain it appears that initially the government policy of nationalising many industries after the Second World War may have had a similar effect upon county and town elites by removing some of their economic foundations. However, the process of re-privatisation of industry and especially utilities such as gas and water, which began during the 1980s, produced a new economic elite. Political scientists, economists and many others have researched the role of these new elites, in particular, the directors and CEOs of newly privatised companies, and their ability to influence political policy at a national level.<sup>62</sup> Despite this, their status and influence and, in particular, their ‘recognition’ by the local community as elites is an area of interest which will benefit from research over longer time spans, particularly where corporations and institutions have a designed short-term project aim.

The definitions which have resulted from the theories highlight areas for further research which this thesis will address. As this thesis is conducted through a series of case studies set in different periods of history, the work is in a unique position to answer the following questions. How should we define individuals and groups at lower levels of power and can we better describe them as elite because of the positions which they hold within society rather than through their economic or social position within the community? Do network connections between elites and non-elite individuals, groups or organisations contribute towards the gaining, maintaining and propagation of elite status; if so how? To find answers, we must assess the overlaps of group and organisational membership and the integration of business and community over the long-term in relation to the political elite. Lastly, the thesis will consider whether Pareto’s definition of elite remained relevant over the *longue durée*.

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<sup>61</sup> Wright-Mills, *The Power Elite*, p. 39.

<sup>62</sup> Kakabadse, and Kakabadse, *Global Elites*, p. 2; Savage and Williams, *Remembering Elites*.

### *Social Capital*

Integral to this research project is the aim of better understanding how elites have used social capital to gain, maintain and propagate their status. It is therefore necessary to analyse the existing literature which discusses the theories and debates around this concept. Social capital as a concept did not enter the academic world with any force until the 1980s. Since then, however, scholars have hotly debated the theory. Research has come from such academic disciplines as political science, economics, sociology, history and business.<sup>63</sup> Outside the academic world, governments, international business, local and district government bodies have become increasingly interested in the concept and the possible uses to which they may put social capital.<sup>64</sup> Debates on social capital have led to confusion and misunderstanding in its definition, which has resulted in no clear understanding of the term. Nevertheless, Gaggio and Laird both argue that social capital is a valuable resource.<sup>65</sup>

The origin of the term social capital lies early in the twentieth century. In 1916, L. J. Hanifan first expressed the concept of social capital when he was the state supervisor for schools. His main interest centred on producing successful schools, and was thus interested in why some schools were less successful than others. His methodology included examining the interaction between the various interest groups: teachers, parents, students and the wider community. He noted that interaction based upon goodwill, fellowship, sympathy and social intercourse, which he termed 'social capital', produced positive outcomes; the greater the interaction between community and a given school, the more successful a school appeared to be.<sup>66</sup> He suggested that interaction, or

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<sup>63</sup> Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital'; B. Fine, 'Social Capital versus Social History', *Social History*, 33:4 (2008), pp. 442-467; Pamela Walker Laird, 'Putting Social Capital to Work', *Business History*, 50:6 (2008), pp. 685-694; J. Ojala and V. Luoma-aho, 'Stakeholder relations as social capital in early modern international trade', *Business History*, 50:6 (2008), pp. 749-764; Putnam, *et al.*, *Making Democracy Work*.

<sup>64</sup> Cabinet office, [www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/seminars/social\\_capital.aspx](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/seminars/social_capital.aspx), Performance and Innovation Unit, 'Social Capital: A Discussion Paper', April (2002) [accessed 23 November 2008]; M. Hooghe, and D. Stolle, *Generating Social Capital: Civil Society and Institutions in Comparative Perspective: The Role of Voluntary Associations and Institutions for Civic Attitudes* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); A. Portes, 'The Two Meanings of Social Capital', *Sociological Forum*, 15:1 (2000), p. 1.

<sup>65</sup> Gaggio, *In Gold we Trust*, p. 325; Laird, 'Putting Social Capital to Work', p. 686.

<sup>66</sup> L. J. Hanifan, 'The Rural School Community Centre', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 67 (1916), pp. 130-138; Hanifan, *The Community Centre* (Boston: Silver Burdett, 1920).

networking maintained; social capital which he suggested could be seen as an inclusive resource producing a 'group good' for those within the wider community.<sup>67</sup>

This work attracted little interest until the 1980s, when academics such as the sociologists Bourdieu and Coleman, and the political scientist Putnam began to debate the term.<sup>68</sup> One aspect of the debate on social capital has been whether its ownership is a community based natural resource within society. Often, the first phase in ascertaining whether social capital exists has been the gathering of data using questionnaires and interviews. For example, the most common practice in use is to compile questions which record the number of organisations, institutions and social groups to which an individual belongs and then to cross-reference those results. However, this process can lead to subjectivity in both the devised questions and the limit or range of the questions which participants answer; it is therefore a problematic means of establishing whether social capital exists as a community or individual resource. Nevertheless, conducting such experiments has shown the possible number of networks and potential networks to which an individual has access and from which social capital may be gained.

Hanifan's view of social capital as an inclusive resource is shared by Putnam.<sup>69</sup> Conducting research in Italy, he considered whether civic interaction was a means through which individuals could access social capital.<sup>70</sup> Gathering data from regional governments, Putnam examined the number of groups and associations to which individuals from the business, social and civic arenas belonged.<sup>71</sup> Cross-referencing the data to examine the overlaps of group and associational membership he determined that the greater number of networks to which an individual belonged, the greater the potential of gaining social capital. More importantly for Putnam, those same networks showed the overlaps between business, social and civic arenas; these he suggested had the potential to produce a more cohesive society, particularly where individuals felt

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<sup>67</sup> Hanifan, 'The Rural School Community Centre'; Hanifan, *The Community Centre*.

<sup>68</sup> Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital'; J. S. Colman, *Foundations of Social Theory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990); Putnam, *et al.*, *Making Democracy Work*; M. Shucksmith, 'Endogenous Development, Social Capital and Social Inclusion: Perspectives from LEADER in the UK', *Sociologia Ruralis*, 40:2 (2000), p. 211.

<sup>69</sup> Putnam, *et al.*, *Making Democracy Work*, pp. 163-185; Hanifan, 'The Rural School'.

<sup>70</sup> Putnam, *et al.*, *Making Democracy Work*.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*



duty bound to perform civic interaction.<sup>72</sup> Putnam argued that social capital was a natural resource within the community to which individuals had open access and that the greater the interaction between civic and social groups, the greater the amount of social capital held by the community.<sup>73</sup> For Putnam, social capital was an inclusive resource and crucial to the maintenance of a cohesive and democratic society. In contrast Bourdieu's main area of research centred on the means by which the cultural elite in France maintained an air of exclusivity.<sup>74</sup> His approach was again to conduct a series of interviews. By interviewing university students and academics in 1960s France, Bourdieu aimed to produce empirical evidence which supported a theory that culture, the social and educational world to which an individual is exposed, produced transferable social capital that benefited individuals.<sup>75</sup> Nevertheless, Laird has noted that before 1900 many in businesses considered education and school or university qualifications of little importance; even so any network connections forged through education could have been transferred into employment or political and social ties that opened further access to social capital.<sup>76</sup> The old boys network was and continues to be a feature within many areas of society.

Bourdieu's researches into cultural behaviour and practices have thus provided the opportunities for more nuanced historical studies into the use of social capital within society.<sup>77</sup> He suggested that social capital was:

the aggregate of actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – in other words, to membership of a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of collectively owned capital a 'credential' which entitles them to turn to credit, in various senses of the word.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of the American Community*, (London: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2000), p. 339; Putnam, *et al. Making Democracy Work*.

<sup>73</sup> Putnam, *et al.*, *Making Democracy Work*.

<sup>74</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> P. Walker Laird, *Pull: Networking and success since Benjamin Franklin* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 149.

<sup>77</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*; Bourdieu, 'Forms of Capital'.

<sup>78</sup> Bourdieu, 'Forms of Capital', p. 251.

The importance of this statement is in the suggestion that network membership is not only desirable for individuals, but that social networks provide access to resources, and that utilisation of those resources has the possibility to produce unlimited and unstated positive results for the user. Furthermore, Bourdieu suggests that the opportunity for self-advancement was more likely to be a primary motive for using cultural capital; which itself can be translated into social capital.<sup>79</sup> For Bourdieu social capital is primarily an asset of personal capital.<sup>80</sup>

Discussing the ownership of social capital, Portes concluded that there were two forms of social capital which were distinct from each other.<sup>81</sup> The first form, he suggested, fitted Bourdieu's theory of social capital as an individual's property which was produced individually; whilst the second was based on Putnam's theory of community or group ownership where collective responsibility produced collective capital.<sup>82</sup> Although Portes had separated social capital into two forms of ownership, he also pointed out that quantifying the existence of social capital required 'other alternative explanations from different theoretical quarters' to be considered before any the question into the ownership of social capital could be definitively answered.<sup>83</sup> This suggests that, as both forms of social capital exist within society, they must form a symbiotic, but unquantifiable, relationship from which both the individual and the community may gain and exercise social capital.

Coming from a slightly different position, Gaggio considered whether historians needed to incorporate social capital within their research and if so which theory would be most relevant.<sup>84</sup> His article discussed the advantages and disadvantages of historians using Putnam's social capital verses Bourdieu's social capital theories. He concluded that Putnam's publicly owned social capital, produced through the invisible hand of civic interaction, was too problematic for use by historians because it was based in 'a much older construct of society'.<sup>85</sup> In this, he appears to be agreeing with Edwards and Foley's conclusion that, in promoting the positive aspects of associational membership,

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<sup>79</sup> Bourdieu, 'Forms of Capital', p. 251.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., Bourdieu, *Distinction*.

<sup>81</sup> Portes, 'The Two Meanings of Social Capital', p. 4.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 4

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>84</sup> D. Gaggio, 'Do historians need social capital?', *Social History*, 29:4 (2004), p. 499-513.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 508.

Putnam had narrowed the discussion on social capital.<sup>86</sup> They further suggested that Putnam had not fully acknowledged that the values and norms of trust and reciprocity, which he had suggested were the basis of social capital, were context specific; in other words, these norms and values could differ from one association to another, reflecting the needs and intentions of the group and its members.<sup>87</sup> Edwards and Foley also added that they believed Putnam had not fully explored the possibility that different associations had the potential to produce different amounts of social capital, or that some groups and associations were more adept at producing social capital for their members.<sup>88</sup>

Thus, whilst Putnam's method of recording and cross-referencing associational membership has become a useful method for historians to adopt, providing a means of analysing interactions between individuals and groups to assess social capital, most historians have contested his conclusions. Gaggio, Portes, Laird and Nan Lin have recognised in their respective studies that social capital is used by individuals as well as groups to achieve specific aims.<sup>89</sup> Social network interactions are embedded in a normal cohesive society, but social capital exchange and return - its value - is context specific.<sup>90</sup> Social capital networks are not homogenous and consist of a diverse membership all of whom will use existing family, business and social networks. As with the diverse membership those available resources are also variable; different types of capital can be associated with different groups.<sup>91</sup> As a resource, social capital and its use are influenced by the social and cultural norms active within the time and space of the given period being investigated.<sup>92</sup> Those norms are generally recognised as trust, honesty, reciprocity and duty, but they are context specific. Moreover, norms that serve one group may not serve another.<sup>93</sup> There is then an inevitability that social capital, as

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<sup>86</sup> B. Edwards and M. W. Foley, 'Civil Society and Social Capital beyond Putnam', *American Behavioural Scientist*, 42:1 (1989), p. 130.

<sup>87</sup> Edwards and Foley, 'Civil Society and Social Capital beyond Putnam', p. 129.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>89</sup> Gaggio, *In Gold we Trust*, p. 17; Laird, *Pull*; N. Lin, *Social Capital: A Theory of Social Structure in Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), Portes, 'The Two Meanings of Social Capital'.

<sup>90</sup> Bourdieu, 'Forms of Capital', p. 252; Lin, *Social Capital*, p. 25.

<sup>91</sup> Bourdieu, 'Forms of capital'.

<sup>92</sup> Laird, *Pull*; Laird, 'Putting Social Capital to Work', p. 686; M. Maclean, 'New rules - old games? Social capital and privatisation in France, 1986-1998?' *Business History*, 50:6 (2008), p. 798.

<sup>93</sup> Bourdieu, 'Forms of capital'; Bourdieu, *Distinction*; Gaggio, 'Do historians need social capital'; Laird, *Pull*; Laird, 'Putting Social Capital to Work'.

with all forms of capital, will be unevenly distributed within society at any given time or in any given space.<sup>94</sup>

The attributes which individuals have, and their potential use by or benefit to others, forms a portion of their social capital assets. Connecting to any network through which social capital can be gained and used is dependent upon connectivity and some individuals are, as Laird has suggested, more connectable than others.<sup>95</sup> Connectivity is important because ‘the extent to which people lay claim to a network’s resources measures their social capital in relation to it’ and is therefore relative to success.<sup>96</sup> Those who have gained social capital are generally those who have gained respect, generated confidence, evoked affection and drawn loyalty in many situations and occasions.<sup>97</sup>

Ogilvie suggests that a wide ‘network band width’ that includes a combination of links with social, business, cultural, and political networks offers the greatest potential for maximising access to social capital and gaining information.<sup>98</sup> Holding multiple roles in society, can therefore be seen as an endorsement of a good reputation based on trust and is likely to generate greater trust, reputation and potential social capital.<sup>99</sup> However, establishing and maintaining social capital networks requires an investment of time and energy if goals are to be realised.<sup>100</sup> Investment in social capital could, Pearson and Richardson have suggested, be a mixed blessing; and in her research of merchant guilds Ogilvie also noted the mixed blessing of social capital and its ‘dark side’.<sup>101</sup>

There are, nonetheless, important positive aspects to social capital. Its value lies in resource access that it can potentially provide and, as with any resource, potential or actual, there are of course the exchange values of costs and returns to be considered. As

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<sup>94</sup> Laird, *Pull*, p. 2; Laird, ‘Putting Social Capital to Work’, p. 686; Edwards and Foley, ‘Civil Society’, p. 130; Gaggio, *In Gold we Trust*, p. 326.

<sup>95</sup> Laird, *Pull*, p. 2.

<sup>96</sup> Laird, ‘Putting Social Capital to Work’, p. 685.

<sup>97</sup> Laird, *Pull*, p. 2.

<sup>98</sup> S. Ogilvie, *Institutions and European Trade: Merchant guilds 1000-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 7, p. 351.

<sup>99</sup> Gaggio, *In Gold we Trust*, p. 202.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>101</sup> Ogilvie, *Institutions and European Trade*, p. 3; Pearson and Richardson, ‘Social Capital, institutional innovation’, p. 766.

social capital is context specific those values are variable, yet the real power of social capital lies in its exchange value and the resources to which it can give access.<sup>102</sup> It has the potential, as Laird has shown in her study of success in America, to become a means of pulling individuals and groups together so that aims and ambitions can be achieved.<sup>103</sup> Social capital networks enable both the flow of available information and access to that information.<sup>104</sup> The effect of this may be a more even distribution of benefits amongst network members. Conversely it may also, as Laird has noted, attract mentors and patrons who may assist individuals in getting to the top in their careers, but who also limit the wider distribution of those resources.<sup>105</sup> Importantly, those same mechanisms that attract investors - group members - also act as a means of protection, limiting networking abuse, so that only the right sort can join and have access to potential resources.<sup>106</sup> Gatekeepers, be they individuals and institutions, invite or 'pull' into the network only those with similar social capital assets.<sup>107</sup> Furthermore, gatekeeping mechanisms, such as rules and regulations, help to define the legal and moral responsibilities of the group and individual members, contributing to group legitimacy.<sup>108</sup> The importance of this is that recognised legitimacy may enable a group to engage in collective social, political or economic action that could benefit the group as a whole.<sup>109</sup>

Some of the above are also representative of the negative or 'dark side' of social capital.<sup>110</sup> First and foremost social capital it is very vulnerable to subjectivity; different perspectives can enable and disable an individual's or group's access and use of social capital, leading to inequality or conflict.<sup>111</sup> Gatekeepers ensure that the right sort may join a group, but they also exclude or 'push' other individuals away from

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<sup>102</sup> Gaggio, *In Gold we Trust*, p. 325; Laird, 'Putting Social Capital to Work', p. 686.

<sup>103</sup> Laird, *Pull*, p. 3.

<sup>104</sup> Ogilvie, 'Guilds, efficiency and Social Capital', p. 325.

<sup>105</sup> Laird, *Pull*, p. 20-22.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>108</sup> J. Ojala and V. Luoma-aho, 'Stakeholder relations as social capital in early modern international trade', *Business History*, 50:6 (2008), p. 757.

<sup>109</sup> See, D. Merrett, S. Morgan and S. Ville, 'Industry associations as facilitators of social capital: The establishment and early operations of the Melbourne Woolbrokers Association', *Business History*, 50:6 (2008) pp. 781-794; G. Verhoef, 'Nationalism, social capital and economic empowerment: SANLAM and the economic upliftment of the Afrikaner people, 1918-1960', *Business History*, 50: 6 (2008), pp. 695-713; Ojala and Luoma-aho, 'Stakeholder relations as social capital'.

<sup>110</sup> Ogilvie, *Institutions and European Trade*, p. 3.

<sup>111</sup> Gaggio, *In Gold we Trust*, p. 326.

joining the group; the basis of the exclusion is subject to the needs of the group.<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, as Gaggio noted in his research on the Italian gold industry, network relations between individual and groups could lead to disharmony and lack of cooperation between members.<sup>113</sup> That potential for disharmony was also noted by Ogilvie, who suggested that within closed networks the transmission of personal opinion rather than factual information could lead to distorted personal reputations and thus the potential to polarise trust within the group.<sup>114</sup>

Social capital, including its good and bad aspects, is the result of social interaction between groups and individuals; it is a resource that has the potential to produce successful intended aims that groups or individuals set out to achieve. We might therefore conclude that it is Bourdieu's concept of social capital which acknowledges social capital as the product of accumulated other capitals (cultural, human and economic) that is the more relevant theory for historians to engage with.<sup>115</sup> His concept of social capital provides the freedom and range for the exploration for social capital theory within economic, political and social history; this is crucial to understanding and determining the extent of elite involvement in the integration of business and community and necessary for analysing methods which the elite employ in the propagation of their status.

### *Networks*

The production of networks is a vital element for all social, political and economic action and networks within society are as diverse in their aims as they are in their membership. They provide the main avenues to social and economic resources with which individuals can respond to the changing socio-economic conditions in society, and through which elites are able to propagate their status.<sup>116</sup> Social network theory is a branch of socio-economics which has expanded into many other academic disciplines. By understanding the means and methods in which markets and individuals respond to a shortage or excess of commodities, companies were better able to direct their marketing and sales policies to produce the best possible economic returns for their

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<sup>112</sup> Laird, *Pull*, p. 174.

<sup>113</sup> Gaggio, *In Gold we Trust*, p. 325.

<sup>114</sup> Ogilvie, *Institutions and European Trade*, p 363.

<sup>115</sup> Bourdieu, 'Forms of capital'; Gaggio, 'Do historians need social capital', p. 513.

<sup>116</sup> J. Scott, *Social Network Analysis: A Handbook*, 2nd edn (London: Sage Publishing, 2002).

investments and their investment holders.<sup>117</sup> Using social network theory not only enabled a greater understanding of company performance and business interaction, but facilitated a means of examining the ways in which individuals have interacted and performed within departments and the wider business community, specifically the role of individuals within the business or corporation.<sup>118</sup>

Network theory is dependent upon the analysis of interpersonal relationships based upon the structure of social norms and behaviours and the pressures that they exert upon individuals and groups to conform within society, organisation or institution. Research has focused upon the formal and informal (public and private) networks which individuals and groups employ in the acquisition and dissemination of information in the workplace and the wider world, and has led to research upon networks and network association.<sup>119</sup>

Networks and networking are not new. The evolutionary nature of networks was just as apparent in the eighteenth century as it is today. Importantly, Pearson and Richardson, and Stobart have suggested that eighteenth-century business networks rarely contained a central hub of spider web networks which large organisations tend to resemble today, but appear to have been more rhizomic in their structure.<sup>120</sup> Business was conducted on a more personal level producing conduits for greater cooperation among businessmen in the transfer of knowledge based information. Some of the business strategies common today have been in use since the medieval period and, by the eighteenth-century, business networks were just as geographically dispersed as they are in the present day, extending across continents and around the globe.<sup>121</sup> The networks of many businessmen also extended into the social and political arenas; often they held positions of local authority as borough councillors or parish overseers, and many also

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<sup>117</sup> R. E. Freeman, A. Wicks and B. Parmar., 'Stakeholder Theory and The Corporate Objective Revisited', *Organization Science*, 15:3 (2004), pp. 364-369.

<sup>118</sup> M. Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age-Economy, Society and Culture, Volume 1* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Pearson and Richardson, 'Business Networking in the Industrial Revolution', p. 673; Stobart, 'Information, Trust and Reputation', p. 303. Rhizomic in this research study, refers to multi-directional connections which themselves have further connections of various and multiple tangents and strands.

<sup>121</sup> Ogilvie, 'Guilds, efficiency and social capital'; S. Haggerty, A. Webster and J. White, *The Empire in One City? Liverpool's Inconvenient Imperial Past* ed. by S. Haggerty, A. Webster and J. White (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008); Stobart, 'Information, Trust and Reputation', p. 301; A. M. Carlos, K. Maguire and L. Neal, 'A knavish people': London Jewry and the stock market during the South Sea Bubble', *Business History*, 50:6 (2008), pp. 728-748.

held positions as Justice of the Peace.<sup>122</sup> The effects of the overlapping networks of eighteenth-century businessmen may have contributed towards individuals gaining and maintaining social capital which could be translated into elite status.

Carlos, Pearson and Richardson, and Stobart have suggested that unwritten rules governed behavioural practices in business networks; this they suggested enabled greater information flow and thus cooperation for business and social elites alike.<sup>123</sup> Annen similarly emphasises the importance of self-government in network practices, his research showing that the number of network contacts could increase if the actor is known to have a good reputation.<sup>124</sup> This, he suggests, is an incentive for behavioural conformity, which ultimately reduces enforcement costs of contracts and penalties.<sup>125</sup> The cost of non-behavioural conformity and of implementing penalties could be the loss of reputation which had both social and economic repercussions for a merchant or businessman within his community and beyond.<sup>126</sup>

Recent research on the interaction between business and the wider community has focused upon stakeholder theory. Freeman suggests that a stakeholder is any group or individual who can affect or be affected by the objectives of companies.<sup>127</sup> In essence, the theory suggests that business, and in particular managers, consider the needs and expectations of all relevant interest groups in their business actions and marketing process. Out of necessity, then, the role of business and individual networks is essential in the production of the best possible outcome for all interested parties. The importance of stakeholders is demonstrated in the number of organisations and institutions which Woods names in his research about Somerset's local elite.<sup>128</sup> There is no single elite group involved in the county's local governance, but a myriad of groups which include the local and county council, voluntary and private organisations, institutions and business, all of whom have a vested interest within the county, and can therefore be

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<sup>122</sup> See Chapter 4.

<sup>123</sup> Carlos, *et al.* 'A knavish people'; Pearson, and Richardson, 'Business Networking in the Industrial Revolution'; Stobart, 'Information, Trust and Reputation'.

<sup>124</sup> K. Annen, 'Social Capital: Inclusive Networks and Economic Performance', *Journal of Economic Behaviour and Organisations*, 50 (2003), p. 450.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> S. Haggerty, *Merely for Money? Business Culture in the British Atlantic, 1750-1815* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012).

<sup>127</sup> Freeman, *et al.*, 'Stakeholder Theory' pp. 365.

<sup>128</sup> Woods, 'Rethinking Elites'.



viewed by the community as stake holders. It is thus not only large companies, their investors, employees and customers whom we may consider stakeholders, but much of society.<sup>129</sup> However, Hemphill *et al.* and Cava and Mayer's research studies have suggested that, even though the stakeholder's interests - the local community - should be of primary concern, decision making is still limited to those few with economic, social or political power, and remains the prerogative of elites.<sup>130</sup>

This suggests that, although the composition of elites may appear more inclusive and resemble the theory which democratic theorists propose, a minority of individuals and groups dominate the real world, whether at a local, national or international level, and it is both their formal and informal networks and positions within those networks that they use to propagate their status. The types of networks and their links (and thus their strengths) become important when considering the individual's position within a network which ultimately determines the success for action and the establishing and propagation of elite status.

In 1973, Granovetter considered the ways in which individual actors in networks optimised personal and group contacts to produce economic and social advantages, which were essential to the propagation of status.<sup>131</sup> For Granovetter, networks are a constantly evolving body that adjusts to the actor's needs and reflects social and economic norms. However, he also suggested that financial capital was the main impetus for networking and all other forms of capital as incidental gains.<sup>132</sup> Like Bourdieu, he recognised that there were opportunities for individual actors to limit or contain the extent if informational flow was for personal advantage rather than that of the group.<sup>133</sup> In particular, Granovetter analysed the various network ties that actors use.<sup>134</sup> He defined a network as having cohesive power based upon the strength of network ties; which he defines as a 'combination of, amount of time invested, the

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<sup>129</sup> Leach and Wilson, 'Urban Governance in England', p. 134.

<sup>130</sup> A. Cava and D. Mayer, 'Integrated Social Contract Theory and Urban Prosperity Initiatives', *Journal of Business Ethics*, 72 (2007), pp. 263-278; L. Hemphill, S. Mcgreal, J. Berry, and S. Watson, 'Leadership Power and Multi-sector Urban Regeneration Partnerships', *Urban Studies*, 43:1 (2006), pp. 50-80.

<sup>131</sup> M. Granovetter, 'The Strength of Weak Ties', pp. 1360-1380.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital', p. 252; Granovetter, 'Problems of Explanation', in *Networks and Organisation: Structure. Form and Action*, ed. by N. Noriah and R. Eccles (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 25-56.

<sup>134</sup> M. Granovetter, 'The Strength of Weak Ties'.

emotional intensity, the intimacy (confiding) and the reciprocal services which characterise the tie'.<sup>135</sup> Granovetter noted that interpersonal ties could provide a bridge between micro-macro businesses, institutions and the wider community and suggested that there were two forms of network tie.<sup>136</sup>

The first form of tie, or linkage, he named 'strong ties'. These were typically formed through regular interaction between people or organisations which formed dense closed networks.<sup>137</sup> He has suggested that within these networks the greatest numbers of network members are likely to have the same or similar information circulating amongst the group that over time may inhibit the flow of new information.<sup>138</sup> These forms of dense networks were maintained through frequent and regular interaction, they were likely to be groups formed through family and kinship connections, friends or immediate work colleagues and probably exhibit similar network behaviours.<sup>139</sup> The second group and linkage were open networks with loose ties which Granovetter named 'weak ties', primarily because there were fewer interactions between members.<sup>140</sup> Those weak ties, Granovetter suggested, provided the bridging mechanism between dissimilar groups and individuals and had the ability to act as conduits through which productive communication avenues could yield fresh information for group members.<sup>141</sup> Weak ties also allowed for the manipulation of a network by restricting or increasing information flow.<sup>142</sup> The degree and strength of network ties thus determines the integration of business and community networks through which individuals and groups can become recognised elites and are able to maintain and expand their elite status.

Expanding upon weak ties theory in network production, Burt analysed social capital network structures.<sup>143</sup> His research is situated within existing large organisations, but resonates for all social and business networks. Burt discussed the importance of

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid., p. 1361.

<sup>136</sup> Granovetter, 'The Strength of Weak Ties', p. 1370.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., pp. 1360-1380.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., p. 1366.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., p. 1360.

<sup>143</sup> Burt, 'The Social Structure of Competition', in *Networks and Organizations: Structure, Form, and Action*, ed. by N. Noriah and R. G. Eccles (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1992), pp. 57-91

bridging links (weak ties) that traversed the gaps in the structure of society.<sup>144</sup> He suggested that, although groups may be aware of each other, their separate spheres of activity mean that there is no contact between them; it is that gap between groups and individuals that Burt termed ‘structural holes.’<sup>145</sup> In providing a connection, in effect becoming a bridge, between previously unconnected groups or individuals, the individual acts as a gatekeeper controlling information flows and access to new resources. As the gatekeeping individual, or bridge, is the first to receive information, it is they who benefit from access to information and potential access to resources firstly and the groups which they connect to secondly.<sup>146</sup> The bridging action and gatekeeping could therefore have both positive and negative outcomes for the existing networks and is dependent on the aims of the gatekeeper.<sup>147</sup> Nevertheless, in bridging structural holes, individuals could have a greater opportunity to respond to socio-economic challenges.

However, simply being part of a network does not suggest control of that network. An actor’s position within the network is of great importance. Burt, and Carayol and Roux suggest that those with the greatest influence are often those individuals or groups which others recognise as having the ability and opportunity to use their power to influence action or decision making; these include Chief Executives in the case of large and international companies and departmental managers within the organisation or company.<sup>148</sup> Granovetter has suggested ‘individuals consider their needs first and the greater good second’; he further suggested that the hierarchical nature of the majority of organisations and companies, and the possible benefits of power, status and economic gain emphasises the importance of positioning within a group and network, and of ensuring that there was fluidity and competition within networks.<sup>149</sup> Individual actors and organisations make strategic decisions that will affect their economic and social position within society. Thus whether in an institutional, organisational or social setting an actor’s position within a network may be reflected in their expended energy and their

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Burt, ‘The Social Structure of Competition’, pp. 65-67.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., p. 78-79; Lin, *Social Capital*, p. 55.

<sup>147</sup> Burt, ‘The Social Structure of Competition’, pp. 65-67; N. Carayol and P. Roux, ‘Knowledge Flows and the Geography of Networks: A Strategic Model of Small World Formation’, *Journal of Economic Behaviour & Organization*, 71:2 (2009), p. 412; Ogilvie, ‘Guilds, efficiency and social capital’, p.325

<sup>148</sup> Burt, ‘The Social Structure of Competition’, pp. 57-87.

<sup>149</sup> Granovetter, ‘Problems of Explanation’, pp. 25-56.

expected returns from networking.<sup>150</sup> Failure to achieve goals may result in dissolving unproductive network ties, whilst success is reflected in their continuing membership in a network.<sup>151</sup>

We cannot underestimate the importance of status and reputation.<sup>152</sup> The role and construction of trust is fundamental for the transfer of knowledge between individuals and groups, whether in the public or private arena.<sup>153</sup> Trust is difficult to define; therefore within the social capital debate researchers have used a simple definition of assumed reliability, honesty, honour and truth; shared moral values, and observance of social norms.<sup>154</sup> The World Values Survey conducted research into how individuals evaluate trust. Participants received a questionnaire which presented a series of questions against a numerical scale from which they assessed levels of trust within the community.<sup>155</sup> Knack and Keefer suggest that this survey does not produce reliable research evidence because there are too many possible interpretations for the statistical data.<sup>156</sup>

An alternative approach is to study trust and reciprocity under controlled laboratory behavioural games.<sup>157</sup> Whilst such studies can yield empirical data, the value of the research becomes limited in the real world of people networks, where connections are constantly evolving. Two other methods to compile quantitative data for the measurement of trust within business and society generally are questionnaires and 'game theory' scenarios. Researchers establish experiments within set parameters. Actors perform various tasks. The researchers then change the parameters and ask the same actors to perform new tasks. Questionnaires and interviews record the responses

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Bourdieu, 'Distinction', p. 10; G. Dogan, M. van Assen, and V. Buskins, 'The Stability of exchange networks' *Social Networks*, 31:2 (2009), pp. 118-125.

<sup>152</sup> Haggerty, *Merely for Money*.

<sup>153</sup> W. Baker and R. R. Faulkner, 'Social Capital, Double Embeddedness and Mechanisms of Stability and Change', *American Behavioural Science*, 52:11 (2002), p. 1550.

<sup>154</sup> N. Letki, 'Investigating the Roots of Civic Morality: Trust, Social Capital and Institutional Performance', *Political Behaviour*, 28 (2006), pp. 306-307.

<sup>155</sup> A. Arbour, *World Values Survey Codebook* (1981-1984) and (1990-1993), [www.worldvaluessurvey.org](http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org) [accessed 29 October 2012]; Letki, 'Investigating the Roots of Civic Morality'.

<sup>156</sup> F. Fukuyama, 'Social Capital and Civil Society' [www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/seminar/1999/reforms/Fukuyama.htm](http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/seminar/1999/reforms/Fukuyama.htm) [accessed 3 November 2009]; S. Knack and P. Keefer, 'Does Social Capital have an Economic Payoff? A Cross Country Investigation', *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 112: 4 (1997), pp. 1251-1288.

<sup>157</sup> K. Kanagaretnam, 'Trust and Reciprocity with Transparency and Repeated Interactions', *Journal of Business Research*, 63:3 (2010), pp. 241-247.

to trust and the ways in which individuals behave. The exercises aim to help us understand the ways in which individuals assess trust, reputation and reciprocity which are of paramount importance to the normal and successful functioning of society and business.<sup>158</sup> Understanding an actor's perceptions to given tasks can help in the reduction of legal contracts and thus has economic benefits for some companies, businesses and organisations.<sup>159</sup> Ben-Ner and Putterman used similar 'game theory' experiments to measure trust.<sup>160</sup> Their findings were similar to those of Barrera in that greater communication between individuals and companies produced greater levels of trust within the social and business institutions. The degree of transfer of knowledge was directly linked to the degree of trust which individuals exhibited between one another. Moreover, the greater the trust, the greater one believed that the knowledge transferred was reliable and the greater the opportunity for future interaction.<sup>161</sup> However, none of the above studies extended beyond a short time frame and the researchers did not engage in a follow up study with the same participants at a later date. Although the studies have value in the understanding of human behaviour concerning trust and reciprocity, they are limited in their long-term assessment of trust when individuals and organisations are faced with social, economic and leadership change over historical distance.

The networking aspect of social capital is also important because it allows individuals to build communities and knit the social fabric. It enables a sense of shared community identity and may produce integration and fulfilment of needs based upon shared values and morals. It is within the community that individuals confer and recognise elites' status.<sup>162</sup> In *The Spirit of Community*, Etzioni suggests that there has been a breakdown of community values and morals that have led to a fractured and self-serving American

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<sup>158</sup> P. Dorian, 'A Brief History of Balance through Time', *Journal of Mathematical Sociology*, 2:1 (1996), p. 114.

<sup>159</sup> D. Barrera, 'The Impact of Negotiated Exchange on Trust and Trustworthiness', *Social Networks*, 29:4 (2007), pp. 508-526.

<sup>160</sup> A. Ben-Ner and L. Putterman, 'Trust, Communication and Contracts: An Experiment', *Journal of Economic Behaviour and Organization*, 70:1 (2007), pp. 106-121.

<sup>161</sup> Barrera, 'The Impact of Negotiated Exchange'.

<sup>162</sup> C. Beem, *The Necessity of Politics: Reclaiming American Public Life* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999), p. 20; G. Crow and G. Allen, *Community Life: An Introduction to Local Social Relations* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994), p. 6; A. Etzioni, *The Spirit of Community: Rights, Responsibilities and the Communitarian Agenda* (London: Fontana Press, 1995); Morris, *Urban Governance*, p. 3; M. Prezzo, 'Sense of Community Referred to the Whole Town: Its Relations with Neighbouring, Loneliness, Life Satisfaction and Area of Residence', *Journal of Community Psychology*, 29:1 (2001), p. 23, p. 30.

society since the 1950s.<sup>163</sup> The book's main discussion revolves around the communitarian ideology of restoring those lost values to produce a system of community living where individual rights and responsibilities are balanced against that of the group. This, Etzioni suggests, will produce a renewal of small self-reliant productive communities of individuals who share similar moral values and norms. In this respect, Etzioni holds similar views to those of Putnam. Both suggest that greater civic engagement, good individual and group reputation, and shared social norms and values have the potential to produce cohesive communities.<sup>164</sup> Putnam takes into account the changing nature and construct of communities and economies, which Etzioni appears to have almost dismissed, not recognising that the influence of rapid economic and social change influence social norms and thus definitions of community.<sup>165</sup> Community elites have often been interconnected through business and family ties. The gentry, where possible, married into other gentry's families, merchants into other merchant families, and so on.<sup>166</sup> Marriage was a means to social, economic and political status, and thus as a means of maintaining status whilst limiting access to power and economics, thus excluding undesirable others.<sup>167</sup> Business and community are interwoven into the fabric of society through interpersonal networks - business, social and political. Networking is a means through which status might be gained and maintained within a community; but, just as importantly, it could also provide elites with the strength to exercise their power in the governance of a community.

Whilst eighteenth- and nineteenth-century county elites tended to be the aristocracy, the urban environment was governed and dominated by those with economic and or social status, the local elite were therefore merchants, tradesmen.<sup>168</sup> Digaetano's comparative study of local state formation in Britain and America during the nineteenth-century highlights the dual role of local social and economic elites in a community's political sphere.<sup>169</sup> Importantly, his study engages in the discussion on the

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<sup>163</sup> Etzioni, *The Spirit of Community*.

<sup>164</sup> Putnam, *Bowling Alone*.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> H. French, 'Localism and the 'Middle sort of People' in England 1620-1750', *Past and Present*, 166:1 (2000), p. 66-99.

<sup>167</sup> Colley, *Britons*; Stone and Stone, *An Open Elite*; Cannadine, *Decline and Fall of the Aristocracy*.

<sup>168</sup> Colley, *Britons*, p. 163; Innes, 'Governing Diverse Societies'; O'Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century*, p. 19.

<sup>169</sup> A. Digaetano, 'Creating the Public Domain: Nineteenth-Century Local State Formation in Britain and the United States', *Urban Affairs Review*, 41:4 (2006), pp. 427-466.

overlapping of ‘merchant, local gentry and urban artisan’ elites, noting that the ‘local governing organisations and bodies did not differentiate between the public and private domain’ before the nineteenth century.<sup>170</sup> Digaetano, in line with the democratic theorists’ view, has also suggested that it was not until the nineteenth century that the composition of local elites began to change, becoming more open and democratic.<sup>171</sup> He has further suggested that increased industrialisation which occurred during the nineteenth century contributed towards the beginning of a long-term process that separated business and political networks into their respective arenas and in doing so reduced personal network overlaps had been previously been used to sustain governing bodies.<sup>172</sup> This is important because, with the separation of dense and complex network overlaps, new groups and networks could then gain access to power, influencing government at both local and national levels – something which democratic theory suggests and which was very evident in the late twentieth century.

Since the 1980s there has been an increase in the involvement of national government in local and regional development projects in many British communities.<sup>173</sup> In part, this is related to the reductions of both heavy and light industry throughout the 1980s and 1990s. The effects on communities included a loss of community identity, which in many cases we can link to the loss of industry and the rise in unemployment. The lack of available personal income, combined with the need for re-skilling the newly unemployed, was a contributing factor in the degeneration of many towns and city areas. Aiming to revitalise areas of greatest unemployment, the government put in place regeneration projects beginning in the 1990s.<sup>174</sup> The finance has come from various contributors including the Government and European Union, via various funds such as the European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund Social Regeneration Budget and private business. These new initiatives have also required new corporations and companies to administer and oversee the projects, for example,

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<sup>170</sup> Digaetano, ‘Creating the Public Domain’; See also, French, ‘Ingenious and Learned Gentlemen’; Haggerty, *et al. The Empire in One City?*; J. Stobart, and N. Raven, *Towns, Regions and Industries: Urban and Industrial Change in the midlands, c1700-1840*, ed. by J. Stobart, and N. Raven (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).

<sup>171</sup> Digaetano, ‘Creating the Public Domain’.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 438.

<sup>173</sup> R. Atkinson and S. Cope, ‘Community Participation and Urban Regeneration in Britain’, in *Contested Communities: Experiences, Struggles, Policies*, ed. by P. Hoggett (Bristol: Policy Press, 1997), pp. 201-221.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

City Challenges and Enterprise and Training Councils, which have introduced new elites to the community.<sup>175</sup> However, new project administrators (organisations) such as the City Challenges had a life-span of only five years, raising questions about the durability of this new elite. More importantly, the question is how have local elites used the new organisations, and the related networks, to gain social capital and maintain their own positions within the community.

Hemphill *et al.* have examined the networking capabilities and interaction between regeneration projects and communities both in the social and political arenas.<sup>176</sup> In discussing partnership and leadership in the regeneration of Belfast in the twenty-first century, and in line with Woods, they suggest that leadership is based in the ability of groups or individuals to organise collective actions between various local government agencies: those in the business arenas and community participation in the decision making process.<sup>177</sup> Using a combination of published reports and interviews, Hemphill *et al.*'s research study suggests that there has been a change in the management of regeneration projects, where the projects of the 1990s often attempted to produce regeneration with little input from the community. The emphasis has changed to include the community in initiative decisions and improving local networks. This has increased community social capital. However, Hemphill *et al.* have also suggested that project leaders can come from a variety of business or social areas. This suggests that such a democratic approach to regeneration produced a variety of interest groups, but is unlikely to produce a recognisable elite within the community, and that the traditional economic and social elite of politicians and businessman retain their identity both before a project commences and once it ends. The extent to which local elite have used the project networks to maintain social capital and their status locally was unclear from the article.

Assessing urban initiatives in America, Cava and Mayer, also recognise that central government has a role in community initiatives, but suggest that much of the financing comes from private and corporate bodies with a vested interest in the community. As

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<sup>175</sup> D. Noon, J. Smith-Canham and M. Eagland, 'Economic Regeneration and Funding', in *Urban Regeneration: A Handbook*, ed. by P. Roberts and H. Sykes (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2000) pp. 61-85.

<sup>176</sup> Hemphill, *et al.* 'Leadership Power and Multi-sector Urban Regeneration', pp 59-80.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60, p. 65; Woods, 'Rethinking Elites', p. 2105.



with most regeneration projects, the greater the number of individuals in employment within the community, the greater their purchasing power, and the emphasis of the paper is on the importance of corporate investment in the community and the reciprocal nature of the network investment.<sup>178</sup> In particular, Cava and Mayer consider the ethics and behavioural norms of corporations investing in the community.<sup>179</sup> Although not stated in the paper, there is a suggestion that large corporations are adopting not only an economic response to urban decline, but have taken almost a paternalistic role and are following the traditional norm of *noblesse oblige* of community elites. Although Cava and Mayer point to business corporations and communities working together, there is little discussion of the networks which are in operation and which bind the enterprises together. The role of the local elite, in particular the brokerage potential of the local politician is neglected.

Hemphill *et al.* and Cava and Mayer's papers respectively highlight the changing composition of community elites or leaders in the short-term and the importance of networking between interest groups involved in the regeneration projects.<sup>180</sup> However, although both see regeneration projects as business and community integration, it is also possible to suggest that the corporations and business involvement are no more than an economic investment, and as such, pose no direct challenge to the involved community, town or city's established elite.<sup>181</sup> A greater threat to elite status may come from the technology boom of recent years, in particular, the Internet.

Further evidence of government intervention through local regeneration initiatives which exclude the borough corporation from the decision making process can be found in a discussion paper produced in 2000 by the Cabinet Office to assess the importance of social capital in the production of social and economic benefits to the nation and within the regions of the British Isles.<sup>182</sup> The paper was not designed as a policy statement, but did consider possible initiatives for stimulating social capital. It

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<sup>178</sup> Cava and Mayer, 'Integrated Social Contract Theory', p. 237 and p. 274.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 263-278.

<sup>180</sup> Cava and Mayer, 'Integrated Social Contract Theory'; Hemphill, *et al.* 'Leadership Power and Multi-sector Urban Regeneration'.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> Cabinet Office, S. Aldridge, D. Halpern and S. Fitzpatrick., 'Social Capital: A Discussion Paper' (2002), *Cabinet Office Performance and Innovation Unit*, [www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/seminars/social\\_capital.aspx](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/seminars/social_capital.aspx) p. 1-81 [accessed 3 November 2009].

included, for example, the Sure Start project (later implemented) where parents and children interact and build new networks of mutual support. The aim of Sure Start was to build cultural and social capital that could result in greater trust between individuals, a reduction of inequality, educational benefits and long-term reduction in crime. The social capital gained from cultural network interaction could also contribute toward greater social cohesion and economic benefit to the community.<sup>183</sup> The Cabinet Office paper considered the benefits and the negative aspects of implementing policy which might alter both the community framework and socio-economic activity; it concluded that greater opportunities for interaction and networking between groups and individuals could produce greater community social capital.<sup>184</sup> The authors compiled the evidence within the cabinet paper using Putnam's view of social capital as community property; they largely neglected the role of individual elite and local business networks.<sup>185</sup> What was clear from the paper was the neglected role of local borough councillors not only in the decision making process, but of their unique position in the community to act as brokers and in particular the networks to which they have access as elites.<sup>186</sup>

Although face-to-face networking has continued to be an important aspect of networking, the use of technology has also produced a new community arena for networking to take place. One-to-one and group-to-group networking has continued on following the invention of the telegraph, telephone and other media has enabled people not only to easily maintain networks, and has allowed knowledge-based information to flow faster than in earlier centuries. The introduction of computers into everyday life has led to an explosion of cyber networking on a private level and impacted upon the ways in which we conduct business and politics.<sup>187</sup> The Internet has also led to interactive business conferencing and cooperation; however, one negative aspect of using today's technological tools is that we cannot always establish the provenance of information. Nevertheless, the technology does enable the dissemination of information around the globe in milliseconds.

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<sup>183</sup> Aldridge, *et al.* 'Social Capital: A Discussion Paper'.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1-81; Putnam, *et al. Making Democracy Work.*

<sup>185</sup> Aldridge, *et al.* 'Social Capital'.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>187</sup> Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society.*

The rise of networking sites such as 'Facebook', 'LinkedIn', 'Twitter' and various blogs provide the opportunity for individuals and organisations to 'self-promote', an aspect which more recently has not been lost upon Northampton's local political elite.<sup>188</sup> However, there is a real possibility that individuals who use Internet sites to establish networks may also be excluding themselves from more 'real world' networks, those based upon face to face interaction. Interpersonal networks where people establish trust on a face to face basis rather than through the cyber world, still dominate the majority of networking which people undertake in life, particularly in the business world. The overlapping networks of the 'cyber' and 'real world' do give the possibility of a more cohesive society which is limited only by imagination of those possibilities. We have taken prevailing social norms and interwoven them into the fabric of the cyber and real worlds which reflects the needs and behaviour of any given community.<sup>189</sup> The urban elites have adapted their networks to include this technology. They use technology to instigate and maintain networks, and social capital for the purpose of retaining and propagating status at local level.

## **Conclusion**

The primary aim of the thesis is to determine how elites gain, maintain and propagate status. This has necessitated a literature review upon three main themes, elites, social capital and networks.

The literature clearly indicates that there was a base level of consensus within theories of elite identity. First, elites are those who hold or have access to the greatest combination of economic, social and political resources, which they are able to utilise for specific aims and goals. Second, elites have, at different points in history, been under assault from others who would be elite. This leads to the third area of agreement that there is, as Pareto suggests, a circulation of elites within society. However, Pareto conducted his research with those who reside among the upper echelons of society. Individuals and groups at lower levels of power, in particular at the local government level, were less well represented. The literature review revealed that studies of elites at local levels of government had not been neglected (for example, French, Ruggiu and

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<sup>188</sup> Northampton.gov, [www.northampton.gov.uk/info/100004/your\\_council\\_elections\\_meetings\\_and\\_members](http://www.northampton.gov.uk/info/100004/your_council_elections_meetings_and_members) [accessed 28 October 2012].

<sup>189</sup> Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*.

Stobart's eighteenth-century studies; Morris, Trainor, and Day's nineteenth-century studies; and Woods, Hemphill *et al.* and Cava and Mayer's twentieth-century research) however, each study remained firmly set within a short historical period.<sup>190</sup> Importantly too, the researchers have conducted these studies in different geographical places. This leaves a gap in historical knowledge, which this thesis fills. The work within this thesis examines the identity of the elite within a single geographical area over the *longue durée*, and how they gained and maintained status within the wider community. By conducting studies over a longer historical timeframe, the research within this thesis is able to assess the types of resources to which elites had access, the influences which placed their status under assault and whether those influences have contributed towards a circulation of urban political elites both within each of the case studies which the author undertook over the long-term.

The second section of the literature review focused on the origins of social capital, how researchers have defined it, who owns social capital, and which concept is more relevant for use by historians. Clearly social capital was the sum of all capitals: human economic and cultural and was the result of reciprocal interaction. As a concept Putnam suggested that social capital was a positive resource emanating from community interaction and therefore communally owned. In contrast, Bourdieu viewed social capital as a resource which resulted from individual actions and was therefore owned and used by individuals. Most often researchers have gathered data on social capital through the use of interviews, questionnaires and 'game scenarios', it was however clear during the review of literature that it is only possible to show that social capital exists in society, and that any measurement of that capital remains elusive. Therefore any historical analysis which engages with the concept of social capital needs to draw on a different methodology (see Chapter 3). The literature review in this section also considered several historical studies and paid attention to the negative and positive aspects of social capital and its use. The literature review also highlighted the

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<sup>190</sup> A. Day, 'A spirit of improvement: improvement commissioners, boards of health and central-local relations in Portsea', in *Urban Governance: Britain and Beyond since 1750*, ed. by R. Morris and R. Trainor (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2000), 101-114; Cava and Mayer, 'Integrated Social Contract Theory'; French, 'Localism and the 'Middle sort of People'; Hemphill, *et al.* 'Leadership Power and Multi-sector Urban Regeneration'; R. Morris and R. Trainor, *Urban Governance: Britain and Beyond since 1750* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2002); F. Ruggui, 'The Urban Gentry', pp. 249-271; Stobart, 'Who were the urban gentry'; Woods, 'Rethinking Elites'.

importance for gaining and maintaining social capital, through networking which the third section of the literature review covered.

Historians have long recognised that during the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth century there was often an overlap of elite interests and network connections in the political, social and economic arenas of society.<sup>191</sup> However, the literature review has highlighted that studies which examine networking have tended, from a historical position, to have been concentrated upon business and trade networks. Researchers have done less to examine the influence of business networks in gaining elite status as a local level politician. Therefore, there is a gap in historical knowledge which scholars need to address.

It is also evident that research into networking has been concentrated over short historical time periods. This means that researchers have not fully explored and charted the importance which individuals place upon various groups and organisations over longer period so time. In conducting research on one area, Northampton, and by concentrating the research on one group of individuals, the Aldermen, this thesis will advance historical knowledge into the response of local elites to those changes. The aim is to identify how elites have responded to social and economic change over time in order to gain, maintain and propagate status.

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<sup>191</sup> Bottomore, *Elites and Society*; French, 'Localism and the 'Middle sort of People', p. 66-99; Stobart, 'Who were the urban gentry', p. 89-112.

### Chapter 3: Methodology

This study focuses on the question of how do urban elites gain, maintain and propagate status. As previously mentioned there are several aims and objectives which this thesis addresses. First, it determines how the local political elite used their social capital networks to gain and maintain status and whether the importance of some networks diminished over the *longue durée*. The second objective is to examine the ways in which different networks interacted; was there a convergence or divergence in membership and structure of those networks which political elites utilised to gain, maintain and propagate status? The third objective is to better understand the business networks of the political elite, the Aldermen and councillors and to determine the importance and employment (use) of their business networks.

The research also aimed to ascertain whether Pareto's theoretical definition of elite as the 'strongest, most capable and the most active' remained relevant over the *longue durée*.<sup>1</sup> Although Pareto suggested that the elite were continuously replaced he offered no empirical evidence as support. This thesis will address that shortcoming in Pareto's argument through the analysis of local elite networks over time and the changes in the composition of local elites. Building on this the thesis will expand our knowledge on social capital, how it was used and importantly whether there were limitations to its use. It is then possible to explore the constructs of different networks and the ways in which networks were used to produce social capital that could be translated into elite status.

The first aim of the research was therefore to identify the elite. This was achieved by examining the available literature on elite theory in chapter two of this thesis. It was evident that the term elite had been most closely associated with those who held legitimate power. There is an abundance of literature on the elite at the highest levels of society but less on the urban elite at lower levels of power. This project therefore concentrates on those urban elite identified with the legitimate use of power at lower level, the Borough Corporation Aldermen and Councillors.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pareto, *The Rise and Fall of Elites*, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Woods, 'Rethinking Elites'; Morris 'Governance: two centuries of urban growth'; Giddens, 'Elites and Power in British Society'; Stobart, 'Who were the urban gentry'.

The term Alderman comes from the old English term elder man; it was a title given to the senior men who were the recognised local political leaders of a given geographic area or people. The title Alderman was in common use in municipal borough corporations [councils] until it was abolished in 1974. The Aldermen were the senior councillors of a borough corporation; they held positions of authority as chairs of committees and were advisors to the members of the common council and in particular the mayor; the Aldermen were also decision makers although the mayor had the casting vote. The committees on which the Aldermen were responsible for included committees that set local taxes, the maintenance of borough corporation property, and the making of by-laws. Since 1974, in Northampton, the position of the chair of a committee has been held by the members of the council cabinet; they are generally selected from the political party in control of a borough council.<sup>3</sup>

The second aim was to analyse archival material to better understand how the elites have constructed their social capital networks. The objective was to understand the ways in which the Aldermen and Councillors have responded to social and economic change over the *longue durée* through analysis of archival material. The methods used to achieve both of these objectives are the subject of this chapter.

Northampton was selected as the urban geographic area for conducting the study in part because of its central geographic position in Britain: approximately 60 miles from London and 50 miles from Birmingham. The town did not have large scale industrial businesses enterprises that were evident in many areas of nineteenth-century Britain. Neither did it have large cloth manufacturing industries that have been associated with towns in Lancashire, or the steel industry of Sheffield, or even the coal mines of Nottinghamshire. Northamptonshire was primarily an agricultural county in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For most of the period covered by this thesis the town's main industry was connected to the leather trade, particularly boot and shoe making, although there has always been a wide variety of retail businesses. The boot and shoe industry grew rapidly in the nineteenth century, mostly through the proliferation of small and medium sized businesses, and was especially influential in the 1920s. By the year 2000, however, shoe and boot manufacture had all but ceased in

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<sup>3</sup> See, <http://www.northamptonboroughcouncil.com/councillors/ieListMeetings> [accessed 11 October 2012].

Northampton, the largest businesses then being brewing, and the service and banking sector.<sup>4</sup> The lack of large scale industries in Northampton is beneficial to this study; it means that the influence of industrialists, their sudden rise to prominence in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and their equally sudden fall during the twentieth century has only a muted impact on the underlying question of how urban power elites maintain status.

Primary evidence used within this thesis is drawn from archival material held by the Northamptonshire Public Record Office, Northamptonshire Library Services, and data available through accessing government, business and social web sites on the Internet. Specific sources are discussed further on in this chapter and form part of the discussion of the case studies undertaken during this research project. Gathering relevant data is always a problematic process. It is made more difficult when studying a long time period because the documentary sources available vary from century to century. It was therefore necessary to draw on a wide variety of sources. Importantly, however, all the chosen sources contained information that could show the connections between individuals and their membership of groups and organisations. They therefore allowed the construction of network diagrams which give a ‘snap shot’ of elite group interaction for the given period of time being examined.

One source of research material that remained constant throughout the thesis was the Borough Corporation [Council] Minutes and Year Books. Using these ensured that there was documentary continuity within the thesis. They provided the names of the Aldermen and Councillors, and the year of office. They also provided a record of attendance which contributed towards a better understanding of how network interaction was maintained. The second source which remained constant was information from the local newspapers. Although there may be a political or editorial bias in specific information printed in newspapers they remained a useful source of historical data.<sup>5</sup> The *Northampton Mercury*, *Northampton Herald*, *Northampton Independent* and the *Chronicle and Echo*, provided information on business

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<sup>4</sup> M. Andrew, *Town and City Memories: Northampton* (Salisbury: The Francis Frith Collection, 2005); R. L. Greenall, *A History of Northamptonshire and the Stoke of Peterborough* (Chichester: Phillimore and Co. Ltd., 2002).

<sup>5</sup> J. L. Secker, ‘Newspapers and historical research: a study of historians and custodians in Wales’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, Aberystwyth: University of Wales, 1999).



partnerships and new business ventures.<sup>6</sup> Information on social activities (for example, association meetings and members names, balls and marriages) was used as a means of collating data about the network connections of Aldermen and councillors. The local newspapers also provided quasi-verbatim reports on Council meetings including disagreements and disaffection between individuals and groups; this information was used to show weak network ties and the separation or severing of ties. Newspaper obituaries also provided personal data on individual councillors which could not be found in other documentation. These were used to build more comprehensive reconstructions of personal networks which had been in operation; business connections, familial ties, social and charitable activities typically form part of those obituaries used. Information on Borough Corporation [Council] election results was cross-referenced with Poll Books and Corporation Year Books, and was used to confirm names and dates of office of the Aldermen and cabinet members. Newspapers were also used in conjunction with other archival material to consider the question of whether network ties that may have originated from shared or similar experiences of schooling could, in the four periods examined, have produced ‘old-boy’ networks that may have been used by the Aldermen or cabinet members to gain or maintain status.

Several directories were used to provide information of Northampton’s industries and businesses, trades and occupations, including *The Universal Directory*, *Pigot’s Directories of Northampton*, *Northampton Directory and Almanac*, *Marks Directory* and *Kelly’s Directories*.<sup>7</sup> The information was used in conjunction with other archival sources and cross-referenced, and then entered into databases in allow statistical analysis and cross-referencing. The evidential information enabled the study to follow the evolutionary process of networking behaviour of the local political elite of Northampton, the Aldermen and cabinet members.

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<sup>6</sup> The *Northampton Mercury* was first published in 1720. It continued as an independent newspaper until 1931 when it merged with the *Northampton Herald*. The *Northampton Herald* was first published in 1831. There was a change of name after the merger of the two papers: the *Mercury and Herald*. The paper changed its name in 1988 to the *Northampton Mercury and Herald*. In 1996 the name was again changed to *Northampton Mercury and Citizen*. In 2011 the paper was renamed again and is now *Northants Citizen*. The *Northampton Daily Echo* and *Evening Herald* both began publishing in 1800, they were merged in 1931 and renamed the *Chronicle and Echo*. In 1994 the name was changed to *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*.

<sup>7</sup> *The Universal British Directory of Trade, Commerce and Manufacture* (1791); *Pigot’s National Commercial Directory* (1830); *Pigot’s Directory of Northamptonshire, Index to Towns and Villages* (Northamptonshire: Pigot and co., 1830, 1840 1841 1845, 1847); *Marks Trade Directory* (London: Marks and co., 1929).

The research was conducted through a series of four separate studies, each set in a different century. The purpose of electing to do case studies rather than a thematic approach is based on how the evidence could be better presented. The main problem in taking the thematic route is that of repetition within each chapter; it would also produce one chapter that would contain many diagrammatic reconstructions of networks at different points in history but which would result in a loss of contextual substance within the project as a whole. By conducting a series of case studies, themes are contained within each chapter and remain contextual; each chapter is also analysed as a 'snap shot' of society at a given period in history and shows the networks which were in operation during that period. Taking a case study approach to the project also meant that, through diagrammatic reconstruction of operational networks in a given period, we are better able to understand the interpersonal and group membership which individuals employed to gain social capital and maintain status. This approach also enabled analysis of how elites have responded to economic and social change at a given point in history. Each case study can therefore stand alone as a representation of elite networking behaviour at a given period of time. The research benefits from a case study approach because this also enables the four case studies to be combined and analysis of the three main themes within the thesis, social capital, elites and networks to be conducted as a historical overview from which the conclusion is formed.

As already mentioned, the case studies are set in different centuries and the research is conducted over one decade of each century under investigation. The first study is set in the 1770s, the second is set in the 1840s, the third in the 1920s and the fourth in the 2000s. One reason for the time gap was to insure that there was sufficient historical space between case studies for socio-economic change to have occurred. The other grounds in selecting the specific dates and decades are discussed further on in this chapter and form part of the discussions on the composition of the chapters within this thesis.

Typically, social scientists and other academics use surveys, questionnaires and interviews in their respective research upon elites and social capital.<sup>8</sup> This project has followed the research approach which has been successfully adopted by historians when

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<sup>8</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*; Putnam, *et al.*, *Making Democracy Work*'; Kakabadse, *et al.*, 'From Local Elites to a Globally Convergent Class'; Woods, 'Rethinking Elites.

analysing networks through archival material.<sup>9</sup> Namely, identifying the number of organisations and people to which an individual has connections and examining how those connections produce network links and social capital.<sup>10</sup> Although chapter 7 could have been conducted through a series of interviews because it is situated in the twenty-first century, to ensure continuity within the thesis, research evidence has come from data that is readily available in the public domain.

One problem within this thesis that needed to be overcome was in the recording and cross-referencing the data for each of the case studies. The quantity of data made it difficult to manipulate data, particularly in statistical data analysis in the Microsoft software package Access. The problem was solved by producing several smaller data sheets in Microsoft Excel. This enabled statistical calculations and allowed the production of specific data sheets dedicated to each area of interest: one for business, several for political connections and others related social activities. There were also problems producing diagrammatic reconstructions using standard software packages, so a dedicated mind map software package was selected, Inspiration 9.0. The software allowed for a greater amount of data to be entered and the manipulation of that data.

Using website Internet data is also not free of problems. Firstly, the web pages are not always updated; secondly, the information held on any website may not be reliable; thirdly, the content of many websites are propagandist and represent the interest and views of those who own them. Lastly, information held on any website may be removed from the website by those who own them and thus important information and data are unavailable for future use by the researcher. However, websites do provide a wealth of information and it is possible to cross-reference the information gained from using them with other data sources in order to confirm the legitimacy of information they provide.

There are, of course, problems with using the ‘snap shot’ case study as a method of historical reconstruction. The most important is that there are always many more factors, such as social, political and cultural change, that by necessity are excluded in

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<sup>9</sup> J. Haggerty and S. Haggerty, ‘The life cycle of a metropolitan Business network: Liverpool 1750-1810’, *Explorations in Economic History*, 48:2 (2011), pp. 189-206; Stobart, ‘Information, Trust and Reputation’.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

order to keep a case study to a manageable size. Equally, a case study considers only that which was happening at a given point in time and space. However the case study approach is also beneficial precisely because it requires tighter parameters on which research is conducted; enabling greater depth of analysis of a given time and place in history.

Chapter four presents the first of four case studies and covers the period 1770-1780. The specific dates were selected on the basis of the amount of archival material available. The political, social and economic practices of this decade are typical of the behaviour of local politicians prior to the 1835 Municipal Corporation Act. As discussed earlier, the Northampton Borough Aldermen were identified as the urban elite of the period (see the literature review). The chapter is laid out in two sections. Section one discusses the route to becoming a member of the elite and shows how social, political and business networks were important for status during the 1770s. Section two examines and reconstructs the type of networks used by the Borough Aldermen to gain and maintain status.

The sources identified that between 1735 and 1780 there was a total of 93 Aldermen in Northampton. Although there were newly appointed Aldermen during the period, retirement from politics and death had reduced the overall number of serving Aldermen to 30 individuals actively engaged in local politics.<sup>11</sup> The primary archival sources were the Book of Register of Freemen of the Town, the Minutes of the Court of Mayor and Aldermen, Poll books and the Abstract of Corporation Leases. These were used to identify the Aldermen and confirm their occupations. The information was then entered into a spread sheet and used for cross-referencing. Personal papers belonging to the Aldermen, including wills, property conveyances, marriage settlements and bankruptcy papers were added into spread sheets and cross-referenced thus revealing the number of networks to which each Alderman belonged.

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<sup>11</sup> *NBR 6/2 Book of Freemen of the Town 1730 'B'*; *NBR 3/5 Minutes of the Court of Mayor and Aldermen, Assembly Book 'B'*; *NBR 3/6 Minutes of the Court of Mayor and Aldermen Assembly Book 1770 'B'*; *The Poll at the General Election of Burgesses to represent the Town and Borough of Northampton, to Represent them in Parliament (1768, 1774, 1796)*. Hereafter referenced as Poll Book with year.

There were problems with gathering the data, primarily that the evidence was not the same for all the Aldermen. Wills existed for some Aldermen, but not for others; the same was true for property conveyance. However, as many of the Aldermen leased Corporation property, records of ownership and leasing were found in the Abstract of Corporation Leases. This was important because it confirms that the Aldermen were economically secure and likely members of the business elite of the town. The most useful edited primary source that was used in conjunction with the primary evidence was *The Records of the Borough of Northampton*.<sup>12</sup> This book was an invaluable source of information and contained several lists which confirmed the names of the Aldermen and detailed how in the eighteenth century the Borough Corporation was structured. It was from the cross-referencing of the material that diagrammatic representations for two networks were reconstructed. Those clearly demonstrated the networks which were used by the Aldermen and the inter-connectedness of individuals. Although the diagrams are ego-centric they also represent the type of network connections which the Aldermen constructed and used to maintain status within the community during the 1770s.

Chapter five focuses on the 1840s. The first reason for selecting that date was to ensure a generational gap between case studies, but also because there had been economic and social change. Second, the introduction of the 1835 Corporation Act impacted upon the Aldermen, reducing their numerical strength and their political power as a group. They were also subject to election to office; this affected how networks were maintained and how the Aldermen interacted with the voting public. Third, the institutions relating to Joint Stock Companies had been relaxed, making it easier to set up such companies. The Aldermen took advantage of the change to instigate new companies to gain both economic and political capital through which they maintained status. There was also an increase in the number of social organisations through which social capital networks could be established and maintained, for example the Freemasons.

The Orders of Assembly provided details on who the Aldermen were and how often they attended meetings. Poll Books provided information on the occupations of the Aldermen and *Pigot's National Commercial Directory* was used as a means cross of

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<sup>12</sup> Cox, *The Records of the Borough of Northampton*.

referencing that information. The Minute books of the Northampton Improvement Commission provided information on its members. This was used to determine whether it was a means of gaining and maintaining status within the community. The data was entered into a data spread sheet and cross-referenced with the membership of the Corporation to determine if there was an overlap of membership. Other sources included archival material relating to the Northampton Water Company, Gas Light Company and local banks. Knowing who the directors of those companies were was important to the research because business and political networks often overlapped in the 1840s. Determining who the directors were made it possible to show those overlaps diagrammatically and explain their important contributions towards the status of the Aldermen and their access to social capital.

Chapter six discusses how the Aldermen gained and maintained status through social capital in the 1920s. The decade was selected to maintain a generational gap but also because of the socio-economic changes following the end of World War One. These changes were both in the political arena, following the introduction of the 1918 Representation of the Peoples Act, and the business arena. Although businessmen had begun to change from personal ownership of a business to Limited Liability status before the War, after 1919 there was an increase in the number of Limited Liability Companies in Northampton. The problem for the businessman was how to change from personal ownership to that of limited liability without damaging his status and social capital. It was especially important to the businessman if he was also engaged in local politics as a councillor or Alderman.

Problems were encountered in generating data for this case study; the only archival material available via the Northamptonshire Record Office was the Corporation Year Books, several of which had been vandalised and important data relating to political office was missing. This was addressed by using evidence from the election results recorded in the local newspapers. However, information relating to membership of corporation committees could not be recovered via other means. The newspapers also provided information of social events which the Aldermen attended, borough election results, business information and importantly the obituaries of Aldermen. The information was collated to produce several small databases which were cross-referenced to show individual networks and the overlapping networks of the Aldermen.

Further evidence from Northamptonshire Library Services provided information on the Chamber of Commerce, Boot and Shoe Manufacturers Association, Northampton Journal of Commerce, Official Hand Book on the town, Borough Corporation Minute Books, and the Trade Exhibition Festivals. The information contained in the above was cross-referenced with newspaper data. The result was that it was possible to reconstruct the networks of the Aldermen and to show the overlaps in membership which contributed elite towards status which were then diagrammatically reconstructed.

Chapter 7 examines the situation in the twenty-first century. The aim as with all the case studies was to determine how the urban elite gained, maintained and propagated status. As with the previous chapter no archival material is held at the record office. This case study therefore used the local newspapers and gathered information via the internet, using the official government sites to which all local government bodies are now connected. The Northampton Borough Council website provided the biographical information on the councillors. The site also provided information on committee membership and the Council Cabinet. The information gathered from the Council website was entered into data sheets and used towards the discussions on the strength of social capital which the committee networks provided the Councillors.

The official local political party association websites were also used to gather information as were the social networking sites of 'Facebook' and 'LinkedIn'. Although the information held on 'LinkedIn' and 'Facebook' can be far from reliable at times, both sites remained important for gathering data on the borough councillors, especially given the lack of other data. The websites are important because there are used by members of the Borough Council and show that the local politician has responded to changing networking behaviour and patterns within the wider community. The social changes which have led to a growth in the use of the internet and its important contribution towards gaining and maintaining status over the past decades is discussed in the section two of that chapter.

Business information was extracted from the Chamber of Commerce, West Northamptonshire Development Corporation, Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership, and similar organisations. The information was crossed referenced to provide details of organisation membership. The information was entered into a database which was then

used to examine and show overlapping memberships of the organisations and in particular the connection between business organisations and the Borough Council.

The data used in producing this thesis has therefore come from a wide variety of sources. Primary evidence was obtained from the Northamptonshire Record Office and included many documents relating to the Borough Corporation. Also provided for use in this thesis were documents of conveyances, business contracts and bankruptcies, and details of company shares, and probate information. Hospital subscription lists and the minute books of the Improvement Commission can also be added to the list. In total the Northamptonshire Record Office provided a total of 69 documents. The Northamptonshire Library Services provided all of the newspaper evidence contained within the thesis, and a total of 49 other documents, including political ephemera, and several business and trade pamphlets. Other primary source material came from Internet websites in total 43 main sites were accessed. Two sites, 'Facebook' and 'LinkedIn' were each accessed 109 times in order to gather data relating to Borough Councillors who served between the years 1995-2012. Information from secondary sources was also extensive. All this data has contributed to making this thesis a comprehensive study on how elite networking provides status for an individual.



## **Chapter 4: Urban Elite in Eighteenth-Century Northampton**

### *Introduction*

The literature review highlighted a degree of consensus in what constitutes the elite: that is, those possessing the greatest combination of economic, social and political power. In Northampton, this has traditionally meant the Borough Corporation Aldermen. The first case study 1770-1780, was selected because the decade was the high point of the 'old regime' and would therefore give a better historical insight into the social, political and business interactions of the Aldermen at the height of their power. The Aldermen in Northampton were typical of those in many towns across England in that they formed a small and oligarchic power base. Their interlocking arenas of business, social and political behaviour and activities were replicated throughout Britain; they sustained the urban political elite of the 1770s, and provided the means through which social capital was gained and maintained, and elite status secured. The aim of this chapter is therefore to examine the means they used to gain and maintain their status as elites in Northampton. The first question to be answered is: what was the route that individuals took to become Aldermen and was that route open to all males in Northampton? Secondly as Bourdieu's research on the concept of social capital has shown networking to be an important means of accessing resources, what networks were available and in operation; were some networks more important than others for gaining and maintain social capital and elite status, and if so were the resources they used, political, economic or social, or indeed a combination of those? This then will answer the question of how social capital was used by Northampton's Aldermen to gain and maintain their elite status within the community in the old regime.

Northampton was similar to many towns during the period. Its population was approximately 5,500 and it was a crossroads for people and goods travelling both in a north-south and east-west direction and was therefore a town which regularly received news.<sup>1</sup> The town's inhabitants also had access to a locally produced newspaper, the *Northampton Mercury*, which disseminated important national and local news twice a week. Northamptonshire in the eighteenth century was predominantly an agricultural

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<sup>1</sup> W. Page, ed., 'The Borough of Northampton a Description', *A History of the County of Northamptonshire, Vol. III* (Victorian County History, 1930), pp. 30-40.

county. The town of Northampton itself was a small county town and, at this time, lacked any major industry or large business.<sup>2</sup> Instead, there were numerous businessmen and various trades which people conducted on a small scale.<sup>3</sup> These included the making of boots and shoes, saddles and bridles, coach making and brewing. There were also plumbers, tanners, tailors, painters, apothecaries, surgeons and solicitors; and there were, as in many towns, shop keepers selling grocery and victuals, haberdashery, glassware and other goods.<sup>4</sup>

Like many towns and cities, Northampton had two layers of political elites during the eighteenth century: the first comprised its two members of parliament and the second was that of the Borough Corporation which dealt with local issues. Northampton's local politicians, similar to those of Chester, were in the main the wealthiest merchants and tradesmen; and it was these businessmen that dominated the Northampton's Borough Corporation senior positions as Aldermen.<sup>5</sup>

Although there were other social elites within the town, members of the local gentry, and other successful businessmen, it was the overlapping networks which existed between the arenas of politics and business that was an important factor in gaining and maintaining status. As Haggerty and Stobart have shown in their respective research, business networks were intrinsically important both for economic gain and political office; it is therefore the combination of economic, social and political networks which identified the Aldermen as the power elite within Northampton.<sup>6</sup> The Aldermen were also the group which, through their networks, had the greatest potential access to and use of social capital.

The study is set out in two sections. The first section explores the route to and maintenance of elite status, set out into four subsections. The first discusses education as a means of potential social capital. The importance of education as a contributory factor to cultural identity, through which social norms and values were constructed, has

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<sup>2</sup> *The British Directory* (1791).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, *Poll Books* (1768, 1774, 1796).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Stobart, 'Who were the urban gentry?' pp. 89-112.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

been highlighted by Bourdieu.<sup>7</sup> It was therefore important to explore whether schooling was available in Northampton during the eighteenth century, whether any of the Aldermen attended school, if any networks could have been established during their schooling which may have produced an ‘old boy’s’ network, and whether any such networks contributed towards social political or business status in Northampton. The second sub section discusses political routes to becoming an Alderman on Northampton’s Borough Corporation, in terms of whether any qualification was required for gaining political office as an Alderman and asks whether family connections contributed toward gaining political office. The third sub section examines how business contributed toward gaining and maintaining status and provided possible access to social capital and considers whether business success was an important factor for gaining political office in Northampton; and whether political office enabled individuals to maintain status as successful businessmen. The final sub section considers the importance of social interaction and social capital.

Section two of this chapter is broken into two sub sections that examine the networks of Northampton’s Aldermen. The first part discusses the role of guardianship networks and the second examines the structure of established networks. Both parts explore the networks of two serving Aldermen of the 1770s, who were typical of urban elite networks in Northampton. Network diagrams were used to help the reader visualise the family, business and political connections. The aim of the study is to discover what networks were in operation; whether there was a convergence or divergence in network membership and whether business social and political network overlaps may have contributed towards individuals gaining and maintaining political office. By fulfilling the aims of the study we will be better able to understand the means that the 1770s Aldermen of Northampton used to gain and maintain their elite status within the community.

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<sup>7</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*.

## Section 1: The Route to becoming an Urban Elite.

### *Introduction*

French, Stobart and Ruggiu, among others, have researched the urban gentry between the late seventeenth- and mid-eighteenth century.<sup>8</sup> French concentrated his research upon parishes in Essex and Lancashire and paid particular attention to the ways in which parish elites described their status within the local community and beyond. However, whilst French noted that it was more often the wealthiest that held the power in local government, he did not explore the networks of associations which individuals with less income utilised to achieve status within their communities.<sup>9</sup> Both Ruggiu and Stobart studied the urban gentry; in particular, their work examined the socially recognised title of 'gentleman', who they were, and how individuals came to identify themselves by that title. Each noted that 'gentlemen' were often members of the local government administration.<sup>10</sup> By contrast there were few members of Northampton's Borough Corporation whom called themselves 'gentleman' during the eighteenth century. This therefore suggests that the title Alderman held greater importance as a title of status for Northampton's urban elite.

The urban elite of Northampton during the eighteenth century were undoubtedly the Mayors and Aldermen of the Borough Corporation, who were also leading businessmen in the town. It appears that continuity of tradition, personal economic and social status, and future economic security were a stimulus for becoming a member of the local elite. The overlapping roles of businessman and politician that were common in the eighteenth century provided the means of accessing potential social capital that could be used by the Aldermen to maintaining and propagating their elite status within the community.<sup>11</sup>

### *Education as a means of social capital.*

As mentioned in chapter 2, Bourdieu has suggested that the dominant class maintain and justify their supremacy through a formal education system of school and

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<sup>8</sup> French, 'Localism and the 'Middle Sort of People'; Ruggiu, 'The Urban Gentry in England', pp. 249-271; Stobart, 'Who Were the Urban Gentry', pp. 89-112.

<sup>9</sup> French, 'Localism and the 'Middle Sort of People'.

<sup>10</sup> Ruggiu, 'The Urban Gentry in England'; Stobart, 'Who Were the Urban Gentry', pp. 89-112.

<sup>11</sup> Stone and Stone, *An Open Elite*; E. P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (London: The Merlin Press, 1991); Thompson, *Gentrification and the Enterprise Culture*.

university.<sup>12</sup> However, for the majority of individuals living in Northampton during the eighteenth century, formal education with the physical boundaries of a school building, and which taught a nationally recognised and standardised curriculum, did not exist. It is possible that some of Northampton's leading citizens opted to send their sons to boarding schools outside the county; however, as Thompson has noted, it was not until the nineteenth century that public schools such as Eton received in large numbers the sons of businessmen.<sup>13</sup> The small number of public schools in the eighteenth century remained the preserve of the upper echelons of society for those with ambition to enter the professions.<sup>14</sup>

The town of Northampton did have a grammar school.<sup>15</sup> During the eighteenth century the incumbent master placed various notices in the local newspaper, the *Northampton Mercury* which stated the subjects taught, the fees charged and the intended benefits of the education available:

A home is preparing for the boarding of youth and all gentlemen, that please to favour me with the care of their children, may depend upon my utmost endeavour in founding them within learning, that young gentlemen are taught the Latin and Greek tongues and fitted for university by the Rev. Mr Wood Master, boarded and qualified for business by Henry Woolley, writing master.<sup>16</sup>

At the grammar school youth are carefully and expeditiously prepared for the liberal professions or qualified for the mercantile business. Such as shall be intended for the former will be instructed in classical learning, history, geography, etc. Those designed for the latter will be taught writing, arithmetic, merchant accompts and to write English with propriety and elegance. The whole expense of institution in every branch taught in the school together with boarding will be 15 guineas a year and 1 guinea entrance.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. 177.

<sup>13</sup> Thompson, *Gentrification and the Enterprise Culture*.

<sup>14</sup> Colley, *Britons*, p. 127, p. 180; Thompson, *Gentrification and the Enterprise Culture*, p. 102, p. 127.

<sup>15</sup> References to Grammar School in multiple issues of the *Northampton Mercury*.

<sup>16</sup> 'Grammar School', *Northampton Mercury*, 26 September (1755), p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> 'Grammar School', *Northampton Mercury*, 11 January (1762), p. 3. Merchant 'accompts' are similar to business accounting.

However, there is no evidence that any of the Aldermen attended the grammar school prior to the nineteenth century. Home schooling and apprenticeships appear to have been the usual method of education, which limited the opportunities for individual network expansion that was to become so commonly associated with grammar school old boys networks of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>18</sup> Why so few of Northampton's urban elite attended the grammar school is unclear, although it may be, as Laird has suggested, that businessmen did not view a grammar school education as necessary for business success or as a means of gaining status in the eighteenth century.<sup>19</sup> There is then no evidence to suggest that during the eighteenth-century Northampton's Aldermen used 'old boy's' school networks to gain political office.

In contrast, all of Northampton's Aldermen of the eighteenth century served an apprenticeship. These provided the opportunity to not only learn an occupation and gain skills, but also instruction on town culture and tradition, social and business norms, values and practices. In general, apprenticeships lasted for seven years, and as Defoe noted, they provided for the building and extending of vital business, social and political networks.<sup>20</sup> It is noticeable that the majority of Northampton's serving Aldermen of the 1770s, were not 'apprenticed out'.<sup>21</sup> This suggests that during their apprenticeship period their respective families continued to educate their sons, in doing so they ensured a continuity of values, social norms, and business practices that included a degree of access to established business, and in some cases social and political networks.<sup>22</sup> There were, however, some exceptions. For example, Alderman Edward Cole appears to have been apprenticed out to Yeoman Robert Lambert in 1746 and William Gibson more than a decade later. It is probable that Gibson benefitted both from his father John's connections as one of the town's Aldermen and from his employer's network connections.<sup>23</sup> The positive aspect of apprenticeships was that they offered an opportunity for an individual to access potential networks and social capital

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<sup>18</sup> Old boy networks were a means of gatekeeping. See Laird, *Pull*, p. 34, p. 309, p. 313.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149.

<sup>20</sup> D. Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman* (Milton Keynes: Tutis Digital Publishing, 2008), p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> The definition here of 'apprenticed out' refers to serving an apprenticeship outside the immediate family circle.

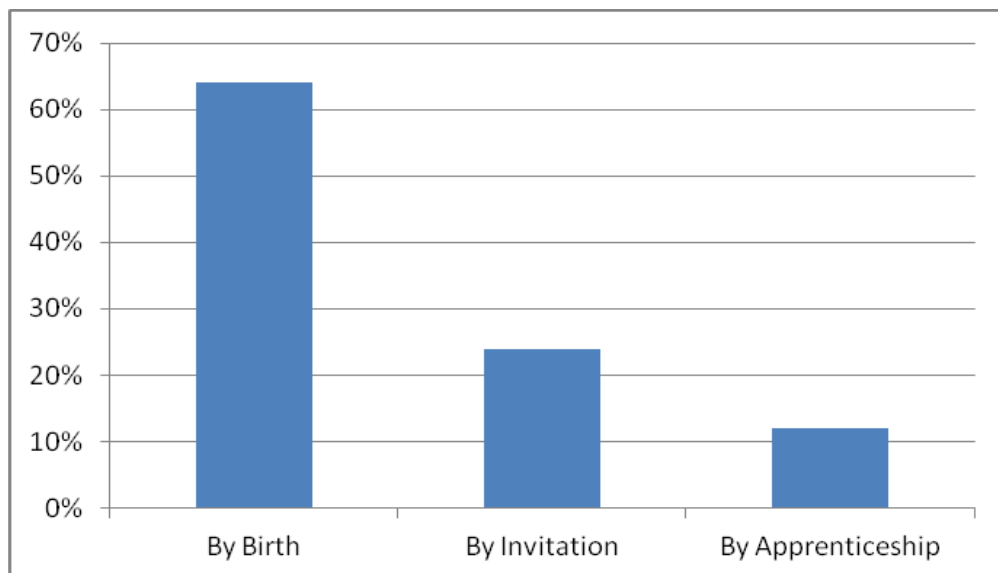
<sup>22</sup> It was usual practice for sons to be apprenticed out. Fathers used their network connections of family friends or business to find a suitable place for their sons. See, Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman*; Laird, *Pull*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>23</sup> William Chamberlain became a Freeman on completion of his apprenticeship in 1748, and William Morris became a Freeman in 1757.

and the opportunities to advance their status within the community. Nevertheless there was also a downside to apprenticeship, what Ogilvie has referred to as the dark side of social capital: employers could also act as gatekeepers, limiting knowledge flow, restricting access to potential networks and influential people, and slowing business and social advancement of the apprentice.<sup>24</sup>

After completing an apprenticeship, a man registered as a freeman of the town. Becoming a freeman was important on many levels. First, it acknowledged the apprentice's ability within a trade. Second, it conferred the right to trade, and third, the right to engage apprentices. Lastly, it provided the right to stand for political office. Analysis of the Register of Freeman (Graph 4.1) revealed that of the serving Aldermen of the 1770s, 64 per cent registered as 'freeman by birth', 24 per cent were brought in through an invitation by the Assembly and Court of the Mayor and Aldermen, whilst 12 per cent registered after completing an apprenticeship.<sup>25</sup> Registering as a freeman of the town was of primary importance as the first step towards a means through which one could acquire elite status.

Graph 4.1 The Registration of Freeman relating to Aldermen of the 1770s.



Source: NBR 6/2, *Book of Freeman of the Town of Northampton 1770 'B'*.

<sup>24</sup> Ogilvie, *Institutions and European Trade*, p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> NBR 6/2, *Book of Freeman of the Town of Northampton 1770 'B'*.

*Gaining and maintaining status in the political arena.*

The Borough Corporation's role as an organisation, similar to many towns in the eighteenth century, was to act as a group representing the town interests and the townspeople.<sup>26</sup> Its main purpose was to promote trade by ensuring that people conducted internal trade according to regulations and ordinances, maintain the peace, grant all liberties and freedoms and ensure that the town received representation in Parliament.<sup>27</sup> The Corporation's financing came from charitable bequests, butcher's stalls and tolls.<sup>28</sup> The Corporation met quarterly and consisted of two tiers. The first was the General Assembly where all members attended and the second was the Court of the Mayor and Aldermen. The role of the latter was to address the administration of Corporation property and of freemen and apprentices. They also voted pensions to themselves, and exercised the patronage and administration of charities.<sup>29</sup> Evidence shows that, during the 1770s, the Northampton Corporation did little to enhance the town or the lives of its inhabitants.<sup>30</sup> The town's political elite were not unusual in such practices: Clark's research on the medium sized market town of Loughborough, 38 miles from Northampton, suggests that the local urban elite did little to enhance that town either.<sup>31</sup>

Stobart has noted in his research on Chester that the status of Alderman may not have transferred beyond the town's boundaries.<sup>32</sup> This thesis does not explore whether status as a Northampton Alderman extended beyond the town's geographic area. Nevertheless, civic duty in Northampton was the route toward elite status in the eighteenth century and it was assumed that all freemen would be available to perform their duty at least once during their lifetime.<sup>33</sup> Northampton had approximately one thousand men registered as freemen who were available to serve on the Corporation common councillors.<sup>34</sup> The Corporation was not a united or homogeneous organisation

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<sup>26</sup> P. Clark, 'The Civic Leaders of Gloucester 1580-1800', in *The Transformation of English Provincial Towns*, ed. by P. Clark (London: Hutchinson, 1984), pp. 311-338.

<sup>27</sup> Cox, *The Records of the Borough of Northampton*, p. 20.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>30</sup> P. Clark, 'Elite Networking and the Formation of an Industrial Town: Loughborough, 1700-1840', in *Towns, Regions and Industries: Urban and Industrial Change in the Midlands, c1700-1840*, ed. by J. Stobart, and N. Raven (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 161, p. 170.

<sup>31</sup> Clark, 'Elite Networking and the Formation of an Industrial Town', p. 162.

<sup>32</sup> Stobart, 'Who Were the Urban Gentry', pp. 89-112.

<sup>33</sup> Cox, *The Records of the Borough of Northampton*.

<sup>34</sup> *NBR 6/2 Register of Freeman; Poll Books (1768, 1774)*.



beyond that of religion.<sup>35</sup> Although Northampton was divided along the lines of Anglican Church and non-conformists, this division was not reflected in the makeup of the borough corporation, all of its members being Church of England – a result of the Corporation Act in 1661 and the Test Act of 1673, which excluded Catholics, Jews and Non-conformists from holding political office. The businesses occupations of the Borough Corporation members covered a plethora of trades which ranged from tanners to inn holders and grocer to shoe maker. No single trade group was able to dominate the proceedings either in full assembly or during the Court of Mayor and Aldermen.<sup>36</sup>

It was the Aldermen who selected the common councillors, the bailiffs, chamberlain and mayor. The political selectiveness which the Aldermen practiced in Northampton was not dissimilar to that of Canterbury or Chester whose Corporation members also originated from the town's business world and who were equally selective in their membership.<sup>37</sup> In this respect, a handful of local elites governed Northampton. This reflects a pattern and practice of eighteenth century local governance in many towns and cities across Britain which Beatrice and Sidney Webb's research on statutory authority highlighted in 1922.<sup>38</sup> The immediate recognisable benefit was that the practice enabled the political elite to exercise exclusion. They selected those with whom they shared common bonds of trust and network reciprocity.

The first step towards recognition as a member of the political elite was for the Court of the Mayor and Aldermen to select individuals for service as a common councillor for the Borough.<sup>39</sup> Having served as a common councillor, a man could receive higher status if selected to serve as a town bailiff. The duties were to act as support to the mayor, to select jurors and to collect debt.<sup>40</sup> Generally, the ex-bailiffs or Office of Chamberlain selected the mayor. There were however, some exceptions. For example, in 1766, John Davis was selected by the Aldermen directly from the pool of 48 common councillors as mayor for that year without having completed a period as bailiff for the town.<sup>41</sup> As a member of the political elite, the position of mayor was significant. It

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<sup>35</sup> R. Greenall, *A History of Northamptonshire*, p. 84.

<sup>36</sup> Cox, *The Records of the Borough of Northampton*, pp. 554-556.

<sup>37</sup> Ruggiu, 'The Urban Gentry in England', p. 257; Stobart, 'Who Were the Urban Gentry', p. 94.

<sup>38</sup> S. Webb and B. Webb *Statutory Authorities for Special Purposes* (London: Frank Cass, 1963), p. 245.

<sup>39</sup> Cox, *The Records of the Borough of Northampton*, p. 20.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

announced to the wider community that an individual had achieved a degree of trustworthiness and reliability recognised by his peers and to be recognised by others. However the real power lay with the ex-mayors, the Aldermen, who could dictate the Borough Corporation's political direction and, more importantly, had acquired political, social and business networks through which they might maintain their status within the community.

It was common practice in the eighteenth century to show preference to family members; for example, sons following in their father's footsteps. The most noticeable example is that of the Thompson family. Two of Alderman George Thompson's sons, Henry and William, had a dramatic rise through the Corporation. The average period of time between becoming a freeman of the borough and a serving Alderman in the 1770s was 22 years. William Thompson took ten years whilst his brother, Henry, completed the transition in eight. Their rapid rise into the political arena may have less in common with Pareto's definition of an elite as the 'strongest, the most able and the most active' than their political and family network contacts.<sup>42</sup> The fact that William, Henry and their father, George Thompson, were related by marriage to Lord Northampton, and that George also acted as Lord Northampton's political agent may well have contributed to William and Henry's rapid rise within Northampton's Borough Council.<sup>43</sup>

There are other examples of sons following fathers into the political world of Northampton, although none shows the rapid rise of the Thompsons. John Gibson, father of William, served as mayor in 1745, John Newcome (senior) served as Mayor in 1742 and Thomas King, grandfather of William, served in Office of Mayor in 1736.<sup>44</sup> However, although family nepotism may have been common practice generally, in Northampton it appears to have been the exception in the political arena. The greater number of individuals who served in the Office of Mayor between the years 1736 and 1780 had no direct family connections with those who had already gained elites status through serving as mayor, chamberlain or bailiffs.<sup>45</sup> This suggests that, although family

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<sup>42</sup> Pareto, *Mind and Society*.

<sup>43</sup> V. Hatley, 'The Northampton Elections of 1774: An Eye Witness Account', *Northamptonshire Antiquarian Society*, 5 (1939), p. 21.

<sup>44</sup> Cox, *The Records of the Borough of Northampton*, pp. 554-570.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

networks could benefit individuals, they were not essential for political office in Northampton.

Ruggiu has suggested that ‘civic function tended to discourage rather than promote social advancement during the eighteenth century’, but analysis of the evidence used in this case study suggests that business and tradesmen in Northampton did recognise political and civic duty as a means of gaining and maintaining status within the community.<sup>46</sup> However, the elite world of politics required recognition by contemporaries of conformity to the views and values of those in office as Aldermen. In 1794, an enquiry into the refusal of individuals to take political office as a common councillor and the inability of the Borough Corporation to maintain 48 common councillors concluded that it resulted from the Alderman’s practice of self-selecting people for office. The investigator, Mr Hall, went so far as to suggest that the Aldermen had over many years deliberately chosen individuals whom they knew would not serve on the Corporation with the express aim of maintaining power and limiting opposition on the Corporation.<sup>47</sup> Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the enquiry findings did not affect or interrupt the practice of self-selecting and it was not until 1835 that the practice ended. In effect then, the Aldermen of the 1770s have met Pareto’s definition of elite.<sup>48</sup> Their strength of numbers ensured their capability to actively exclude others and remain an exclusive group within Northampton.

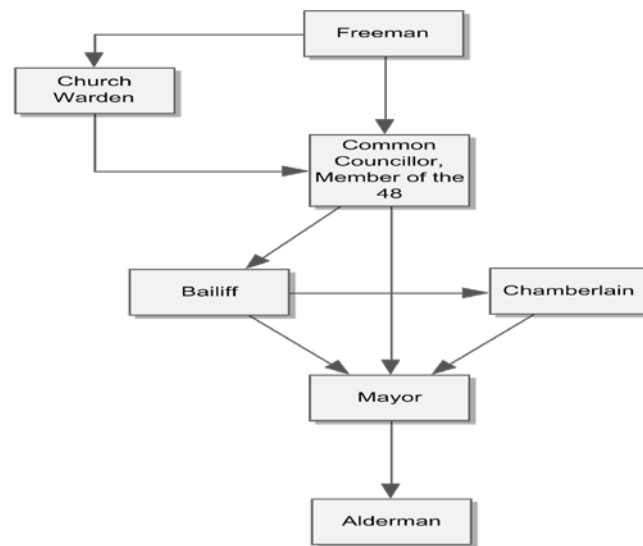
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<sup>46</sup> Ruggiu, ‘The Urban Gentry in England’, p. 267.

<sup>47</sup> Cox, *The Records of the Borough of Northampton*, p. 24.

<sup>48</sup> Pareto, *The Rise and Fall of Elites*, p. 36.

Figure 4.1: Route to gaining political status in eighteenth-century Northampton.



Source: Cox, *The Records of the Borough of Northampton*, pp. 554-556.

*Gaining and maintaining status in the business arena.*

In recent years historians have been engaging with the concept of social capital and its uses and benefits to individuals and groups. Much of the research on social capital during the eighteenth century has concentrated on the merchant networks. As mentioned in the literature review, Pearson and Richardson, and Stobart have discussed the importance of trust and reputation intrinsic to eighteenth-century merchant networks, noting that merchants were often engaged in a civic role within the community.<sup>49</sup> The importance of business in gaining and maintaining status is therefore an area of interest which this sub section explores. The research pays attention to how individuals gained business success and further examines the overlapping political and business networks of the Aldermen. The aim is to show that the resources to which the Aldermen had access could potentially produce social capital through which they were able to maintain elite status.

Wilson has suggested that the introduction of the 1720 Bubble Act restricted the growth of large companies in the eighteenth century. Restrictions on the number of company directors and of non-transferable shares coupled with the general expenses involved with incorporating a company meant that most businesses remained, as in earlier

<sup>49</sup> Pearson and Richardson, 'Business Networking in the Industrial Revolution', p. 673; Stobart, 'Information, Trust and Reputation', pp. 298-307.

centuries, in personal ownership.<sup>50</sup> Indeed there was only one incorporated company in Northampton during the eighteenth century, the ‘Joint Stock Navigation Company, Western Division’.<sup>51</sup> In his research of nineteenth- and twentieth-century business behaviour and practices W. Rubinstein observed that, ‘the majority of economic activity was conducted overwhelmingly in one trade or line of business, and other interests as a side line to their main field’, his statement is equally relevant to Northampton’s businessmen of the eighteenth century.<sup>52</sup> They acted independently within their primary business or trade and, with the exception of family partnerships, only jointly or with others as a secondary economic activity. Their success in business was often translated into the accumulation of land and property which as Thompson has suggested served as ‘a jumping off point for power and office’.<sup>53</sup> Again, Northampton was no exception to the rule: business success was an important component in selecting an individual as a member of the common council; it was also a contributing factor in gaining a position as an Alderman of the town. Just as importantly, once political success had been achieved, Northampton’s Alderman continued in their primary business and in their acquisition of land and property to maintain status. Table 4.1 shows the occupations of the Northampton Aldermen and the dates of their political rise to the position of Alderman.

Table 4.1 List of Aldermen 1770-1780.

Name		Occupation	Bailiff	Chamberlain	Mayor	Alderman and JP
Moor	Richard	Unknown	1744	No	1751	1752
Plackett	John	Tailor	1740	1742, 1744	1752	1753
Thompson	George	Victualler	1746	1748, 1751	1753	1754
Jeffcutt	Henry	Grocer	1746	1752, 1753	1754	1755
Jackson	William	Surgeon	1752	No	1755	1756
Stamford	Farrin	Unknown	1729	1737	1756	1757
Lucas	Robert	Unknown	1747	Unknown	1757	1758
Ward	Lucas	Gent	No	Unknown	1758	1759

<sup>50</sup> J. Wilson, *British Business History, 1720-1994* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 44.

<sup>51</sup> XYZ 1287a, *Joint Stock Nene Navigation* (1759).

<sup>52</sup> W. Rubinstein, *The Very Wealthy in Britain Since the Industrial Revolution* (London: Croom Helm, 1981), p. 58.

<sup>53</sup> Thompson, *Customs in Common*, p. 26.

Fox	John	Cooper	1750	Unknown	1759	1760
Tyres	Robert	Tin man	1739	1749, 1750	1760	1761
Morris	Robert	Yeoman	1753	No	1761	1762
Giles	William	Unknown		Unknown	1762	1763
Elston	Joseph	Ironmonger	1759	No	1763	1764
Davis	William	Inn Holder	1763	No	1764	1765
Baalam	Robert	Painter	1751	1764	1765	1766
Davies	John	Unknown	No	No	1766	1767
Breton	Thomas	Apothecary	1766	No	1767	1768
Edwards	John	Gent	1766	1767	1768	1769
Woolley	Henry	School Master	1768	No	1769	1770
Sturgiss	Samuel	Tanner	1764	No	1770	1771
Gibson	William	Maltster	1767	1768, 1769	1771	1772
King	William	Grocer	1770	No	1772	1773
Thompson	Henry	Currier	1769	1770	1773	1774
Kerby	Edward	Plumber	1768	1771,1772, 1773	1774	1775
Newcombe	John	Draper	1767	1774	1775	1776
Chamberlain	William	Hatter	1773	No	1776	1777
Trasler	Robert	Baker	1760	No	1777	1778
Cole	Edward	Yeoman	1770	No	1778	1779
Clarke	James	Shoemaker	1775	No	1779	1780
Thompson	William	Victualler	1774	1775, 1776	1780	1781

Source: Cox, *The Records of the Borough of Northampton; Poll Books* (1768, 1796, 1818). The data for the Chamberlains 1754-1764 are missing. The Aldermen column signifies the year an individual became Alderman, and automatically serve one year as a Justice of the Peace.

During the 1770s, the number of serving Aldermen fluctuated between 19 and 30 and their business occupations varied from merchant to tanner.<sup>54</sup> Colli and Rose have suggested that, in the eighteenth century, the ‘family business represented a predictable response to instability and uncertainty and became the central pivot of a network of trust’.<sup>55</sup> However, only half of the Aldermen of the 1770s followed their father’s main trade or business. For example, William Chamberlain became a hatter like his father, William Morris a yeoman, and William Thompson a victualler; whilst William Gibson,

<sup>54</sup> NBR 4/3, *Book of Freemen of the Town, ‘B’* (1730); NBR 3/6, *Minutes of the Court of Mayor and Aldermen Assembly Book 1770 ‘B’*.

<sup>55</sup> A. Colli and M. Rose, ‘Family Business Review’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Business History*, ed. by G. Jones and J. Zeitlin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 194-218.

Henry Woolley and Samuel Sturgiss's businesses were independent of family business interests.<sup>56</sup>

Although a lack of opportunity within the family business may have been an incentive for some individuals to strike out on their own, it may also be that the family business was not pivotal to economic success or status. It is possible that some men may have felt it prudent to show their independence as a badge of competency and ability in business with the aim of gaining political position and power in the future. As Laird has suggested in her study of America, no man could be completely independent of help; this was true of William Gibson and others who received financial assistance through the inheritance of money and property, and Edward Kerby and Henry Woolley who received money and property upon marriage.<sup>57</sup> This not only gave them financial security, but raised their status and networking opportunities.

There were several routes through which a man could ultimately become successful in business. The first was simply through hard work and good business acumen. A second and common route was using an employer's good name and reputation upon completion of apprenticeship.<sup>58</sup> For example, James Whitney utilised his connections with Alderman Edward Kerby in his advertisement of a new business on completion of his apprenticeship.<sup>59</sup> The third route in Northampton was to make an application to the Corporation for funds from Sir Thomas White's Charity. The charity was open to all freemen between the ages of 25 and 35 years, and stipulated that recipients could use the money as part of a mortgage for a property of not more than £200 or for funding a business venture. The loan amount was £50 which the recipient had to pay back over a nine year period.<sup>60</sup> Several of the serving Aldermen of the 1770s made use of this funding opportunity, as did many of the town's tradesmen. In 1772, serving members of the Corporation, Samuel Sturgiss, William Gibson and William Davis, all repaid

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<sup>56</sup> *NBR 3/6, Minutes of the Court of Mayor and Aldermen Assembly Book 1770 'B'; Poll Book (1768); Register of Apprentices Book 'B' (1721).*

<sup>57</sup> Laird, *Pull*; *NPL 2685, Will of John Gibson; D 3698, Will of Alderman Edward Bailey; NPL 2279, Will of John Newcome (senior); NP L2296 and YZ 8014.*

<sup>58</sup> See, Laird, *Pull and Haggerty, Merely for Money.*

<sup>59</sup> 'Advertisement, James Whitney', *Northampton Mercury*, 21 February (1776), p. 3.

<sup>60</sup> *ZB 667/2/50, Sir Thomas White Charity; NBR 3/7 Assembly Book (1796-1818); NBR 3/5, Assembly Book 'B'.*

their loans.<sup>61</sup> The three routes to success did, nevertheless, require good network contacts based upon trust and trustworthiness.

The archival material examined in this research suggests that partnerships, or rather alliances in business in eighteenth-century Northampton, were rarely lifelong commitments outside of the family circle. People entered into them as single ventures. Normal family partnerships were often pairing of father and son as with the printers Birdsall or Dicey, who not only ran a printing business, but produced the local newspaper, the *Northampton Mercury*.<sup>62</sup> The family partnership of John Lacy and Son, booksellers and local bank owners, is an example of the integration between Northampton's business, social and political world. Not only had John Lacy become a successful businessman, but in 1781 he became a bailiff which he followed with two terms as Chamberlain of the Borough Corporation.<sup>63</sup> Lacy also held other positions of importance within the community: he was treasurer of the Northampton General Hospital Funds, treasurer of the Joint Navigation Stock Company and a trustee of the All Saints Church property.<sup>64</sup>

The records show business activity in the selling or leasing of property and land outside of the primary activity of trade by several of the serving Aldermen during the 1770s. For example, victualler William Gibson, plumber Edward Kerby, shoemaker Thomas Hall and scrivener William Gates owned and sold the Goat Inn to victualler James Miller; Stephen Gaudern and the Rev. Frost, meanwhile, leased arable land to gardener John Gibson, victualler George Thompson and others.<sup>65</sup> The sale of land and property was not limited to residents of Northampton. In 1780, William Gibson sold land and property - business premises in Northampton - to City of London oilman William Fox for £400. The property does not appear to have been advertised and thus suggests that Gibson had networks which extended outside of the county.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> *NBR 8/2, Mayoral Accounts 'B'* (1772).

<sup>62</sup> See publisher's names on issues of *Northampton Mercury*.

<sup>63</sup> Cox, *The Records of the Borough of Northampton*, pp. 554-556.

<sup>64</sup> 'Northampton General Hospital', *Northampton Mercury*, 9 September (1771), p. 3; 'All Saints Church', *Northampton Mercury*, 1 July (1771), p. 2; 'Nene Navigation', *Northampton Mercury*, 2 October (1775) p. 1.

<sup>65</sup> *WB(N) 21, Conveyance of Property; Poll Books (1768, 1774); ZB 542/12/7-6, Lease of Land; XYZ 2015, Lease Agreement.*

<sup>66</sup> *XYZ 864 Conveyance of Property; XYZ 863 Conveyance of Property.*



Land and property ownership, whether freehold or leasehold, was an important commodity during the eighteenth century. As Thompson has noted, property ownership was often a pre-requisite for political inclusion.<sup>67</sup> It appears that short-term partnerships were not an uncommon practice and often emerged from the dense network of business, social and political connections.<sup>68</sup> There are several possible reasons for this. First, there was a reduction in personal financial outlay: the more individuals involved in the scheme, the less each individual stood to lose should the venture fail. Second, owning property or land, even on a short-term basis, brought economic and social recognition. Third, if they did not sell it, family members often passed on land to other family members as a legacy. Fourth, joint ventures in property were the physical presentation of network contacts and fifth, the owners could use the property against loans or mortgages. Lastly, property was a display of economic success, a route into elite status in the accumulation of social capital.

The practice of patronage and the traditional custom of economic gain through political office were thoroughly embedded in society by the eighteenth century and Northampton was no different to other towns and cities of the period.<sup>69</sup> In particular, the office of Alderman produced the unique opportunity for the acquisition and use of knowledge, and the Aldermen used this advantage to increase their economic and thus social status as elites. The knowledge available to the Aldermen of Corporation leases' expiry dates - including land, buildings and road tolls - provided the opportunity for business activity and economic gain. Once an individual expressed an interest in applying for a Corporation lease, the body of Aldermen decided whether the application should proceed. We can thus attribute success at least in part to good network ties. For example, the Abstract of Corporation Leases show that in 1755, Alderman John Fox leased grounds and stables from the Corporation in All Saints parish of Northampton for the term of ninety-nine years, at £2 per year.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, new business opportunities that involved leasing and renting Corporation property could not always come to immediate fruition. The limited number of leases for Corporation property meant that they were often purchased years in advance of an existing lease expiring,

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<sup>67</sup> Thompson, *Customs in Common*, p. 26.

<sup>68</sup> Wilson, *British Business History*, p. 47.

<sup>69</sup> J. Clemis, 'Government in an English Provincial Town: the Corporation of Ipswich, 1720-95' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leicester, 1999), p. 142.

<sup>70</sup> *NBR 9/2 Abstract of Corporation Leases 1730-1769*.

thus delaying an Alderman's new business venture.<sup>71</sup> In 1769, Alderman William Gibson leased all the Corporation road tolls for a period of 14 years beginning in 1772, with the express aim of renting out each toll. In the same year, Henry Thompson bought the Corporation lease for a tenement in Newlands for £8 per year, although the 31 year lease did not begin until 1775.<sup>72</sup> The Aldermen of Northampton practiced equality among equals to ensure that business opportunities, via the Corporation, produced an exclusivity of actual and future financial capital. This forward planning suggests that, to maintain the recognition of elite business status, the Aldermen needed to constantly reaffirm their business ability and economic capital.

*Gaining and maintaining status in the social arena.*

Social acceptance was undoubtedly paramount in the acquisition of elite status in the eighteenth century. It was important to have the right connections and move in the right social circles if access to potential social capital and status was to be realised.<sup>73</sup> Marriage was one possible way in which one could attain almost immediate acceptance, Thompson noting that eighteenth-century society was becoming more acceptable of marriages between the aristocracy and those involved in the industrial or entrepreneurial trades.<sup>74</sup> We can see examples of this in Northampton. George Thompson was uncle by marriage to Lady Northampton, which afforded him personal interaction with the local aristocracy and brought him social recognition.<sup>75</sup> The Rev. Woolley married the comparatively wealthy spinster Elizabeth Sewell, which brought financial stability and enabled the Reverend to enter into local politics and other social activities.<sup>76</sup> Social, business and political life and networks were thus interwoven and overlapping in Northampton during the 1770s and the overlapping networks were facilitated through social activities.

Church attendance offered the Aldermen and leading citizens the opportunity to display their status within society. Whilst the dissenting Baptist congregations encouraged social mingling, the Anglican churches of the Aldermen offered the opportunity to display their social status. There were areas within most Anglican churches where the

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<sup>71</sup> *NBR 9/2 Abstract of Corporation Leases 1730-1769.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*; Cox, *The Records of the Borough of Northampton.*

<sup>73</sup> Laird, *Pull*, p. 25.

<sup>74</sup> Thompson, *Gentrification and the Enterprise.*

<sup>75</sup> Hatley, 'The Northampton Elections of 1774', p. 21.

<sup>76</sup> *NPL 2296; YZ 8014.*

local elite would sit and worship together in clear view, but separated from the lower ranks of society, and it was not unusual for members of the elite to have purchased their pews as Edward Kirby did in 1763.<sup>77</sup> In All Saints Church, Northampton, there are several plaques which name Aldermen and other leading citizens of the community. They are an outward display of the importance that the church gave to those individuals, but also an acknowledgement of the men's contribution to the wider community.<sup>78</sup> Equally important, we can view these plaques as a display of family wealth and status to the wider community of Northampton.

Similar to other towns, there were other activities in Northampton where the local elite often met.<sup>79</sup> Northampton held an annual horse race which many of the townspeople attended and there were regular cock-fights on the grounds of Northampton's inns. In the summer there was cricket and bowls, although Borsay has suggested that, towards the end of the eighteenth-century, bowls was a becoming less attractive pastime within fashionable society<sup>80</sup>. Nevertheless, in 1771, several Aldermen sanctioned the leasing of land in Kingsthorpe to Councillor Samuel Treslove for the specific purpose of establishing a subscription only bowling green.<sup>81</sup> Membership was limited to an exclusive group of individuals with a degree of economic freedom, mostly Aldermen and successful businessmen: those with established overlapping networks and friendships. As Borsay has noted such activities offered the opportunity for individuals to see and be seen.<sup>82</sup> In 1770s Northampton, as elsewhere, they provided not only amusement and sport but social and business networking opportunities that were essential for gaining and maintaining status.

The *British Directory* records that Northampton had 91 inns; they were open to all members of society, and men often met there for business, social and political

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<sup>77</sup> ZA 9940 *Contract of Purchase of Church Pew*.

<sup>78</sup> There are memorial plaques to several local elite individuals in All Saints Church, Northampton. These include Alderman Thomas Hall, John Newcome, and Sir James Stonehouse, the surgeon of Northampton General Infirmary.

<sup>79</sup> J. Black, *Eighteenth-Century Britain 1688-1783*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 105.

<sup>80</sup> P. Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town 1660-1770* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>81</sup> Advertisement, 'Bowling Green Subscription', *Northampton Mercury* 29 July (1771), p. 3.

<sup>82</sup> Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance*, p. 178.

interaction.<sup>83</sup> Between 1771 and 1797, the Court of Mayor and Aldermen met nine times in the George Hotel and seven times at the Angel Inn.<sup>84</sup> This displayed not only their status as local political elites, but allowed them to portray a sense of corporate solidarity and unity.

There were also a series of ordinaries each year which began during the winter months.<sup>85</sup> These occasions included dancing, card playing and other entertainment for many of the local elite, men and women alike, and afforded an opportunity to reaffirm established social networks. As with many of the activities of the social elite, Ordinaries or Assemblies required subscription and were limited to those of social standing as a 1775 advertisement hints:<sup>86</sup>

Three Assemblies for the ensuing months are proposed on the following terms at the Peacock Inn. Ladies to subscribe 10s 6d. Gentlemen 15s. No other expense will attend to the evening. Tea, Cards, Music, Negus, Cakes etc. will be paid out of the Subscription. Subscribers will be good enough to send their servants this week to set their names down in the subscription. Non-subscribers to pay ladies 5s Gentlemen 7s 6d, and it is expected they are to be introduced by a subscriber.<sup>87</sup>

Subscribing to worthy causes such as the Northampton Infirmary was a sign of economic and social status. Although the governors of the infirmary were members of the aristocracy and gentry, the subscription lists were important. The yearly publication provided written confirmation of commitment to the whole community and went towards enhancing reputation and status. Indeed, subscription to worthy causes was a traditionally recognised means through which one could exhibit economic and social status and was the core of the public space.<sup>88</sup> Surprisingly, less than half of the Aldermen made donations or subscribed to Northampton's General Infirmary over the period of one decade, 1770 to 1780. This suggests that those individuals were excluded

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<sup>83</sup> *The British Directory* (1791).

<sup>84</sup> Cox, *The Records of the Borough of Northampton*, p. 51.

<sup>85</sup> 'Meeting', *Northampton Mercury*, 27 November (1775), p. 3.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> 'Ordinary', *Northampton Mercury*, 27 November (1775), p. 4.

<sup>88</sup> Price, *British Society*, p. 195.

from the Annual General Meeting and therefore, could not engage in productive networking in this context, thus limiting involvement as a group.

Subscribing or donating to the ‘deserving poor’ appears to have been an annual occurrence during the 1770s. During the winter months the *Northampton Mercury* would ask ‘eminent persons’ to donate funds or goods such as firewood or blankets.<sup>89</sup> Without question, the local landed gentry did so and the newspapers often reported their contributions. The newspaper did not acknowledge the donations from other citizens beyond that of requesting their attendance at meetings to deliberate upon whom should receive the donations.<sup>90</sup> In a period of history when paternalism and *noblesse oblige* were the cultural norm, any established or budding elite would not only have donated, but reputation would have demanded that he attend such meetings and in doing so, enhance his reputation.<sup>91</sup>

The social activities available in Northampton during the 1770s were varied and numerous. Social interaction could be financially costly; nevertheless, by engaging in subscription donations, attending ‘ordinaries’ and entering into sporting and other leisure activities individuals had the opportunity to access and strengthen networks whilst simultaneously defining and protecting their status. Church attendance displayed conformity to social norms and values of Northampton’s political elite. For a man to become a member of the political elite, an Alderman in Northampton, he needed to develop economic, social and political contacts; and economic capital was the facilitator of social capital and thus elite status in eighteenth-century Northampton.

## **Section 2: Personal Networks**

Bourdieu has suggested that ‘individuals do not move about in a random way’.<sup>92</sup> The importance of this statement from a social capital perspective is the suggestion that connections of importance are strategically rather than randomly made. It is therefore the way in which individuals optimise their network memberships and contacts, their

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<sup>89</sup> ‘Donations for the Poor’, *Northampton Mercury* 6 January (1776), p. 3.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> C. Williams, ‘Expediency, Authority and Duplicity: Reforming Sheffield’s Police 1832-40’, in *Urban Governance: Britain and Beyond since 1750*, ed. by R. J. Morris and R. H. Trainor (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), p. 118.

<sup>92</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. 10.

use of 'strong and weak ties' and the bridging of 'structural holes' that have the potential to produce social capital.<sup>93</sup> Shared values and social norms, often unwritten rules of behaviour, help individuals and groups to build levels of trust facilitating network interaction.<sup>94</sup> It was through regular network interaction that trust and reputation could be built and status achieved.<sup>95</sup> It is therefore the networks of the Northampton Aldermen that this section of the chapter discusses. It considers two types of networks: the immature contacts of 'guardianship' networks and the mature 'established' networks and their role and importance in gaining social capital and elite status.

*'Guardianship Networks'*.<sup>96</sup>

It is apparent that, during their normal course of business, Northampton's Aldermen instigated network ties to produce both economic and political advantage to gain and maintain elite status within the community. As businessmen, their networking behaviour was similar to that of other businessmen of the period; they were members of existing networks, but also instigators of new networks. One long established means of becoming a member of a business network was by serving an apprenticeship.<sup>97</sup> It was through apprenticeship that access to potential social capital could be gained. First, the apprentice embraced a trade, and elders and mentors expected him to become competent at that trade. Second, apprenticeships were a time when young men earned trust, which is an important asset for social capital. They could prove their individual honesty and start establishing their personal reputation to the employer, customer and the wider community. Third, it was a training ground for interpersonal relationships and fledgling networks, in which apprentices could experiment under the protection of

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<sup>93</sup> Burt, 'The Social Structure of Competition', pp. 57-87; Granovetter, 'The Strength of Weak Ties', pp. 1360-1380.

<sup>94</sup> Carlos, *et al.* 'A knavish people'; Pearson, and Richardson, 'Business Networking in the Industrial Revolution'; Stobart, 'Information, Trust and Reputation'; Baker and Faulkner, 'Social Capital, Double Embeddedness', p. 1550.

<sup>95</sup> Baker and Faulkner, 'Social Capital, Double Embeddedness', p. 1550; Laird, *Pull*, p. 2-3.

<sup>96</sup> This research utilises the term 'guardianship network' as a definition for a network which provides protection and education, allowing an individual to grow in the confidence and competency of joining, utilising and expanding existing networks and initiating new networks, under guidance of a recognised and or established senior individual. Laird, *Pull*; Laird uses 'mentor' to describe a similar interaction and use of a network, p. 7.

<sup>97</sup> See, Laird, *Pull*, on mentoring, patronage and gatekeepers.

the employer. Lastly and most importantly, apprenticeships gave access to established networks within society, business and politics.<sup>98</sup>

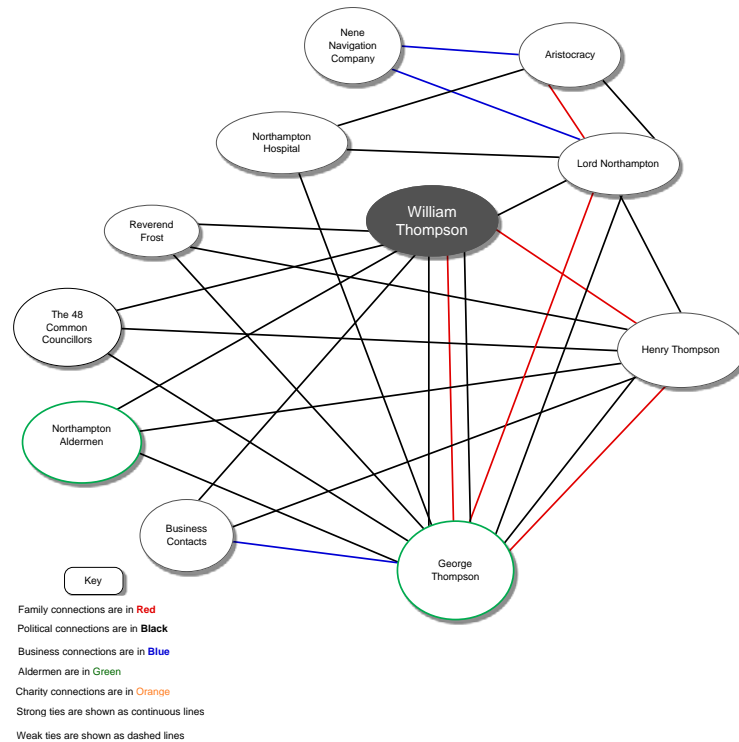
The complexity of ‘guardianship networks’ can best be examined through two detailed examples: Aldermen William Thompson (Figure 4.2) and William Gibson (Figure 4.3). Apprenticeship networks in the eighteenth century consisted of many main strands; familial, employer and friendship, and in the case of Thompson and Gibson, political. However, their strongest ties were between family members, other ties shown in the diagrams are weak ties through which potential access to social capital might be gained.

Apprenticed to his father, an Alderman, William Thompson’s ‘guardianship’ network clearly shows that there were two main network strands. The more influential of the two is, undoubtedly, family connections. It was through his father’s established network that William had access to the aristocracy, the county’s landed gentry, the business world and political connections. With the first of these, the network map shows that it was William’s family connection to Lord Northampton that potentially provided him with an unearned degree of social status among the Northampton community. This was an asset which he might translate into usable business and social capital later in life. As an apprentice, William was unable to conduct business in his own right and therefore relied upon indirect business links through his father’s network. Whilst initially these connections were ‘weak ties’, over the period of his seven year apprenticeship, William may have consolidated those connections and potentially increased his business networks and thus social capital for future use. Similarly, through his father’s political networks, William was introduced to political activity and local politicians. It was through those connections that William had access to common councillors and the town’s Aldermen. Again by cultivating his father’s networks over time William was able to build political alliances, thus increasing his overall potential access to social capital and, in particular, political capital for later use.

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<sup>98</sup> Laird, *Pull*; Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman*, p. 14.

Figure 4.2 William Thompson's Guardianship Network.



Sources: *NBR 4/3 Register of Freeman*; *NBR 6/2 Book of Enrolment of Apprentices*; *NGH List of Subscribers*; *NBR 3/5 and NBR 3/6 Minutes of the Court of Mayor and Aldermen, Assembly Book*; *British Directory 1791*; Hatley, 'The Northampton Elections of 1774'.

Unlike Thompson, William Gibson was apprenticed out, so his guardianship network had three strands: family, friendship and employer (Figure 4.3). It is immediately apparent that the network distance between William Gibson and the aristocracy is greater than was the case for Thompson. Whilst the latter had an advantage of family association and thus an automatic social status, the degree of separation between Gibson and the aristocracy was such that it was unlikely to produce any realisable social capital. However, he may have gained some business network advantage over Thompson's strong network ties, from the separation of family and employer. The separation had the potential to produce a more extensive network of weak ties; networking opportunities which enabled a greater accumulation of business capital. As with the guardianship network of Thompson, Gibson also had access to political networks via his father, which again offered the opportunity of building loose political and business alliances for future utilisation in the acquisition of status. Both of these networks formed avenues for integration into existing networks and for the instigation and development of new ones. They provided actual and potential social capital which was necessary for the acquisition of elite status in eighteenth-century Northampton.



Figure 4.3 William Gibson’s Guardianship Network



Sources: *NBR 4/3 Register of Freeman*; *NBR 6/2 Book of Enrolment of Apprentices*; *NGH List of Subscribers*; *NBR 3/5 and NBR 3/6 Minutes of the Court of Mayor and Aldermen, Assembly Book*; *British Directory 1791*; Hatley, ‘The Northampton Elections of 1774’.

### *Established networks*

There is limited archival material to show the progression of political and economic capital networks of any of the established urban elite of the period. It is a problem which historians such as Pearson and Richardson, and Stobart, have encountered.<sup>99</sup> However, data is available to suggest how elites maintained their status. The data relating to two individuals was collated and used to reconstruct the established networks of the Aldermen William Gibson and William Thompson. Gibson’s network is discussed first and then Thompson, before both networks are overlaid to show their connectivity to each other and with other members of the Borough Corporation.

The first diagram (Figure 4.4 below) depicts William Gibson’s established network. It shows his connection to All Saints Church where he was a member of the trustees and therefore suggests that he had gained some status and trust among his contemporary Aldermen. That Gibson may have been considered trustworthy and capable can also be seen in his appointment by the Northampton’s Aldermen as a trustee in the bankruptcy

<sup>99</sup> See, Pearson and Richardson, ‘Business Networking in the Industrial Revolution’; Stobart, ‘Information, Trust and Reputation’.

case of the innkeeper, George Saunders.<sup>100</sup> Along with his friend, Robert Billson, Gibson was entrusted with publicising and conducting an auction to sell Saunders' property, goods and chattels; the money going towards paying his creditors. It is also likely that another means in which Gibson displayed his trustworthiness and business skills to his fellow politicians was in the repayment of a loan from Sir Thomas White's charity. The Aldermen as a group administered this charity and Gibson repaid this loan within the prescribed period prior to becoming mayor of the Corporation in 1771.<sup>101</sup>

Economic capital was important in maintaining elite status in the eighteenth century. Money provided the means to interact with influential or established individuals and groups and was the means of procuring property. People did not always conduct business on a face to face basis as Haggerty, Richardson and Pearson, and Stobart have demonstrated.<sup>102</sup> The evidence of Northampton Aldermen's business activities also suggests that some may have conducted business through a third party. Gibson's network diagram (Figure 4.4) shows his connection with the oilman William Fox, which suggests that Gibson also had business activities in London.<sup>103</sup> Whether he individual acted in the capacity of facilitator between members of his established networks is unclear, however, it is important to know that the possibility existed. Nevertheless, Gibson as with all of Northampton's Aldermen primarily conducted business with those with whom they had interpersonal relationships. Their political and social networks provided access to business connections through Corporation membership. That William Gibson may have established strong network ties with several Aldermen prior to becoming mayor and then Aldermen is reflected in his gaining several leases for Corporation property.<sup>104</sup> Gibson also held property which suggests he had economic ability and security.<sup>105</sup> More importantly, it was the interpersonal networking with other Borough Corporation members which enabled his acquisition of property. For example, in 1769, whilst still a common councillor, Gibson leased all Northampton 'road tolls' from the Corporation for 14 years at £87 half

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<sup>100</sup> ZB 142/10/1-30, Bankruptcy papers relating to George Saunders.

<sup>101</sup> NBR 3/5 *Minutes of the Court of Mayor and Aldermen*; NBR 3/6 *Minutes of the Court of Mayor and Aldermen*; *British Directory* (1791).

<sup>102</sup> See, Haggerty, *Merely for Money*; Pearson and Richardson, 'Business Networking in the Industrial Revolution'; Stobart, 'Information, Trust and Reputation'.

<sup>103</sup> XYZ 864 and XYZ 863 *Conveyances of Property*.

<sup>104</sup> NBR 9/2, *Abstract of Corporation Leases* (1730-1769).

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

yearly.<sup>106</sup> This was a large sum of money which intimates that Gibson was economically comfortable. That Gibson acquired the lease also indicates that he had established strong network ties with serving Aldermen prior to gaining office as town mayor. Figure 4.4 gives a clearer picture of the networks which were, by 1780, established and in operation for William Gibson. The green circles give the names of those with whom Gibson shared a network as members of the Borough Corporation's upper house. What is immediately apparent from the diagram is that many of the Corporation members were also trustees of All Saints Church. This membership overlap suggests that these individuals had established a degree of trust between them through serving on both bodies that produced the strength which Pareto suggests is an elite attribute.<sup>107</sup>

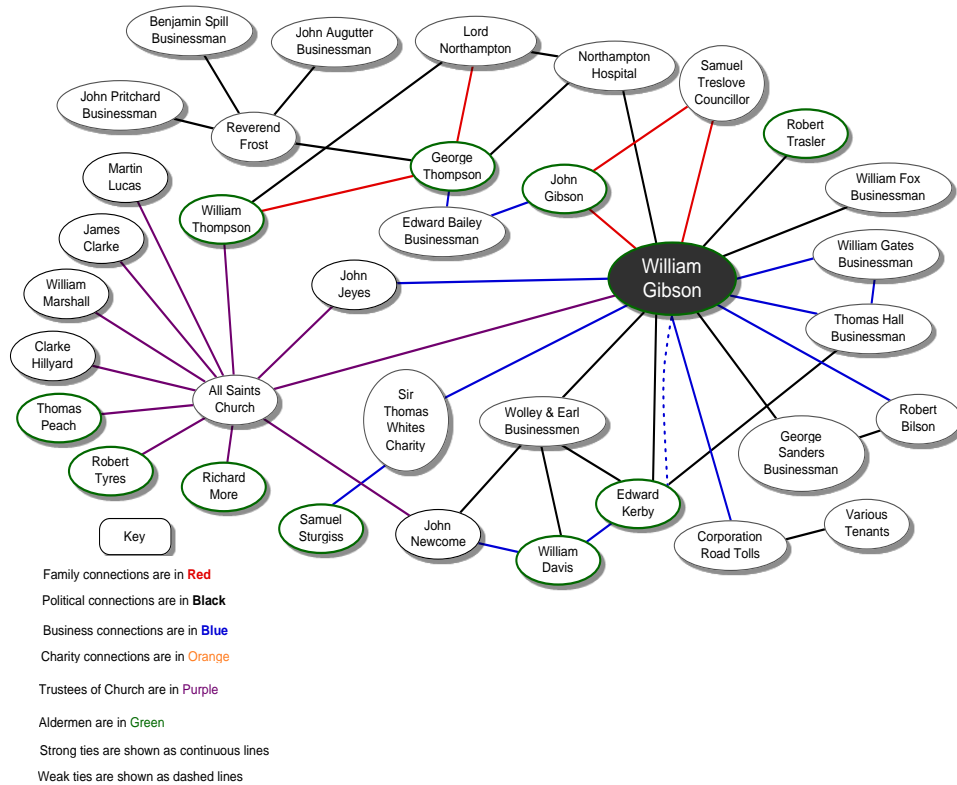
Gibson's established network also shows the indirect route to the aristocracy, through his donations to the Northampton Hospital and through his membership connection with Aldermen George and William Thompson's family links. There is no archival material to show whether Gibson ever directly used the links to the aristocracy, but he may have. Figure 4.4 also shows that there were few family connections for Gibson to draw upon in maintaining his status as a member of the political elite. However as his guardianship network showed (Figure 4.3), his father had been an Alderman and it is likely that William Gibson could have continued to access and use his father's political and business connections. The diagrammatic representation of Gibson's established network is typical of the majority of networks operated by Northampton's Aldermen during the 1770s.

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<sup>106</sup> *NBR 9/2, Abstract of Corporation Leases (1730-1769)*.

<sup>107</sup> Pareto, *Rise and Fall of Elites*, p. 36.

Figure 4.4: Established Network – William Gibson.

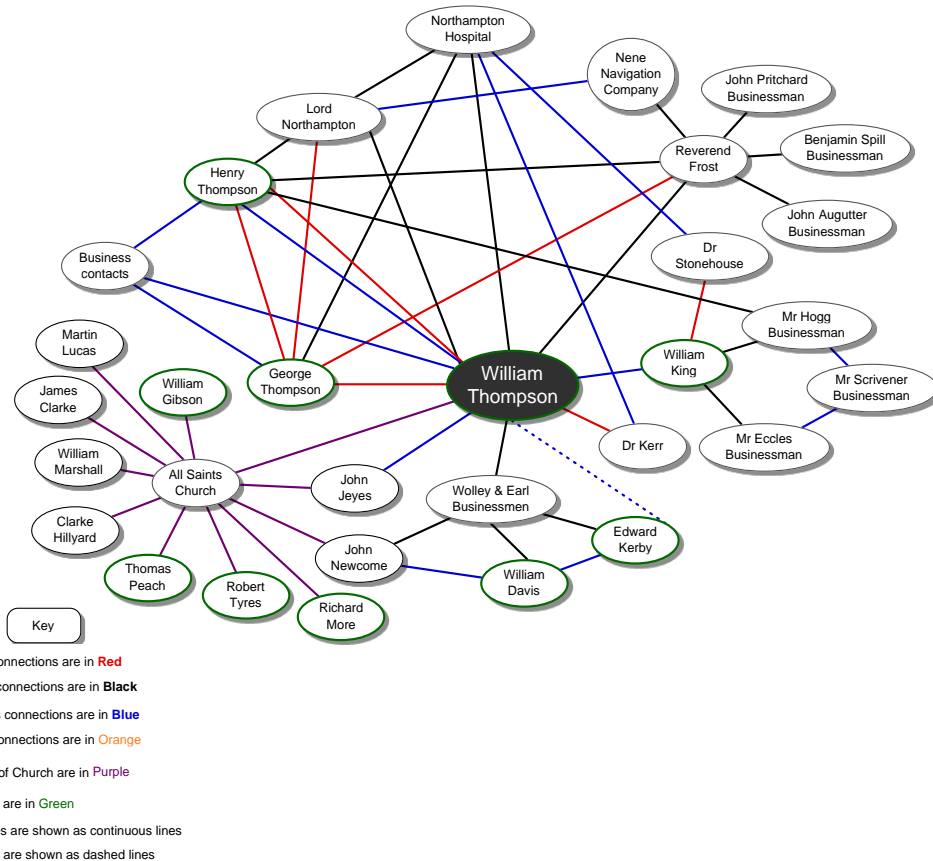


Sources: *NBR 4/3 Register of Freeman*; *NBR 6/2 Book of Enrolment of Apprentices*; *NGH List of Subscribers*; *NBR 3/5 Minutes of the Court of Mayor and Aldermen*; *NBR 3/6 Minutes of the Court of Mayor and Aldermen*; *British Directory (1791)*; *ZB 524/12/7-6 Property Lease*; *NBR 9/2 Corporation Leases*; *ZB 142/10/1-30 Bankruptcy Paper*; *NPL 511*; *WB(N)21 Property Conveyance*; *NBR 9/2 Abstract of Corporation Leases 1730-1769*; Hatley, ‘The Northampton Elections of 1774’.

The diagram of William Thompson’s established network (Figure 4.5) shows several familial connections. The strongest were those to his father and brother, but he was also connected by family marriage to Lord Northampton and the Reverend Frost – links which are shown as weaker network ties. As both men were connected to the Nene Navigation Company, Thompson also had possible access to potential social capital networks associated with the company. Through Reverend Frost’s business connections to businessmen John Augutter, Benjamin Spill and John Pritchard, Thompson also had further indirect network connections that he could have potentially accessed to gain business, political or social capital. Likewise his familial connections to Dr Kerr and the Northampton Hospital gave him potential access to the former’s network connections. However, whether he actually made use of any such connection cannot be proven. The diagram also shows Thompson’s business connection to Alderman William King, a link which gave him potential access to three further

networks: those of London businessmen Hogg, Eccles and Scrivener. As with William Gibson, the diagram also shows that Thompson was also a trustee of All Saints Church. It is through his direct, indirect and potential access to social capital networks that Thompson was able to gain and maintain his economic and political position in Northampton.

Figure 4.5: Established Network – William Thompson.



Sources: *NBR 4/3 Register of Freeman*; *NBR 6/2 Book of Enrolment of Apprentices*; *NGH List of Subscribers*; *NBR 3/5 Minutes of the Court of Mayor and Aldermen*; *NBR 3/6 Minutes of the Court of Mayor and Aldermen*; *British Directory (1791)*; *XYZ 1287a Joint Stock Nene Navigation*; *NPL 1322B*; *NPL 2312/2 Conveyance of Property*; *O3839*; Hatley, 'The Northampton Elections of 1774'.

Analysis in this 'snap shot' of the Northampton Aldermen's eighteenth-century networks suggests that they had both rhizomic and spider web characteristics. A more nuanced and complex picture emerges when we overlay the two networks (Figure 4.6). This shows the direct and indirect connections that Thompson and Gibson had to each other and others as Aldermen of Northampton's Corporation in 1770. This shows the importance of family connections in shaping the interpersonal networks between some members of the Corporation.

The diagram also shows some of the Aldermen's business connections. As was discussed earlier, short-term partnerships were a common practice in the eighteenth century and often emerged from the dense network of business, social and political connections.<sup>108</sup> Short-term partnerships or business alliances and projects provided not only economic benefits to those involved, but if successful could contribute towards increased levels of trust between the individuals concerned. This enhanced individual and collective reputation, making the network bond stronger; whilst successful projects could also lead to acquiring new networks and future business projects.

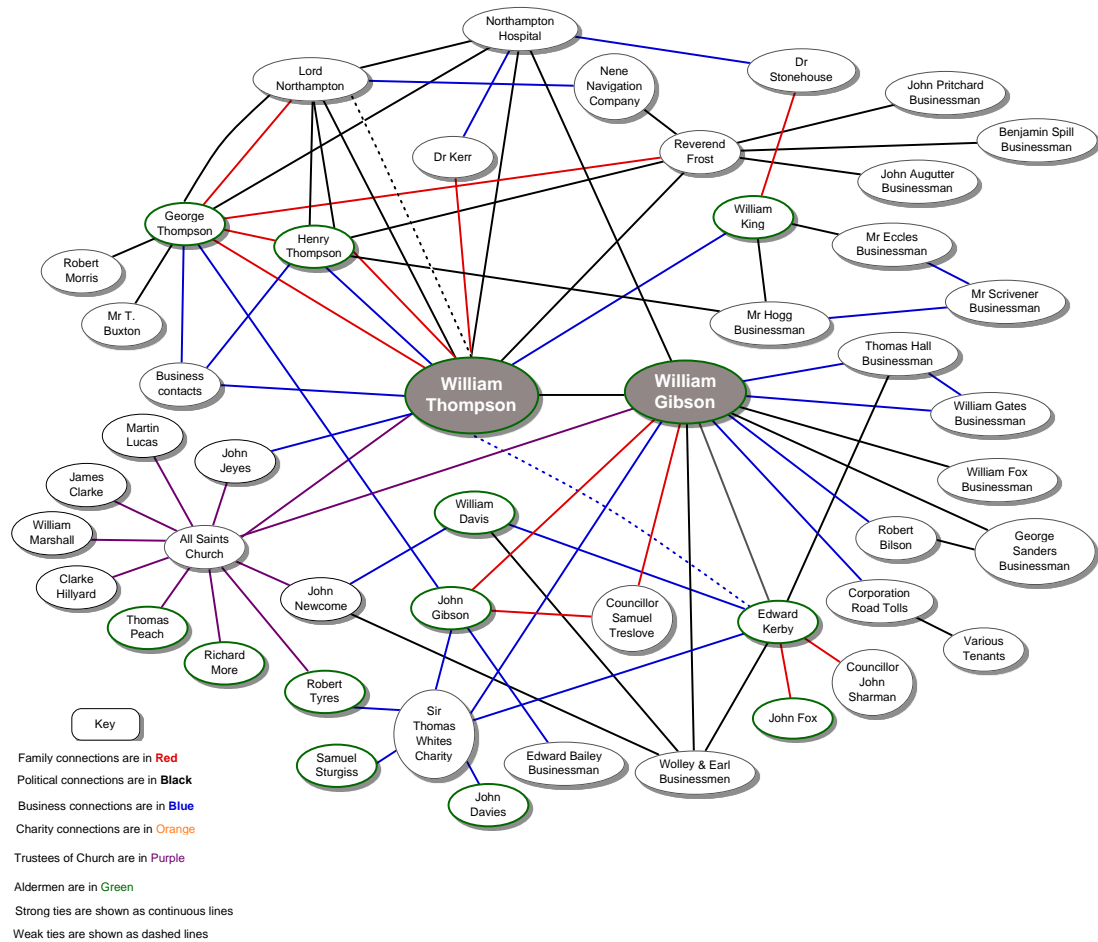
The network diagram also shows those who subscribed to Northampton General Hospital and those Corporation members who served as property trustees belonging to All Saints Church Northampton serving as a trustee produced trust that could be translated into social status. It was a means of consolidating elite status. Historically, marriage has often brought social, political and economic capital and the diagram shows some of those connections. William Gibson's daughter married Councillor Samuel Treslove, and Edward Kerby's daughters married Alderman John Fox and Councillor John Sharman. Both Treslove and Sharman later capitalised on their network connections to become Aldermen themselves.

There were many more interlinking and overlapping networks in operation in eighteenth-century Northampton than the diagram below shows; however, visual representation does begin to give a physical dimension to the networks that have the potential to produce social capital for Northampton's Aldermen in the 1770s.

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<sup>108</sup> Wilson, *British Business History*, p. 47.

Figure 4.6: Thompson and Gibson’s overlapping network connections.



Source: *NBR 4/3 Register of Freeman; NBR 6/2 Book of Enrolment of Apprentices; NGH List of Subscribers; NBR 3/5 Minutes of the Court of Mayor and Aldermen; NBR 3/6 Minutes of the Court of Mayor and Aldermen; British Directory (1791); XYZ 1287a Joint Stock Nene Navigation; NPL 1322B; NPL 2312/2 Conveyance of Property; O3839; ZB 524/12/7-6 Property Lease; ZB 142/10/1-30 Bankruptcy Paper; NPL 511; WB(N)21 Property Conveyance; NBR 9/2 Abstract of Corporation Leases 1730-1769; Northampton Poll Books (1768, 1774, 1796); Hatley, ‘The Northampton Elections of 1774’; Cox, *Records of the Borough of Northampton*.*

In summary, the analysis shows that guardianship networks probably facilitated access to established networks in eighteenth-century Northampton. The diagrams which depict established networks suggest that the guardianship networks used successfully to produce political power, business interaction; they also suggest that new networks were later established. The diagrams also suggest that the construct of the guardianship network were like spider webs whilst the established networks suggest a rhizomic construct. Crucial to the propagation of elite political status was the Borough Corporation, as a central hub it facilitated access to business and social connections thus contributing to the maintaining of status for Northampton’s Aldermen.

## Conclusion

This research has drawn on Bourdieu's theory of social capital and Pareto's definition of elites as the 'strongest, most capable and the most active', as identified in the literature review. The aim of this chapter was to identify the networks that were used by the Aldermen to gain and maintain elite status and assess whether a convergence or divergence in network membership may have contributed towards individuals gaining and maintaining political office. The chapter also aimed to identify whether some network were more important than others during the 1770s. This then could answer the question of how Northampton's unreformed political elite drew on social capital to gain and maintain their status.

The chapter has shown that the route for gaining political office in Northampton was in theory at least available to all male citizens of the town, and that the town's administrative power was in the hands of trade and businessmen and not the local gentry. Analysis of the evidence also shows that the majority of individuals who served as Aldermen of Northampton Borough Council did not do so through inherited or nepotistic family networks but used other networks to gain political office. Examining the evidence of networking connections importantly revealed that there were two distinct periods of networking that had not previously been investigated or reconstructed for the political elite of Northampton.

The first was 'guardianship' networking. It is of importance because it was during the period of apprenticeship that cultural capital (including the social norms and values), that Bourdieu has suggested determines and justifies status, began to establish a man's good reputation.<sup>109</sup> The reconstruction of those networks showed that, even whilst apprentices, the future Aldermen of Northampton had potential access to a variety of established networks via their employer, these included familial ties, political ties and probably more importantly economic network ties. Just as importantly those same guardianship networks provided a potential route to successful future independent network connections after apprenticeship, especially in terms of social capital.

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<sup>109</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*.



The reconstructed networks for the second period of networking showed the established networks of the Aldermen. As might be expected, the evidence showed that Aldermen used their unique position within the community to advance their personal economic and political positions within the community. The analysis clearly shows that there was an overlapping and interlocking of family, business, social and political networks during the 1770s that was a vital means of gaining and maintaining social capital providing the attribute of strength that Pareto associated with the elite.

The data examined also showed that economic capital was vital for gaining status within the community. Political position and therefore elite status in Northampton during the 1770s was primarily gained through business success. It was clear that the most important networks for gaining social capital in the 1770s were those connected to business. Business activity and reputation provided access to economic capital that in turn enabled access to groups and activities where the established business, social and political elite interacted with one other, and where they could consolidate existing networks and form new networks. Established networks were where some temporary business alliances of the type highlighted by both Wilson and Rubinstein were in operation.<sup>110</sup> Membership of the Corporation opened business opportunities and many Aldermen took full advantage of 'insider' knowledge to 'pre-book' Corporation property leases, often years in advance.

The evidence examined showed that the vast majority of business alliances concerned property and indicated that several Aldermen formed small groups intent on acquiring land, or business and private premises. The clear convergence of network membership, political, social and business, provided Aldermen with the means to limit and control social capital resources necessary for elite status and thus to defend their privileged position. Social interaction - particularly that which involved the outlay of finances, engaging in subscription donations, attending 'ordinaries' and entering into sporting and other leisure activities - also served to strengthen network bonds, whilst simultaneously defining and protecting elite status. This was important because it was a key means through which the Aldermen could display their status to the wider community.

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<sup>110</sup> Wilson, *British Business History*, p. 47; Rubinstein, *The Very Wealthy in Britain*.

Finally, analysis of the evidence shows that it was through their social capital networks that the Aldermen were able to maintain their political oligarchy and propagate their status as elites in Northampton. In addressing the question of how the Aldermen gained, maintained and propagated elite status in Northampton during the 1770s, this chapter contributes to our wider appreciation of the importance of networks and networking. The analysis has given us a better understanding of how individuals have gained and maintained elite status within a community.

## **Chapter 5: Urban Elite in Nineteenth-Century Northampton**

### *Introduction*

This case study builds upon the previous study which examined the Northampton Aldermen in the 1770s. It continues to analyse the social, political and business networks to which they belonged and which contributed towards their status in the community. It is a ‘snap shot’ of Northampton in the 1840s. The period was selected because it was one where the effects of political change and the introduction of new institutions in the business arena, had been in operation for only a short period of time.

This chapter considers how Aldermen used their networks in the 1840s. Although there were, in the preceding years, several Acts of Parliament that could have impacted on the networks of the Aldermen - including the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts 1828, the Poor Law Amendment Act 1834 and the Catholic Emancipation Act 1829 - it is the Municipal Corporation Act 1835 and its effect on the networks of the Northampton Aldermen that this study considers.<sup>1</sup> The introduction of this particular Act of Parliament may not only have impacted on the power of the Aldermen as a group but also on the ways in which they therefore produced and drew on their social capital networks.

This study also considers the importance, or not, that the Joint Stock Companies Act may have had on the business networks of the Aldermen; whether there was convergence or divergence in the network memberships of the Joint Stock Companies and Northampton Borough Corporation.<sup>2</sup> The introduction of the Corporation Act in 1835 had altered the Borough Corporation’s structure and, in particular, had reduced the political oligarchy, which had repercussions for maintaining and propagating the status of Northampton Aldermen. Therefore, this study examines the membership of the power base networks which were in operation prior to the 1840s. This is done through analysis of evidence on the membership of the Northampton Corporation before and

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<sup>1</sup> *Municipal Corporations Act: An Act to provide for the Regulation of Municipal Corporations in England and Wales (5 & 6 Will VI c76) 9 September (1835); Repeal of the Test and Corporation Act 1828 (9 Geo. IV cap. 17) An Act for repealing so much of several Acts as imposes the Necessity of receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper as a Qualification for certain Offices and Employments 9 May (1828); Catholic Emancipation Act, Roman Catholic Relief Act: An Act for the Relief of His Majesty's Roman Catholic Subjects (10 Geo. VI c. 7 13) April (1829); Poor Law Amendment Act 1834: An Act for the Amendment of the Laws relating to the Poor in England and Wales (4 & 5 Will. VI c. 76) 14 August (1834).*

<sup>2</sup> *Joint Stock Companies Act 1844 (7 & 8 Vict. c.110) (1844).*

after the Corporation Act 1835. Evidence on the membership and composition of the Improvement Commission before and after the Northampton Improvement Act 1843 is also analysed; as are the business networks of the councillors and Aldermen. By combining the information gathered from the analysis of the above mentioned evidence, this case study produces a better understanding of the social capital networks which the Northampton Aldermen used to gain and maintain their status in Northampton.

By 1840, Northampton had expanded outside the original town boundaries geographically to accommodate a population which in 1841 stood at 21,230.<sup>3</sup> This growth was in line with national trends, but was driven locally by the expansion of the boot and shoe industry. By the 1840s, Northampton was being recognised as the ‘first great provincial centre for footwear’.<sup>4</sup> In 1830, there were 40 businesses engaged in boot and shoe making, and by 1847 this had risen to 97.<sup>5</sup> By the 1830s, several manufacturers had established extensive networks of ‘retail and wholesale outlets in Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Edinburgh and Belfast’.<sup>6</sup> Other businesses in Northampton included trades and occupations that could be found in urban communities around Britain. For example, coal merchants, inn keepers, grocers, butchers, plumbers, tailors and haberdashers and many other occupations.<sup>7</sup> The number of business establishments during the period also reflects the population growth in the town.<sup>8</sup> In 1791, there were 164 businesses in Northampton; by 1830 that number had grown to 678, and by 1847 it had increased further to 1102.<sup>9</sup>

Improved means of transportation may have contributed towards the growth in the number of businesses in Northampton. Road improvements between Northampton and London had reduced journey times to 7¾ hours. The opening of The Grand Union

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<sup>3</sup> ‘Population figures for Northampton’, 1801 the population was 7,020; 1811, the population was 8,343; in 1831 the population had increased to 10,793; in 1832 the population was 15,351; and by 1841, the town’s population was 21,230, *Northampton Mercury*, June (1841).

<sup>4</sup> R. Greenall, *A History of Northamptonshire and the Stoke of Peterborough*, p. 115.

<sup>5</sup> *The Universal British Directory of Trade, Commerce and Manufacture* (1791); *Pigot’s Directory of Northamptonshire, Index to Towns and Villages* (Northamptonshire: Pigot and Co., 1830); *Pigot’s Directory of Northamptonshire, Index to Towns and Villages* ((Northamptonshire: Pigot and Co., 1847). Hereafter referenced as *Universal Directory* with date, and *Pigot’s Directory* with date.

<sup>6</sup> Hatley, ‘Some aspects of Northampton’s History’, p. 243.

<sup>7</sup> *Universal Directory* (1791); *Pigot’s Directories* (1830, 1845, 1847). In 1830, the number of businesses in Northampton was 687, and by 1847 that number had risen to 1102.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*; *The Directory and Guide to the Town of Northampton 1847* (Northampton: J. Burgess, 1847).

Canal branch line between Braunston and Northampton in 1815 assisted the distribution of goods manufactured in Northampton and contributed to the initiation of new business enterprises in the town.<sup>10</sup> Railways had little impact at this time. Whilst towns such as London, Birmingham, Newcastle and Carlisle embraced the coming of the railways, Northampton's elite were slow to recognise the advantages of railway transportation.<sup>11</sup> The Aldermen, although themselves businessmen, ordered in 1831 that, 'no consent be given to the projected plan for making a railway to and from London and Birmingham'. It was not until 1845 that a branch line opened to the town, thus facilitating greater movement of people and goods to and from Northampton.<sup>12</sup> The new communication and transportation routes enabled Northampton businessmen quicker connections with London, Manchester and Birmingham and offered the opportunity for the greater distribution of Northampton manufactured goods.

This chapter comprises two sections. The first section looks at how Northampton's Aldermen gained maintained and propagated their status in the community. Firstly by examining how the Aldermen gained and maintained status in the political arena; secondly, by exploring social networks to discover who the members of the local Freemasons were and whether membership of the organisation could have contributed to gaining status in Northampton; and thirdly by considering the business networks that were in operation in Northampton during the 1840s and the way in which the Aldermen used those networks to gain and maintain status. Section two reconstructs the business, political and social networks of two of Northampton's Aldermen: that of grocer and businessman Alderman George Osborn, who was randomly selected and is typical of the network connections used by the Aldermen, and that of the solicitor Christopher Markham - a selection based on the fact that he was in a professional occupation and therefore not typical of the members of the Northampton Borough Corporation.

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<sup>10</sup> N. Marlow, 'The Coming of the Railways to Northampton', *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, 2:5 (1966), pp. 203-212.

<sup>11</sup> *Two letters by the Rt Hon. Earl Fitz William of the Railway from Blisworth to Peterborough* (London: Marshall and Co., 1843), p. 12, p. 25.

<sup>12</sup> *NBR 3/8 Assembly Orders of the Court of Mayor and Aldermen*, 24 January (1831).

## Section 1: The route to becoming political elite.

### *Gaining and maintaining status in the political arena.*

Civic participation and in particular serving as a member of the Borough Corporation was a civic duty. Nevertheless, as in the previous century, business success remained an essential prerequisite to gaining a local position.<sup>13</sup> Thus, those less actively engaged in network building and especially successful business networking, never served on the Borough Corporation. Nevertheless, by the 1830s, there were 90 individual Corporation members. These included Aldermen, chamberlains, bailiffs, common councillors and several others such as mace bearer, town crier.<sup>14</sup> At the beginning of the nineteenth century civic power remained in the hands of those with Tory leanings whose religious involvement was with the Church of England. Their network ties were often interwoven with those of the county aristocracy and gentry. In 1835 the introduction of the Municipal Corporation Act challenged their dominance of the political arena in Northampton. In 1833 the Government appointed a Royal Commission to enquire in to the state and management of 258 Borough Corporations in England and Wales; among those investigated were Maidstone in Kent, Winchester in Hampshire and Northampton.<sup>15</sup> The Royal Commission found several faults, but most importantly, the report concluded that Northampton Borough Corporation was a political engine engaged primarily in acts which maintained the Tory party ascendancy in the town, rather than serving the needs of the town as a community.<sup>16</sup>

The Commissioners' report on the Municipal Corporations in England and Wales for The Borough of Northampton stated:

...the election of members of the body [corporation] has been conducted on the strictest principle of political exclusion. It was admitted by the mayor, that he had never known an instance in which a person opposed to the politics of the corporation had been elected into the body....Dissenters are very numerous in

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<sup>13</sup> Morris and Trainor, *Urban Governance*.

<sup>14</sup> *NBR 38 Orders of Assembly, Court of Mayor and Aldermen (1811-1835)*; Cox, *The Records of the Borough of Northampton*; Hatley, 'Some Aspects of Northampton's History'.

<sup>15</sup> 'First Report: Parliamentary Papers, 1835/xxiii', *Royal Commission on Municipal Corporations (1835); Municipal Corporations in England and Wales Report on The Borough of Northampton Commissioners Report c1835* (London: James and Luke G. Hansard and Sons, 1835).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

the town. Scarcely any of the master manufacturers engaged in the staple trade of the town are members of the Established Church; yet since the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, no dissenter has been admitted into the common council.<sup>17</sup>

Recognising that change was coming and in a desperate attempt to maintain the political status quo, and in particular their status as political elites of the town, the Court of Mayor and the Borough Corporation's Aldermen wrote to Parliament.

19 June 1835, Resolved unanimously:

That it is the opinion of this house that the Bill now before Parliament for regulating Municipal Corporations in England and Wales proposes such alterations in the constitution of this corporation as do not appear calculated to improve the present system of Municipal Government in the Borough. That the elective franchise proposed by this Bill will in this town give undue influence to a small number of inhabitants, that the Charity funds under the care of the Corporation will by the provision of this bill be under control of a small number of persons and that the proposed enactment will destroy or materially prejudice the rights of this Corporation and Freemen resolved unanimously. That the predictions under the Common Seal be presented to both houses of Parliament praying that the said may not pass into law.<sup>18</sup>

The letter to Parliament was to no avail and in 1835, the Northampton Borough Aldermen's oligarchy ended. Before 1835, the Corporation had retained a hierarchical composition: those with the greatest power were undoubtedly the Aldermen, followed by the mayor and lastly, the common councillors. After the 1835 Municipal Corporation Act the Borough Corporation's composition and structure altered. The government separated the Borough into three wards; each ward elected six common councillors and two Aldermen as their representatives.<sup>19</sup> The Corporation still remained hierarchical in structure with the Aldermen at the top; however, numerical power and

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<sup>17</sup> *Municipal Corporations in England and Wales Report on The Borough of Northampton, Commissioners Report* (c1835), p. 14.

<sup>18</sup> *NBR 3/8 Orders of Assembly, Court of Mayor and Aldermen* (1811-1835).

<sup>19</sup> Cox, *The Records of the Borough of Northampton*, p. 29.

thus day to day power lay with the common councillors. The co-optive practice of selection pre-1835 ended and selection to the civic positions on the Borough Corporation entered into the hands of the local electorate. Each year one third of the councillors' seats, two per ward, were subject to re-election, thus creating the need for good relationships between candidate and electorate. The Alderman's title and position also became an elected office subject to the choice of the common councillors. Each ward group of six councillors selected two Aldermen to represent their respective wards. Initially, the Councillors and Aldermen were selected from the pre-1835 Aldermen.<sup>20</sup>

The Borough Corporation members also received a blow to exercising their power later in the 1840s. The exercise of patronage, via the Corporation, which had been a staple in accruing and maintaining social capital for the Aldermen, ended after 1841.<sup>21</sup> Following a nationwide investigation into the number and condition of municipally run charities, the government removed several charities from the Northampton Corporation Aldermen's direct control and placed them into the hands of small groups of trustees.<sup>22</sup> However, several trustees had, prior to the reconstituted Corporation, been Aldermen. It would therefore be naive to suggest that patronage ceased or that new trusts disabled established networks. It is, however, possible to suggest that access to the charities funds via network contacts took a more circuitous route, resulting in brokers and intermediaries gaining greater social capital than the trustees of the various charities. The administration of property related to All Saints Church, previously in the hands of the Corporation's Aldermen, also went into the hands of trustees.<sup>23</sup> They would eventually sell the property, although the Borough Corporation did continue its involvement in administering the various charity schools in the town.<sup>24</sup>

The longevity of the old political order in Northampton had much to do with the fact that there were few bodies and groups to challenge existing practice before 1835. The

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<sup>20</sup> 'Election Results', *Northampton Mercury*, December (1835); *NBR 15/1 Northampton Borough Corporation Minute Book* (1835-1838); *NBR 15/2 Northampton Borough Corporation Minute Book* (1839-1848).

<sup>21</sup> Cox, *The Records of the Borough of Northampton*.

<sup>22</sup> *Commissioners of Inquiry Digest of the Reports in to the County of Northamptonshire Charities 1841* (London: HMSO, 1841); Northampton Borough Corporation administered 41 charities of various sizes and four schools; Cox, *The Records of the Borough of Northampton*, p. 403.

<sup>23</sup> Cox, *The Records of the Borough of Northampton* p. 403; *Municipal Reform Act* (1835).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*



introduction of the 1835 Municipal Corporation Act, whilst not a revolution in the sense which Pareto writes, did initiate the beginnings of a ‘circulation of elites’ within the political arena.<sup>25</sup> However, Pareto’s ‘circulation’ ignores the fact that the ‘most active and most capable’ of Northampton’s elite were likely to maintain established networks through business and or social interaction outside the political arena.<sup>26</sup> As such, although the government removed the majority of the Aldermen from office before 1835, the opportunity for indirect influence upon power remained. When we interweave Bourdieu’s theory of social capital, ‘access to resources’ with Pareto’s theory of a ‘circulation of elites’, Northampton’s deposed Alderman may have retained their status as elites over a considerable period of time.<sup>27</sup>

Equally important in propagating elite status was that the Corporation moved from a politically unrepresentative group of individuals that had excluded men on grounds of religion to a more inclusive and open organisation that was more representative of the citizens of Northampton and where non-conformists had access to political office. Status as political elite became the gift of the electorate and not simply the result of good network maintenance between the community’s elite members. The Northampton Poll Books of 1828, 1830, 1831, show that a greater number of the electorate were voting for more Liberal candidates as Members of Parliament than at any period previously.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, it seems natural that, once Borough elections began, a greater number of politically liberal men became local councillors.<sup>29</sup> The ‘new men’ of the reconstituted corporation needed to prove their ability to lead and show to the wider community their right to hold civic office went beyond being successful businessmen. There was not, however, a ‘clean sweep’ of the old Corporation members and several continued to serve as new Corporation members. For example, Joseph Adnett, John and Charles Freeman and Edward Cotton held their positions as Aldermen after the

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<sup>25</sup> Pareto, *The Rise and Fall of Elites*, p. 13.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Bourdieu, ‘Forms of Capital’, pp. 241-258; Pareto, *The Rise and Fall of Elites*, p. 1, p. 13.

<sup>28</sup> *The Poll at Election of Two Burgesses to Represent the Town and Borough of Northampton in Parliament* (Northampton: J. Freeman, 1828); *The Poll at Election of Two Burgesses to Represent the Town and Borough of Northampton in Parliament* (Northampton: J. Freeman, 1830); *The Poll at Election of Two Burgesses to Represent the Town and Borough of Northampton in Parliament* (Northampton, J. Freeman, 1831). Hereafter referenced as *Poll Book* with date.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, *Municipal Election for the Borough of Northampton* (Northampton: Committee of the Oak Club, 1841); *Municipal Election for the Borough of Northampton* (Northampton: Committee of the Oak Club, 1842). Hereafter referenced as *Poll Book* with date.

introduction of the Municipal Corporation Act of 1835.<sup>30</sup> Although John Phipps lost his position as Alderman he returned as a councillor in 1842. George Peach and Thomas Sharpe, both councillors before the introduction of the Corporation Act 1835, went on to serve as mayors and Aldermen during the late 1830s and therefore continued to be members of Northampton's political elite.<sup>31</sup>

Of the 46 men who served as common councillors prior to the Corporation Act, only 10 were re-elected during the 1840s.<sup>32</sup> The analysis of Borough Corporation membership before and after the Municipal Corporation Act suggests that the 'circulation of elites', to which Pareto refers, was an evolutionary process during the 1840s.<sup>33</sup> The combination of new local politicians and the continuity of some of the old Borough Corporation members allowed the elite to maintain established networks in the political arena and provided the opportunity to establish new and strengthen weak networks over time. There were three committees within the Borough Corporation: the 'watch committee', the 'finance committee' and the 'estate committee'.<sup>34</sup> Membership on a committee held the potential of reinforcing trust between members which Granovetter suggests is essential for strengthening all network activity, whilst membership on outside bodies such as the Freemasons and the Improvement Commission also contributed towards maintaining and propagating status.<sup>35</sup>

Those who gained and maintained their elite status within the community, such as John Phipps, appear to have conformed to Pareto's definition of elite as the 'most capable and the most active'.<sup>36</sup> Having gained social capital through established business, social and political networks, Phipps continued to maintain those networks. We can view his prior positions as Alderman, member of the local Improvement Commission and his membership of the Freemasons as a measure of trust with which contemporaries

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<sup>30</sup> *Poll Books* (1828, 1830, 1831, 1841, 1842); *NBR 15/1 Northampton Borough Corporation Minute Book* (1835-1838); *NBR15/2 Northampton Borough Corporation Minute Book* (1839-1848).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> Pareto, *The Mind and Society*, p. 5.

<sup>34</sup> *Committees and Trustees appointed by the Municipal Council of the Town or Borough of Northampton* (1836, 1838, 1845).

<sup>35</sup> See Granovetter, 'Problems of Explanation' pp. 25-56.

<sup>36</sup> Pareto, *The Mind and Society*, p. 2.

recognised and engaged.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, he was able to maintain his status as a member of the Northampton local elite.

One method that the Corporation members employed to enhance their reputation from 1835, and gain trust between themselves and those whom they served, was through greater fiscal transparency and accountability. Although one of the requirements of the Municipal Corporation Act 1835 was that corporation accounts were properly audited, it was not until 1841 that these were published annually.<sup>38</sup> The local newspapers, the *Northampton Mercury* and the *Northampton Herald*, assisted in the process of Corporation openness by attending and then publishing quasi verbatim reports of Corporation meetings. This may have contributed to propagating the status of the Borough Corporation's members, but they also promoted party division during the 1840s. It is likely that the partisanship displayed actually aided the concept of the Borough Corporation as the legitimate authority to hold and exercise power because of its political neutrality as an organisation. Political parties argued, individuals came and went, but the organisation of local government remained. The organisation's neutrality was the means through which it maintained trust, based on the perception of reliability and honour, between the organisation of government and the wider community. During 1841, the newspapers related the political division between Liberal councillor Thomas Sharp (perfumer) and Tory councillor Christopher Markham (attorney).<sup>39</sup> It is likely that both men may have gained greater local recognition from the general public through exposure in the local press. Markham, in his role as attorney, was involved in several joint-stock companies, and Sharpe was the director of two of Northampton's joint stock companies.<sup>40</sup> It seems reasonable to suggest that both men gained some capital through newspaper exposure.

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<sup>37</sup> T. Phipps, *A History of the Pomfret Lodge No 360 Northampton* (Northampton: J. Stanton, 1910); *NBR 14/05, Minute Book, Northampton Improvement Commissioners* (1825-1842); *NBR 14/6a, Minute Book, Northampton Improvement Commissioners* (1842-1848); *NBR 15/1, Northampton Borough Corporation Minutes* (1835-1838); *NBR 15/2, Northampton Borough Corporation Minutes* (1839-1848a).

<sup>38</sup> *An Abstract of the Borough Fund Account: Northampton, Year Ending* (1842); *An Abstract of the Borough Fund Account: Northampton, Year Ending* (1843); *An Abstract of the Borough Fund Account: Northampton, Year Ending* (1844).

<sup>39</sup> 'Council Meeting Report', *Northampton Mercury*, November (1841), p. 3. 'Council Meeting Report', *Northampton Mercury*, 6 April (1844), p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> *Prospectus of the Northampton Corn Exchange Company* (Registered pursuant to 7th and 8th Victoria, cap 110); *Deed of Settlement of the Northamptonshire Union Bank* (Northampton: T. E. Dicey 1827); *Act to Establish a Company for Lighting with Gas the Town of Northampton Royal Assent 27th June, 1823* (4 Geo. IV, sess.) (1823); *O(N)242 Northampton Water Works Company Meeting* (1843).

Civic ritual, which the Corporation administered, remained an activity through which one could display elite status. In Northampton, as part of the ritual inauguration of a new mayor, all Borough Corporation members dressed in their respective regalia. A large number of townsfolk watched the procession of the Mayor and Aldermen as they walked from the Town Hall to All Saints Church for the ritual blessing of the taking of office – events reported in the local newspapers.<sup>41</sup> There were also other occasions where elites displayed their status and civic position through public procession. In 1836, all Borough Corporation members processed from the town hall to the foundation stone site for the Northampton General Lunatic Asylum. Members of the aristocracy and the town's MPs also participated in the procession, witnessed by large numbers of the public.<sup>42</sup> The reduced number of councillors and Aldermen was a smaller spectacle for the population; nevertheless, the reduced presence of political elite served to emphasise the status of those few.

One means of maintaining a good profile within the community was serving as a member of the Improvement Commission which Day states was often regarded as 'alternate body of local power'.<sup>43</sup> It was therefore an organisation through which one could access and maintain social capital. She notes that in Portsea the Borough Corporation and the Improvement Commission were separate bodies which competed for local power.<sup>44</sup> However, in Northampton, the Improvement Commissioners were all Borough Corporation members.<sup>45</sup> Established in 1778, the Northampton Improvement Commission covered areas which the Borough Corporation did not, primarily the improvement of the towns facilities. The composition of the Improvement Commissioners in Northampton was similar to that of other Commissions in England and Wales, comprising local merchants and businessmen.<sup>46</sup> Analysis of the Northampton Improvement Minute Books identified 25 business and trade occupations within the Improvement Commission during the 1840s, the main groups being ordinary

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<sup>41</sup> *Northampton Mercury*, December (1844) and November (1847).

<sup>42</sup> Phipps, *A History of the Pomfret Lodge*, p. 15.

<sup>43</sup> A. Day, 'A spirit of Improvement: Improvement Commissioners, Boards of Health and Central-local Relations in Portsea', in *Urban Governance: Britain and Beyond since 1750*, ed. by R. Morris and R. Trainor (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2000), p. 103.

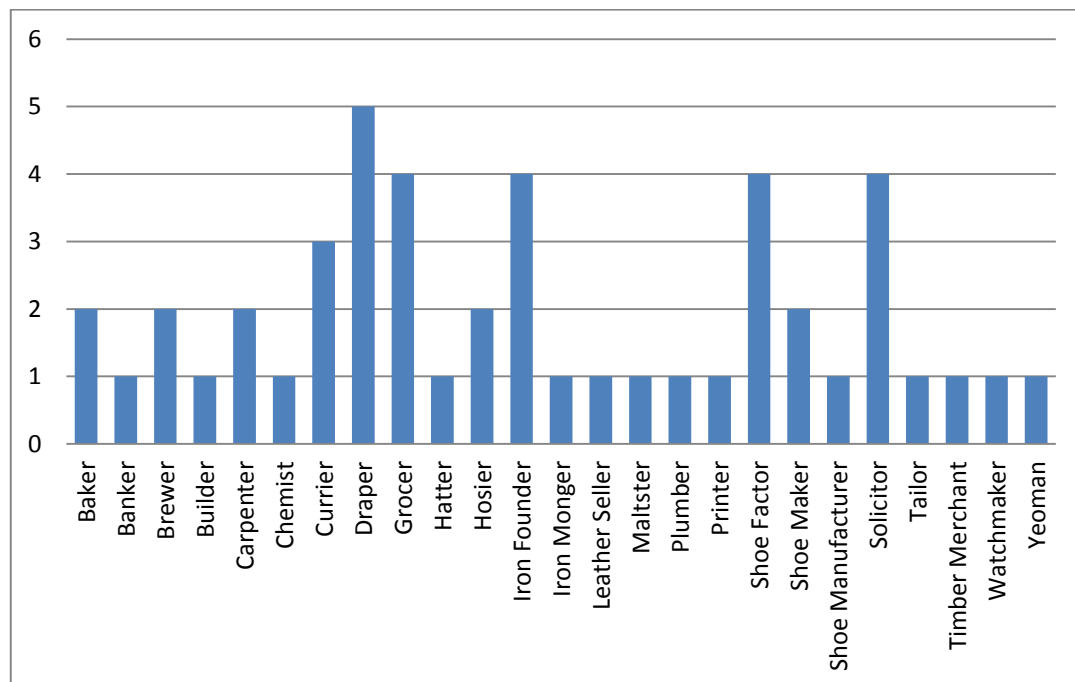
<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *NBR 14/6a Improvement Commissioners Minute Book (1842-1848)*; Day, 'A Spirit of Improvement', p. 103.

<sup>46</sup> J. Smith, 'Industrialisation and Social Change: Wolverhampton Transformed, 1700-1840', in *Towns, Regions and Industries: Urban and Industrial Change in the Midlands, c1700-1840* ed. by J. Stobart and N. Raven (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 140.

shopkeepers, which included tailors and grocers; individuals involved in the shoe industry, and those engaged in the law.<sup>47</sup> However, it is clear from the available evidence (Graph 5.1) that no single area of business dominated the Commission’s make-up.

Graph 5.1 Occupations of the Northampton Improvement Commissioners 1843.



Source: *NBR 14/6a Improvement Commissioners Minute Book* (1842-1848); Pigot’s Directories (1830-1847).

Unusually, and in contrast to Day’s research of Improvement Commissioners in Portsea, Northampton’s Improvement Commission comprised the entire body of the Northampton Borough Corporation when first formed.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, Northampton’s commissioners were a co-opted body of men whose personal networks stretched across the political, business and social arenas and boundaries of Northampton’s urban elite society.<sup>49</sup> Their power came from the Acts of Parliament which vested in the commissioners the right to raise revenue for improvement projects. The commissioners selected contractors through ‘tender’ for the work deciding which areas of the town

<sup>47</sup> *NBR 14/6a Improvement Commissioners Minute Book* (1842-1848).

<sup>48</sup> Day, ‘A spirit of Improvement’, p. 103.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

required improvement and maintenance.<sup>50</sup> Qualification for civic duty as a commissioner was straightforward. The individual was required to be a borough freeman, have property or business worth £40 per annum and have a personal income value of £80.<sup>51</sup> The examined material shows that on average there was a total of 40 serving commissioners annually, often with the same men serving for long periods.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, the Commission generally replaced them only when poor health or death necessitated a new member.

In 1843, the government passed a second Improvement Act for Northampton.<sup>53</sup> The Act ended the practice of co-opted membership and instigated election of the Improvement Commissioners and to committee positions within the body. The Act clarified the job of the Improvement Commissioners in Northampton, organised around five committees: the fire engine committee, paving committee, scavenging committee, lighting committee and building committee.<sup>54</sup>

The two local newspapers printed the commissioners' names annually, and there were large bill sheets for distribution about the town.<sup>55</sup> Importantly, the composition of the commissioners by 1843 represented the composition of the town's inhabitants, with an even balance of Church of England members and non-conformists, and of those with Tory and Liberal beliefs. Nevertheless, the members continued to come from the town's more affluent businessmen and tradesmen. Day notes that the Improvement Commissions presented the opportunity for men seeking an identity for themselves, 'an appearance of respectability and moral authority'.<sup>56</sup> This suggests that the local Improvement Commissions were a body through which men could acquire social capital and through which they could gain or maintain elite status.<sup>57</sup> As a more accessible public body, the position of Improvement Commissioner in Northampton offered a viable alternative for the acquisition of trust and reputation, for network

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<sup>50</sup> *NBR 14/6a Improvement Commissioners Minute Book* (1842-1848); *Northampton Mercury*, November (1842).

<sup>51</sup> *NBR 14/05 Minutes of Improvement Commissioners* (1825-1842); *NBR 14/6a Improvement Commissioners Minute Book* (1842-1848).

<sup>52</sup> *NBR 14/05 Minutes of Improvement Commissioners* (1825-1842).

<sup>53</sup> *Northampton Improvement Act, Vict. 6 and 7*, 78 (1843).

<sup>54</sup> *NBR 14/6a Improvement Commissioners Minute Book* (1842-1848).

<sup>55</sup> Bill Poster, 'To the Inhabitant Household', 10 May (1843); 'Committees and Trusts', November (1836).

<sup>56</sup> Day, 'A Spirit of Improvement', p. 102.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

building and consolidation, and for accumulating social capital. The Improvement Commissioners' books (from 1827-1849) show that a total of 107 men served as commissioners.<sup>58</sup> In 1848, the *Northampton Mercury* complained that 'having two bodies of authority in the town did not help to integrate politics'.<sup>59</sup> However, evidence shows that there was little animosity between the two organisations; the Borough Corporation did not incorporate the Improvement Commissioners' responsibilities into one single body of town authority until 1868.

As previously mentioned, the entire membership of the Borough Corporation registered to serve as members of the Improvement Commission in Northampton - a practice which continued until the introduction of the second Improvement Act in 1843. Cross-referencing the names of the Improvement Commissioners with those of borough councillors reveals a very close correspondence between the memberships of the two bodies. Prior to 1843, there were never more than three commissioners who were not also serving on the Borough Corporation.<sup>60</sup> After 1843 and until 1850 the numbers of individual members of the Improvement Commission who had never previously or did not jointly serve as members of the corporation was five.<sup>61</sup> For example, Joseph Adnett Sr. became a member of the Improvement Commission in 1821, and served until 1848, whilst simultaneously serving as an Alderman from 1835-1841.<sup>62</sup> It seems likely that William Stanton and Benjamin Stevenson, both of whom became Improvement Commissioners in 1828, may have used the position, in particular the trust associated with holding such a position within the community, to accumulate social capital prior to standing and winning seats as local councillors in 1835.<sup>63</sup> The overlapping networks of those who served on both the Improvement Commission and as Borough Corporation members provided a strong degree of trust that Granovetter has suggested was vital in gaining and maintaining social capital.<sup>64</sup> Therefore continued service in one or both of the power bodies contributed towards status within the community.

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<sup>58</sup> *NBR 14/6a Improvement Commissioners Minute Book* (1842-1848); *NBR 14/05 Minutes of Improvement Commissioners* (1825-1842).

<sup>59</sup> 'Council Meeting' *Northampton Mercury*, 17 October (1848), p. 3.

<sup>60</sup> *NBR 14/6a Improvement Commissioners Minute Book* (1842-1848); *NBR 14/05 Minutes of Improvement Commissioners* (1825-1842); *NBR 15/1 Northampton Borough Corporation Minutes* (1835-1838); *NBR 15/2 Northampton Borough Corporation Minutes* (1839-1848).

<sup>61</sup> *NBR 14/05 Minutes of Improvement Commissioners* (1825-1842).

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> Granovetter, 'The Strength of Weak Ties', p. 1360.

### *Gaining and maintaining status in the social arena*

Social activities in Northampton during the first half of the nineteenth century were recognisably similar to those of the previous century. There was an annual January Town Ball held at the George Hotel, and other balls to celebrate significant events such as royal birthdays.<sup>65</sup> These were occasions for the town elites to see and be seen amongst their contemporaries. This helped in the acknowledgement and affirmation of their status, but afforded them the opportunity to meet and mingle with the aristocracy who also attended many of these events. The balls were thus an occasion for individuals to publically reaffirm established social, political and business networks, and gave opportunity for individuals to forge new networks. Public notices in the local newspapers informed not only the town's elite of an upcoming event, but informed the population generally, giving the time, day, date and place.<sup>66</sup> This afforded the ordinary citizen the opportunity of becoming spectators and gave a signal, both physical and visual, of the attendees' position within the community.

The community expected social philanthropy of Northampton's elite. There were several avenues through which the elite achieved this, and as a result, several organisations and groups expanded in the town. Religion remained important within the town and several bible societies flourished.<sup>67</sup> Prior to the 1810s, there was a small number of Sunday schools, but numbers grew to accommodate demand and by 1850 every religious denomination and virtually each church in Northampton had such a school.<sup>68</sup> Although the ministers and general clergy naturally dominated Sunday school leadership and instruction, financial assistance came from the congregation and importantly from local elite businessmen. Whilst the Sunday schools provided religious instruction and a small amount of reading and writing for the younger Northampton working class and poor, the Mechanics Institute provided for male adult education.<sup>69</sup> It gave local working men access to technical knowledge and other subjects for self-improvement. The governors of the Institute were generally local elite businessmen, many of whom donated the books which the Institute lent out.<sup>70</sup> Important to those elites involved in the Institute is that the local newspapers reported all donations and

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<sup>65</sup> 'Notice: Ball at George Hotel', *Northampton Mercury*, 14 January (1843), p. 3.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> 'T. E. Dicey President of the Bible Society', *Northampton Mercury*, 17 September (1842), p. 3.

<sup>68</sup> Hatley, 'Some aspects of Northampton', p. 251.

<sup>69</sup> *Report of the Northampton and Northamptonshire Mechanics' Institute* (1851).

<sup>70</sup> *NPL 2934 Minutes of the Northampton Mechanics Institute* (1836-1839).



annual meeting attendees.<sup>71</sup> Many of the Sunday school and Mechanics Institute's governors and trustees had overlapping networks and were members of the Borough Corporation or Improvement Commission; for example Edward Harrison Barwell taught in a Sunday school, and was a member of both the Improvement Commission and the Borough Council, where he served as mayor from 1842 to 1844.<sup>72</sup>

The practice of subscribing to worthy causes also may also have contributed towards accessing social capital for the subscribers; however, both subscribing and gifting donations of goods to the 'deserving poor' tended to decrease after the introduction of the 1834 'New Poor Law'. Nevertheless, donations to the building of new churches and the local hospital were published by the *Northampton Mercury*, which listed names and amounts donated. In this way, the local newspaper helped the elite to maintain and propagate their status within the community.<sup>73</sup> However, there were periods when they required reminding of their duty to the community.<sup>74</sup> In August 1841, following the annual general meeting of the governors of Northampton Infirmary, the *Northampton Mercury* informed the general public that: '...the governors [of Northampton Infirmary] hope that the gentlemen of the town might subscribe more generally than they have recently done so'.<sup>75</sup> The rebuke in the local newspaper appears to have worked in the favour of the general infirmary. Analysis of the annual report, which included the list of subscribers and benefactors, suggests that there was a small increase in the number of donors from Northampton's business community throughout the 1840s.<sup>76</sup>

One of the newer organisations for networking and thus accruing social capital was the Freemasons. Inaugurated in 1819, the Pomfret Lodge was initially slow to recruit members; but its numbers steadily grew over the following decades. Although it has proved impossible to uncover precise figures for the Pomfret Lodge's membership over the study period as a whole, we can be certain that there were 60 members by 1838 and

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<sup>71</sup> 'Mechanics Institute: Thomas Sharp Chairs Meeting', *Northampton Mercury*, 16 June (1841), p. 4.

<sup>72</sup> A. Cox, 'Notes on Edward Barwell, Ironfounder, Northampton', *Conservation Section, Planning Department* (Bedford: Bedfordshire County Council, 1981); *Report of the Northampton and Northamptonshire Mechanics' Institute* (1851).

<sup>73</sup> 'List of Subscribers to the Northampton General Infirmary', *Northampton Herald*, 15 January (1842), p. 2.

<sup>74</sup> 'Annual Meeting of the Governors of the Northampton General Infirmary', *Northampton Mercury*, August (1841), p. 4.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> NGH (Northampton General Hospital), *List of Subscribers*.

a total of at least 93 between 1819 and 1852.<sup>77</sup> Occupations varied and included doctors and solicitors, iron founders and shoe manufacturers, brewers and various merchants as Table 5.1 shows. The fact that occupations could not be found for 22 individuals suggests that some Pomfret Lodge members came from outside the borough of Northampton.

Table 5.1 Occupations of the members of the Northampton Freemasons.

Printer	2	Solicitor	5	Hatter	2	Shoe Manufacturer	2
Bootmaker	8	Innkeeper	3	Saddler	1	Builder	2
Carpenter	2	Ostler	2	Surveyor	1	Tobacco Manufacturer	1
Upholder	2	Pawnbroker	1	Coachman	2	Brewer	1
Iron Founder	1	Reverend	2	Ironmonger	1	Gentleman	3
Shoe Factor	3	Cabinet Maker	2	Maltster	1	Yeoman	1
Unknown	22	School Master	1	Watchmaker	2	Perfumer	1
Stationer	1	Druggist	2	Tailor	1	Cowkeeper	1
Book Seller	1	Confectioner	1	Wine Merchant	1	Woolsorter	1
Surgeon	2	Victualler	2	Guilder	1	Coachmaker	1
						Currier	1

Source: Phipps, *A History of the Pomfret Lodge, No 360*; *Pigot's Directories* (1830-1847).

Although there is evidence of fathers, sons and brothers as masons in the Lodge during the period, the number is extremely low. Moreover, no single occupational group dominated the positions of Masonic hierarchy, but there was internal promotion and election.<sup>78</sup> Comparing the data from lists of Corporation and Improvement Commissioners of Northampton with the known members of the Pomfret Masonic Lodge from 1819 – 1851, revealed that only 9 per cent had served in civic office. This suggests that civic position was not a prerequisite for membership in Northampton's Masons during the nineteenth century.<sup>79</sup>

Although Dedopulos states that Freemasonry does not offer the opportunity for networking as self-promotion, nineteenth-century Northampton Freemasonry was a means through which individuals strengthened network ties.<sup>80</sup> Pomfret Lodge membership was based upon proven trust and honesty, offering the opportunity for

<sup>77</sup> Phipps, *A History of the Pomfret Lodge, No 360*, p. 2.

<sup>78</sup> Phipps, *A History of the Pomfret Lodge, No 360*.

<sup>79</sup> *NBR 14/6a Improvement Commissioners Minute Book* (1842-1848); *NBR 14/05 Minutes of Improvement Commissioners* (1825-1842); *NBR 3/8 Orders of Assembly, Court of Mayor and Aldermen* (1811–1835); Phipps Dorman, *A History of the Pomfret Lodge, No 360*.

<sup>80</sup> T. Dedopulos, *The Secret World of the Freemasons* (London: Carlton Books, 2006), p. 11.

networking to a variety of Northampton businessmen. As with all Freemasonry, it was ‘essentially a social activity’, and the Pomfret Lodge, in line with standard practice, insisted that neither religion nor politics were topics for conversation whilst on lodge premises.<sup>81</sup> Thus, almost a decade before the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Act 1828 or Catholic emancipation in 1829, the Freemasons provided non-Church of England businessmen and gentlemen with a means of strengthening established business and social networks and initiating new networks as Masonic Lodge members.<sup>82</sup>

Whilst it offered social activities such as chess, billiards, newsrooms, dining and refreshment, the Lodge also initiated several charitable subscriptions.<sup>83</sup> These included subscriptions towards the building of Northampton Lunatic Asylum in 1836 and for the building of a new church, St Andrews in St Sepulchre’s parish.<sup>84</sup> The *Northampton Mercury* regularly published the lists of subscribers for both, although the newspaper did not distinguish between Masonic and non-Masonic donations.<sup>85</sup> However, the newspaper did report the foundation stone laying for the Lunatic Asylum in 1836, although it named only a few of the attendees.<sup>86</sup> An estimated 8,000 people witnessed the occasion and numerous others watched the procession to and from the event.<sup>87</sup> This procession included the mayor and Corporation members. Pomfret Masonic Lodge members dressed in their respective regalia symbolising unity of purpose and power. This served as a visual statement and confirmation of status within the community and propagated status.

One further demonstration of status within the community was to serve as a juror or Justice of the Peace in the Northampton Borough. Borough Corporation members, councillors and Aldermen or family members of those who had or were members of the Corporation all served in these capacities. During the 1840s, serving Alderman

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<sup>81</sup> T. Dedopulos, *The Secret World of the Freemasons*.

<sup>82</sup> It was unlikely that any practicing Catholic would have become a Freemason following Pope Clement XII’s *In Eminenti* in April (1738); Pope Leo XIII’s *Ab Apostolici* October (1890), both ban Catholics from becoming Freemasons. Much later the Code of Canon Law (1917) decreed that becoming a Freemason would be grounds for excommunication.

<sup>83</sup> *Articles of Association the Companies Act 1862-1888 Memorandum of Association of the Masonic Club Company Limited* (1888), p. 1-26.

<sup>84</sup> Phipps, *A History of the Pomfret Lodge*, No 360.

<sup>85</sup> ‘Subscription Lists’, *Northampton Mercury* (1835, 1836, 1837 and 1840).

<sup>86</sup> ‘Laying of the Foundation Stone’, *Northampton Mercury*, 26 May (1836).

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

William Porter, Councillor John Phipps (previously an Alderman under the old corporation) and the sons of previous Alderman George Osborn, as well as Thomas Groom and William Row, all did jury service.<sup>88</sup> It was not possible to determine whether the selection was a result of inherited or individual accrument of social capital from personal networks. Neither was it possible to establish whether their jury service was a means of accumulating new or consolidating and maintaining existing social capital. Nevertheless, their personal status was likely enhanced and they gained social capital.

*Gaining and maintaining status in the business arena.*

‘First, build up your capital. Reputation comes after wealth’.<sup>89</sup> The quotation is apt for the acquiring, maintaining and propagating of status in the first half of the nineteenth century. Early nineteenth-century acquisition of business status remained rooted in the practices of the eighteenth century. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter there had been an increase in the numbers of businesses in Northampton by the 1840s. It therefore seems reasonable to see what the actual percentage figures are for the number of businesses operating in Northampton between the years 1791 and 1847. The percentage of growth is as follows: between 1791 and 1830 the growth was 413.4 per cent; between 1830 and 1847 the increase was 162 per cent the overall growth in less than 50 years, that is, between 1791 and 1847, was 671.9 per cent, which gives a mean average of 13.44 per cent growth per year (see Graph 5.2).<sup>90</sup> The importance of these numbers is that, as business competition appears to have become more intense, it would also have become more difficult for individuals to gain business status and become a member of the local political elite.<sup>91</sup> This is especially true because business and social networks, and a good economic performance, remained just as essential for status in the nineteenth century as it had been in the eighteenth century; it was therefore important that individuals took on the responsibility of exploiting business opportunities.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> ‘Grand Jury Lists Quarter Sessions’, *Northampton Mercury*, 5 January (1842), p. 2.

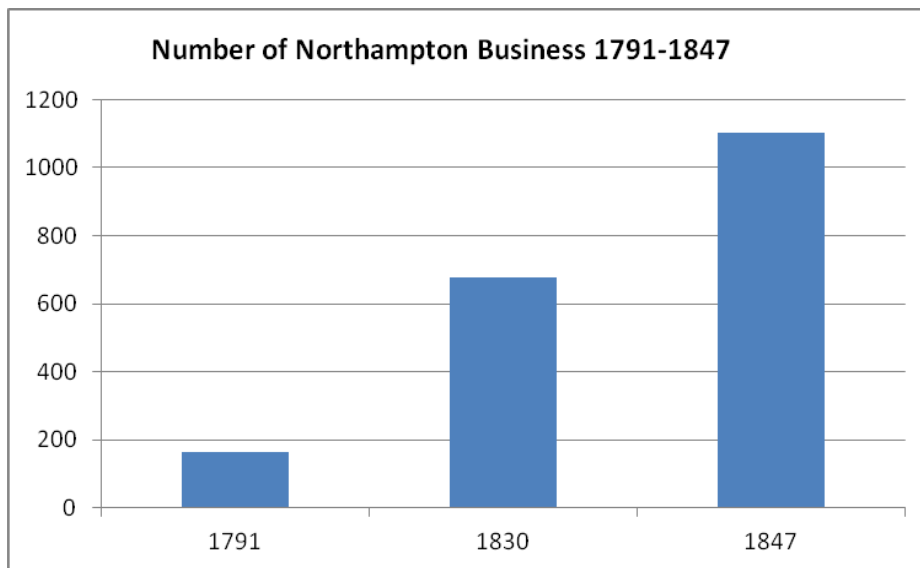
<sup>89</sup> Horace, *Epistle*.

<sup>90</sup> *Universal Directory* (1791); *Pigot’s Directories* (1830-1847); G. Shaw, ‘The content and reliability of nineteenth-century trade directories’, *Local Historian*, 13 (1978), p. 205-209. As Shaw has noted, there were continuous changes in the way in which researchers gathered the original data and a change in the classification and description of occupations.

<sup>91</sup> Laird, *Pull*, p. 12, p. 13.

<sup>92</sup> Morris and Trainor, *Urban Governance*; Wilson, *British Business History*, p. 24.

Graph 5.2 Number of Northampton Businesses 1791-1847



Source: *Universal Directory* (1791); *Pigot's Directory* (1830); *Pigot's Directory* (1847).

As Laird and others have noted, apprenticeship helped develop interpersonal contacts and contributed towards gaining a good reputation that was necessary to build social capital networks.<sup>93</sup> However, the Repeal of the Registration of Apprentices Act 1813 makes it difficult to trace their initial evolutionary business networks.<sup>94</sup> Nevertheless, Northampton's businessmen, as with the majority of men in the nineteenth century, did complete a period of apprenticeship through which they developed 'guardianship networks'. As with the eighteenth-century, Northampton's businessmen utilised their family contacts and apprenticeships to extend and initiate business networks through which they increased their social capital. Apprenticeships within the family were still common as John Markham's family law business demonstrates: his two sons and grandson were apprentices with the family business.<sup>95</sup> Apprenticeships therefore remained an important means of gaining social capital well in the nineteenth century.

Although the Bubble Act was repealed in 1824, partnership rather than incorporated companies remained a common practise in business throughout the early nineteenth century.<sup>96</sup> We can see this in Northampton in the partnership that the tailors and drapers Walker and Son entered into with Gourley, becoming Walker, Gourley and

<sup>93</sup> Laird, *Pull*, p. 20-22; Haggerty, *Merely for Money*, p. 57.

<sup>94</sup> *Repeal of the Registration of Apprentices Act*, 53 Geo III (1813).

<sup>95</sup> 'Obituary: Henry P. Markham', *Northampton Mercury*, 29 January (1904), p. 5.

<sup>96</sup> M. Poovey, *The Financial System in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 15.

Walker.<sup>97</sup> Although family partnerships were common during the 1840s, there were also business partnerships between Borough Corporation members. It is possible that such partnerships were intended for short-term business only. Although individuals undoubtedly founded these partnerships for economic gain, it is likely that, as Granovetter has suggested, the secondary benefits of reputation and status were important in selecting new business partners and ventures.<sup>98</sup> For example, John Brettell and Edward Barwell founded the Eagle Foundry as a partnership in 1823 – a venture which lasted for seven years.<sup>99</sup> Barwell continued as owner of the Eagle Foundry and entered into partnership with Thomas Grundy for a further three years. Next was a new partnership between Barwell and Hagger as owners of the Eagle Foundry.<sup>100</sup> Whilst it is more likely that Barwell's moves were for information gathering and new business opportunities he also opened new opportunities for gaining social capital.

As individuals make strategic decisions on which networks to develop, it may be that Hagger's incentive involved the opportunity to gain greater access to Borough Corporation members; the extending of his networks could give him the opportunity for recognition both as a business and political elite.<sup>101</sup> Barwell had served as a Corporation member prior to the Corporation Act 1835 and was a member of the Freemasons.<sup>102</sup> Working in partnership would have signalled trust between Barwell and Hagger, and produced an increased benefit in terms of social capital acquisition. This is reflected in the evidence that both served as members of the reconstructed Corporation after 1835, suggesting that each had gained the respect and trust of the wider community. As a member of the Northampton Borough Corporation, Barwell served three terms as Mayor of Northampton, and received Queen Victoria on her visit to Northampton in 1844.<sup>103</sup> We can further demonstrate Barwell's influence and access to resources in that he was largely responsible for reforming the Northampton Police force

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<sup>97</sup> 'Partnership: Walker, Gourley and Walker', *Northampton Mercury*, 18 October (1841), p. 2.

<sup>98</sup> Granovetter, 'The Strength of Weak Ties', pp. 1360-1380.

<sup>99</sup> *Northampton Mercury*, 27 September (1823), p. 3.

<sup>100</sup> E. Instone, 'Northampton Foundries', in *Bulletin of Industrial Archaeology in CBA Group*, 9:12 (1979), p. 4.

<sup>101</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. 104.

<sup>102</sup> Phipps, *A History of the Pomfret Lodge*; 'Barwell Elected Mayor', *Northampton Mercury*, and *Northampton Herald*, 28 November (1842), p. 5.

<sup>103</sup> 'Queen Visits Northampton', *Northampton Mercury*, 12 November (1844); Cox, *The Records of the Borough of Northampton*, pp. 554-570.

in 1848.<sup>104</sup> This suggests that his networks were both extensive and influential, and indicates that his social capital was at a maximum by 1848.

Until 1835, businessmen could access Sir Thomas White's Charity for loans of up to £100. This was an ample amount with which to begin a small business during the nineteenth century. Established businessmen were also able to access the charity for investment into other business activities. Nevertheless, simply being successful in one field of business may not have helped one gain status; even so, receiving a loan of £100 does suggest that there was trust between the borrower and lender, which further suggests that the borrower had already gained adequate degree of social capital on which the loan was based.

Northampton businessmen not only entered partnerships; they also entered new business arenas such as banking and shareholding in joint stock companies following the repeal of the bubble Act in 1824. Although there was a boom in the number of joint stock companies nationally during the 1830s and 1840s, their uptake in Northampton was limited to a few companies.<sup>105</sup> Nevertheless, investment in joint stock companies had existed in Northampton prior to the 1840s period. For example, there was the Northampton Union Coal and Mining Company which received Royal Assent in 1815, continued to trade until 1855.<sup>106</sup> There was also the Gas Lighting Company which began in 1823 and, in 1837, 14 Northampton businessmen formed the Water Works Company, selling shares at £150.<sup>107</sup> The initial directors of the Water Company came from different occupational backgrounds, but their connections included strong network ties through links to or membership of the Borough Corporation or Northampton's Improvement Commissioners.<sup>108</sup> They were medical practitioners William Kerr and Archibald Robertson; shoe manufacturers Samuel Percival, William Parker and Thomas Richards; currier William Williams; leather seller George Rand; perfumer Thomas Sharp; draper William Stanton; auctioneer Richard Dennis; merchant Henry Stockburn;

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<sup>104</sup> Hatley, 'Some Aspects of Northampton', p. 252.

<sup>105</sup> Poovey, *The Financial System in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>106</sup> *O(N) 156* Share papers for 85 shares belonging to George Osborn.

<sup>107</sup> *NRB 43/1, Northampton Water Works Company Minute Books* (1843).

<sup>108</sup> *NRB 43/1, Northampton Water Works Company Minute Books* (1843); *NBR 3/8 Orders of Assembly, Court of Mayor and Aldermen*; *NBR 15/1 Northampton Borough Corporation Minute Book* (1835-1838); *NBR 15/2 Northampton Borough Corporation Minute Book* (1839-1848); *NBR 14/05 Improvement Commissioners Minute Books* (1825-1842); *NBR14/6a Improvement Commissioners Minute Books* (1842-1848).

iron founder Thomas Hagger; Henry Whitworth, whose occupation is unknown; and Charles Markham who acted as the company's attorney.<sup>109</sup> These men continued to interact and strengthen their political and business ties which suggests that the flow of information and therefore investment in economic and social capital remained limited to a relatively few individuals in Northampton during the 1840s.

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth century also witnessed a growth in the number of banks in Britain. The removal of the monopoly of the Bank of England in joint stock banking in 1826, probably contributed to their increase and by 1850 there were 459 banks in operation.<sup>110</sup> Northampton businessmen had access to three banks: the Northampton Savings Bank, established in 1816 and claiming in 1842 to have 5,525 depositors; the Northampton Town and County Bank, and the Northampton Union Bank.<sup>111</sup> The evidence shows that the Northampton banks followed the managerial and membership construct of other banks where the directors, trustees and shareholders were local businessmen and county aristocracy tied to the community.<sup>112</sup>

Essentially, local banks were credit rather than investment banks. They extended short-term loans, but did not initiate investment in specific business enterprises.<sup>113</sup> Businessmen needed to use their network assets; rumour could destroy not only an individual's successful application for a loan but could also his business reputation, limiting his access to potential social capital.<sup>114</sup> Conversely, network contacts could bolster the good name and reputation, and provide evidence of trustworthiness and business acumen that were essential for a business loan in Northampton. Although there is no evidence to show that Aldermen secured loans from any of the town's banks, several of them were directors of local banks. As 'investors would only invest if they actually believed in that particular institution or individual', the reputation of a bank

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<sup>109</sup> *NRB 43/1, Northampton Water Works Company Minute Books* (1843); *NBR 3/8 Orders of Assembly, Court of Mayor and Aldermen*; *NBR 15/1 Northampton Borough Corporation Minute Book* (1835-1838); *NBR 15/2 Northampton Borough Corporation Minute Book* (1839-1848); *NBR 14/05 Improvement Commissioners Minute Books* (1825-1842); *NBR14/6a Improvement Commissioners Minute Books* (1842-1848).

<sup>110</sup> Collins, *Banks and Industrial Finance in Britain*, p. 14.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> *O(N) 158 Northampton Union Bank; A Notable Achievement: The Northampton Town and County Benefit Building Society* (1931); Collins, *Banks and Industrial Finance in Britain*, p. 16; Poovey, *The Financial System in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p. 2.

<sup>113</sup> Collins, *Banks and Industrial Finance in Britain*, p. 18.

<sup>114</sup> Poovey, *The Financial System in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p. 3; Haggerty, *Merely for Money*, p. 117; Ogilvie, *Institutions and European Trade*, p. 363.



relied, in part, on its directors having to have a good name within the community.<sup>115</sup> The reputation of the directors could therefore pull investors and customers toward the bank or push customers and investors away from interacting, borrowing or depositing money with the bank.<sup>116</sup>

The Northampton Town and County Bank directors were Aldermen Smith, Osborn and Howes.<sup>117</sup> Occupationally, they differed: Smith was a coal merchant, Osborn a grocer, and Howes a solicitor. However, they had served as members of the ‘old corporation’, together building up a solid foundation of trust between and in them.<sup>118</sup> From a social capital aspect, they had direct and indirect access to the networks of all the Borough Corporation members, which in turn gave them access to the county aristocracy, the Freemasons and various community religious leaders. The Northamptonshire Union Bank offered 21,500 shares at £25 per share, which in July 1841 gave a half-yearly dividend of 7s per share.<sup>119</sup> Although the day to day running of the bank was in the hands of a professional accountant and bank manager, the directors of the company were members of the county aristocracy and gentry.<sup>120</sup> It is likely that the social status of the directors, combined with the practice and acceptance of social paternalism, produced the intrinsic value of trust in the company. We can assume that a measure of trust existed through a brief examination of the types of individuals and groups who deposited their finances with the company; they included the Northampton Water Works Company, Northampton Gas and Light Company, and several groups of clergymen.<sup>121</sup>

In 1848, two further joint stock companies were formed, the Corn Exchange Company and the Northampton General Cemetery Company. That same year the Northampton Town and County Freehold Land Association, an early model of a building society, also

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<sup>115</sup> Poovey, *The Financial System in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p. 3; Haggerty, *Merely for Money*, p. 117; Ogilvie, *Institutions and European Trade*, p 363.

<sup>116</sup> See, Laird, *Pull*.

<sup>117</sup> 1404/8, ‘Paper from the Northampton Town and County Bank’ (1849).

<sup>118</sup> *Northampton Poll Books* (1830, 1831, 1837) *Northampton Borough Municipal Elections Poll Books* (1841, 1842).

<sup>119</sup> Notices, ‘Half Yearly Meeting of Northamptonshire Union Bank Dividend of 7s per Share’, *Northampton Mercury*, July (1841); *FXII 39, The Northamptonshire Union Bank*, The bank became the Northamptonshire Banking Company.

<sup>120</sup> *O(N) 158*, Northampton Union Bank; *FXII 39, Bank Book*, Belonging to a Group of Clergy Men (1846-1861).

<sup>121</sup> *FXII39, Bank Book*.

offered investment opportunities.<sup>122</sup> The Northampton Corn Exchange Company offered £10,000 of shares valued at £20 per share, with expected returns of 6 per cent annually. Its directors were local businessmen John Adkins, John Freeman, William Higgs, Samuel Percival, John Perry, Thomas Phipps, Thomas Sharp and James Spiller.<sup>123</sup> Five had served as members of the Corporation, which suggests that they had strong existing political network ties prior to investing in the company.<sup>124</sup> Equally important is that, by personally investing in the new joint stock companies, the directors also had the opportunity to potentially access new networks from which they could enhance reputation and gain social capital. By doing so, members of the Borough Corporation could enhance their status as members of Northampton's elite.

Northampton's businessmen were slow to recognise the benefits both to the community and the possibilities of profit making that could accompany some companies. For example it was not until 20 years after the boom and financial success of Cemetery Companies that the Northampton Cemetery Company was incorporated.<sup>125</sup> In Northampton, the number of company shares offered for sale was 2,400 at £5 per share.<sup>126</sup> Rugg notes that non-conformists initiated many cemetery companies; however, the primary source material regarding shareholders' and subscribers' religious affiliations is limited and thus the present research cannot substantiate Rugg's statement.<sup>127</sup>

The Northampton Town and County Freehold Land Association began in 1848.<sup>128</sup> The Association's aim was to buy and sell parochial land in the vicinity of Northampton, with the intention of building and selling or leasing houses to the middle classes.<sup>129</sup> In 'the spirit of mutual self-help', local businessmen Thomas Sharp, Frederick Parker,

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<sup>122</sup> *Prospectus Corn Exchange Co.*, 7 and 8 Vict. c 110 (1844); *Northampton General Cemetery Co Act for the Registration, Incorporation and Regulation of Joint Stock Companies*, 7 and 8 Vict. c 110 (1844).

<sup>123</sup> *Prospectus Corn Exchange Co.*, 7 and 8 Vic c110 (1844); *Pigot's Trade Directory* (1847), Phipps was a brewer, Freeman a stationer, Sharp a perfumer, Adkins a miller, Percival a solicitor, Higgs a maltster, Perry a cooper, and Spiller was a bank manager for the Northampton Banking Company, previously known as the Northamptonshire Union Bank.

<sup>124</sup> Cox, *The Records of the Borough of Northampton*, pp. 554-570.

<sup>125</sup> J. Rugg, 'Ownership of the Place of Burial', in *Urban Governance: Britain and Beyond since 1750*, ed. by Morris and Trainor (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2000), p. 213.

<sup>126</sup> *Northampton General Cemetery Co Act for the Registration, Incorporation and Regulation of Joint Stock Companies*, 7 and 8 Vic c110 (1844).

<sup>127</sup> Rugg, 'Ownership of the Place of Burial', p. 213.

<sup>128</sup> J. Evans, *A Bakers Tale*; (Rushden: S. L. Hunt, 2000), p. 69.

<sup>129</sup> *A Notable Achievement* (1931); Hatley, 'Some Aspects of Northampton', p. 246.

Thomas Grundy, Thomas Hagger, Joseph Gurney, Thomas Frost, Edwin Grenville and Grey Hester became the first trustees and investors in the scheme.<sup>130</sup> Six of the trustees had served as members of the Corporation before 1848; five had also served as Improvement Commissioners, and the same five were also Freemason members in Northampton. This suggests that these men had established strong bonds of trust over a period of years through network association, both politically and socially. Knowledge of town improvement needs was readily accessible for the Freehold Land Association trustees to act upon.<sup>131</sup> Importantly, Grundy had gained some ability and reputation in building prior to 1848, having opened his own brickyard ten years earlier and built housing on the edge of the town, principally for Northampton's middle classes.<sup>132</sup> House building was extensive during the first half of the century. In 1811, there were approximately 1,600 houses in Northampton; by 1851, the number had increased to 5,016, the larger proportion of which had been built by Grundy, either acting in his own right or as a Freehold Land Association member.<sup>133</sup> The trustees' status as businessmen in their own right and their success in other business areas helped to develop trust in the Freehold Land Association and secure its ultimate success. More importantly, the trustees were able to propagate their status as elite businessmen and thus increase their social capital through the networks which they initiated through business activity.

Analysis of the evidence for the Northampton joint stock companies show that they did not produce a high economic return for the initial outlay of financial capital.<sup>134</sup> Nevertheless there were benefits to being a director of one or more of the companies. First, there was a degree of financial security in starting such a business: investors lost only their initial outlay if the business failed. Second, although success of a joint stock company was not guaranteed in the nineteenth century, the lack of business competition, with the exception of the banking companies, ensured that economic gain was possible; individuals could make small but safe financial gains through the half

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<sup>130</sup> *A Notable Achievement* (1931), p. 4; S. Smiles, *Self-Help: with Illustrations of Character and Conduct* (London: Samuel Smiles, 1859).

<sup>131</sup> *A Notable Achievement* (1931); *NBR 3/8 Orders of Assembly, Court of Mayor and Aldermen*; *NBR 15/1 Northampton Borough Corporation Minute Books* (1835-1838); *NBR 15/2 Northampton Borough Corporation Minute Books* (1839-1848); *NBR 14/05 Improvement Commissioners Minute Books* (1825-1842); *NBR 14/6a Improvement Commissioners Minute Books* (1842-1848); Phipps, *A History of the Pomfret Lodge*.

<sup>132</sup> Hatley, 'Some Aspects of Northampton'.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 244.

<sup>134</sup> *NBR43/1 Northampton Water Works Minute Books*; *FXII39 Bank Book*.

yearly dividend payments. Third, in Northampton, it is likely that reputation and status grew because of the improvements for the town specifically from the gas, water, burial, corn and railway Companies. Members of the Corporation and Improvement Commission of Northampton were the instigators, directors and trustees of the various joint stock companies. That said, the town's two bodies of authority – the Improvement Commission and Borough Corporation - had little input in the decision making process or the business direction which companies took. Lastly, the main reason for starting a joint stock company in Northampton was that of group and individual social philanthropy. Whilst shareholding produced some economic capital, the greater capital was that of social capital within elite circles. As a company director and usually one of the main investors, social capital extended beyond that of immediate elite into the wider community. It contributed to the expansion of personal and business networks overall and an increase in personal social capital. What this suggests is that individuals who engaged with civic duties and responsibilities could bring benefits to the wider community.<sup>135</sup> Nevertheless, when we combine that with the economic benefits and status that an individual may gain, it seems more likely that social capital networks benefitted the individual first and foremost.<sup>136</sup>

Many of the directors of joint-stock companies were also members of either or both the Borough Council or the Improvement Commission (Table 5.2). This was especially the case for the utility companies where there was a public good (the Corn, Cemetery and Water Companies). In contrast, representation on the board of directors of the Union Bank and Building Society, where there was greater risk of economic loss and therefore a possibility of damage to personal reputation, was distinctly lower. This suggests that becoming a company director of a business was also a strategic decision, but this does not detract from the suggestion that networks which had been consolidated through membership of the local authorities contributed towards a greater degree of trust among individuals which enabled them, probably with some confidence, to invest their time and money in the new joint stock companies. Furthermore their membership of the Borough Corporation and or Improvement Commission meant that they were more likely to be successful in their business aims because of their connections with each

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<sup>135</sup> Putnam, *Bowling Alone*; Putnam, et al., *Making Democracy Work*.

<sup>136</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*; Portes, 'The Two Meanings of Social Capital'.

other.<sup>137</sup> Their status within the community could have contributed in drawing outsiders to invest in their joint stock companies. However, it is also likely that interpersonal relationships outside of the local authority groups were used as gatekeeping mechanisms in selecting outsiders as directors. For example, shoe factor Edward Cook was a director of the Water Company in 1844; his directorship may have been through his membership of the Freemason's Lodge of which Christopher Markham was also a member and a director of the Water Company.<sup>138</sup>

Table 5.2 Joint stock companies and civic office holders - 1840s.

	Corporation Members Only	Improvement Commissioners Only	Served on Both Bodies	Did not serve in either body
Corn Company	2	1	4	3
Cemetery Company	9	0	12	3
Water Company	12	0	13	7
Union Bank Company	8	0	2	8
Building Society	4	0	4	10

Source: *Prospectus Corn Exchange* (1844); *NBR 15/1 Northampton Borough Corporation Minutes* (1835-1838); *NBR 15/2 Northampton Borough Corporation Minutes* (1839-1848); *NBR 43/1 Northampton Water Works Company* (1838-1849); *NBR 14/05 Improvement Commissioners Minute Books* (1825-1842); *NBR 14/6a Improvement Commissioners Minute Books* (1842-1848); *Northampton General Cemetery Co* (1844); *O(N) 158, Northampton Union Bank; A Notable Achievement* (1931).

Analysis of the Northampton joint stock and banking companies during the 1840s suggests that Borough Corporation members, Aldermen and councillors and Northampton Improvement Commission members were engaged in economic activities outside their main areas of business. It therefore seems reasonable to suggest that local company directorship in Northampton was dependent for many upon network connections and in particular, network interactions with the Borough Corporation and Improvement Commission. However, for a few – such as the water company director, Richard Thomas – the network connection came from other bodies such as the

<sup>137</sup> Laird, *Pull*, p. 44.

<sup>138</sup> *NBR 43/1 Northampton Water Works Company Minute Book* (1838-1849); Phipps, *A History of the Pomfret Lodge*.

Freemasons.<sup>139</sup> The overlapping network memberships were a means through which individuals could attain economic status and access social capital, their continuous and active engagement with one another helped sustain their status.

The Aldermen and Councillors were able to use their wide network bands that spanned the political, social and business arenas as a means of gaining and maintain status as local elites. Although their interconnectedness produced dense overlapping networks which Granovetter has suggested can limit knowledge flow, they successfully combined their knowledge and existing good reputations to engage in economic activity outside their primary occupations as directors of joint stock companies.<sup>140</sup>

## **Section 2 Personal networks**

### *Established networks*

Just as the interpersonal networks of the eighteenth century were important, so to were the interpersonal networks of the nineteenth century. As Laird notes, status and reputation in particular continued to remain important throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>141</sup> It was through networking that Northampton's political elite were able to gain and maintain their status within the community. Although the Municipal Corporation Act of 1835 had changed the composition of the Borough Corporation, membership of the Corporation continued as a means of accessing potential network resources for economic, social and political gain. Equally important to obtaining elite status was economic ability, security and status, which meant that business networks were an essential component in maintaining and propagating elite status. This section examines the nature and composition of the established networks of two of Northampton's Aldermen, grocer George Osborn and solicitor Christopher Markham.

### *Network - George Osborn junior.*

Using Putnam's methodology where he measures social capital by the number of associated links, it is clear that the father and son, both called George Osborn, were

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<sup>139</sup> *NBR 43/1 Northampton Water Works Company Minute Book (1838-1849)*; Phipps, *A History of the Pomfret Lodge*.

<sup>140</sup> Granovetter, 'The Strength of Weak Ties'.

<sup>141</sup> Laird, *Pull*; Haggerty, *Merely for Money*.

members of the local elite, both in business and civic terms.<sup>142</sup> The established network of George Osborn junior is fairly typical of the networks in operation during the 1840s. He was a grocer, operating in partnership with his father until the death of the latter 1823.<sup>143</sup> It was through the business that George junior was able to access his father's business networks and to further strengthen his own networks. As both father and son had served on the pre 1835 Borough Corporation and both had become Aldermen it is likely that their political networks connections were very similar. After George senior's death George junior continued in politics and, although he lost his position as an Alderman in 1835, he continued later as a councillor on the reformed Borough Corporation and also served as a member of the Improvement Commission.<sup>144</sup> As the entire body of the Borough Corporation's Aldermen were members of the Improvement Commission prior to 1843, his political ties remained strong and regular interaction with other members of the Improvement Commission helped to maintain those ties.

Figure 5.1 shows the network connections for George Osborn junior. Following his father's death Osborn went into partnership with the grocer Henry Lenton Stockburn.<sup>145</sup> Besides selling general groceries, both men were hop and seed factors, and had business accounts with various individuals, including the Northampton brewery which the Phipps family ran.<sup>146</sup> Both Osborn and Stockburn acted as agents for Phoenix Fire Insurance and Osborn was also an agent for Pelican Life Insurance.<sup>147</sup> He extended his business interests further, holding shares in several joint stock companies and becoming a director of the Northampton Union Bank in 1844.<sup>148</sup> Osborn's legal connections were with the Markham family business of attorneys and he served as foreman during jury service for the Quarter Sessions.<sup>149</sup> Socially, Osborn was a member of the Pomfret Lodge as were members of the Phipps and Markham families, and Osborn regularly donated money to the Northampton General Infirmary.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> See Putnam, *et al. Making Democracy Work*.

<sup>143</sup> O(N)97 *Account Book*, Partnership of the George Osborn senior and junior (1823).

<sup>144</sup> NBR 14/05 *Northampton Improvement Commissioners Minute Books* (1825-1824); NBR 14/6a *Northampton Improvement Commissioners Minute Books* (1842-1848).

<sup>145</sup> *Pigot's Commercial Directory* (1847).

<sup>146</sup> O(N) 112, *Business Account* (1823-1833).

<sup>147</sup> *Pigot's Trade Directory* (1847).

<sup>148</sup> O(N) 245 *Northampton Union Bank Director* (1844).

<sup>149</sup> 'Grand Jury List Quarter Sessions', *Northampton Mercury*, 5 January (1842).

<sup>150</sup> 'Northampton Hospital Subscription List', *Northampton Herald*, 15 January (1842), p. 2.

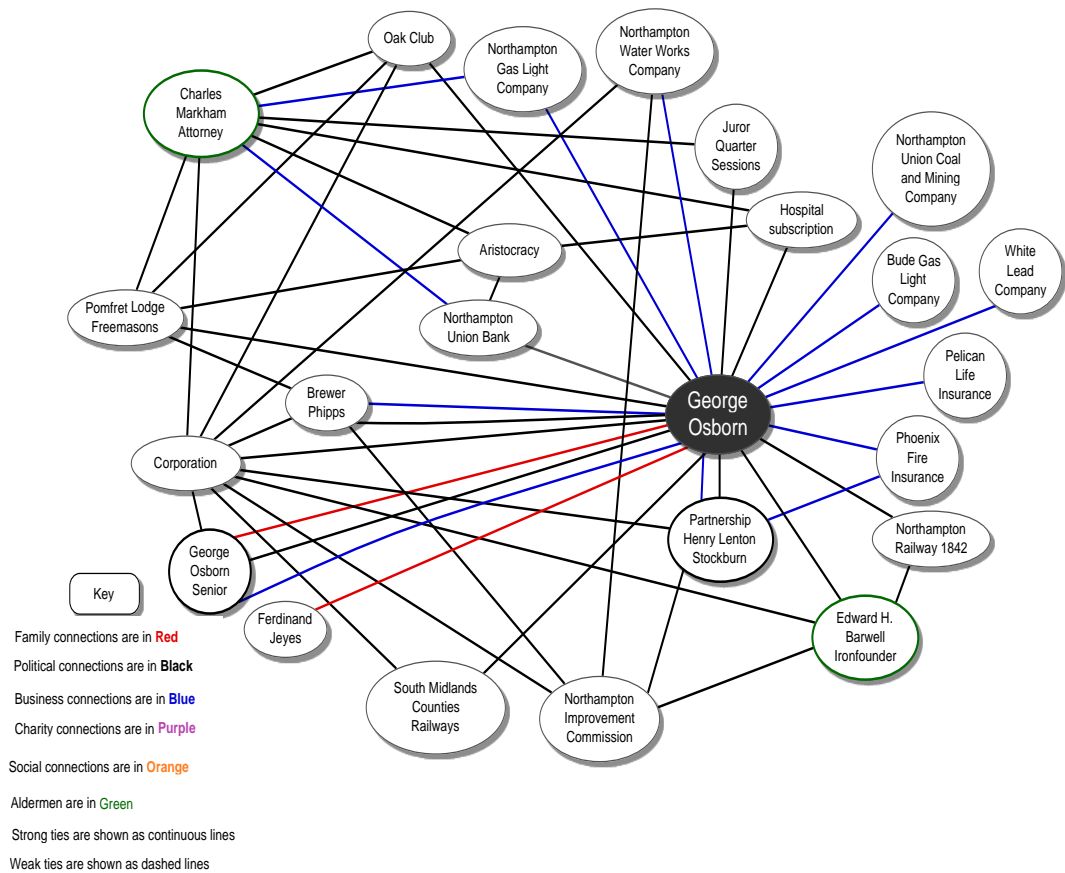
Although Figure 5.1 shows some of George Osborn junior's network connections, the intensity of friendship, political, business and social ties are difficult to reconstruct. The evidence thus suggests that there were strong networks of trust between Osborn, Phipps, Stockburn and Markham, politically, socially and in business. The weakest of Osborn's network links were those with the Insurance and joint stock companies White Lead and Bude Gas Light, where Osborn held shares.<sup>151</sup> Those weak links may have produced for Osborn some degree of social capital; however, available archival material is not sufficient to show their relevance to Osborn as a 'broker' of information. Nevertheless, it is possible that his connections to joint stock companies had the potential to provide Osborn with further network connections from which potential social capital could possibly have been gained.

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<sup>151</sup> *Pigot's Trade Directory* (1847); *O(N) 180/2 White Lead Company Shares* (1841); *O(N) 240 Bude Gas Light Company, Shares* (1842-1846). Data was not available that listed the other directors and shareholders for the two joint stock companies.



Figure 5.1 Network Map for George Osborn junior, c1830-1850.



Source: *O(N) 245 Northampton Union Bank Director* (1844); ‘Grand Jury List Quarter Sessions’, *Northampton Mercury* (1842); ‘Hospital Subscription List’, *Northampton Mercury*, 15 January (1842); *O(N) 180/2 White Lead Company Shares* (1841); *O(N) 240 Bude Gas Light Company, Shares* (1842-1846); *NBR 3/8 Orders of Assembly, Court of Mayor and Aldermen* (1811-1835); *NBR 15/1 Northampton Borough Corporation Minutes* (1835-1838); *NBR 15/2 Northampton Borough Corporation Minutes* (1839-1848); *NBR 14/05 Minute Book, Northampton Improvement Commissioners* (1825-1842); *NBR 14/6a Minute Book, Northampton Improvement Commissioners* (1842-1848).

### Network - Christopher Markham

Analysis of the evidence for this case study suggests that solicitors and attorneys also gained social capital and elite status through their network connections. The trust between attorney and client, specifically in business and financial areas, was a major source of social capital for those in the legal professions. As with all areas of trade and industry, the legal profession expanded in Northampton. In 1791, there were 14 men in the legal profession, and by 1847 that number had risen to 22.<sup>152</sup> Their role was to act as impartial brokers of knowledge on legal matters or other concerns important to the individual and community. In the 1840s, the most notable individuals within the legal

<sup>152</sup> *Universal Directory* (1791); *Pigot's Directory* (1847).

profession were the members of the Markham family. The *Universal Directory* 1791 lists John Markham as a practicing solicitor in Northampton. Both his sons Christopher and Charles were articled to their father and John's grandson Henry was later articled to the firm in 1838.<sup>153</sup> All three generations were active within the community and served as Borough Corporation members. John, Christopher and Henry also served as mayors for the borough, and Christopher also served on the Improvement Commission for a short period.<sup>154</sup>

The Markham family served as clerks of the peace in Northampton and as Clerks of the Lieutenancy for the County of Northamptonshire, mixing with the county's aristocracy and gentry, and with Northampton's urban elites as Figure 5.2 shows. The family built its social capital upon the reputation of business and interpersonal networks. They maintained social networks with the aristocracy and gentry through sport – cricket and hunting – and with the urban elite through membership of the Masonic Lodge, where Christopher Markham was elected as Worshipful Master in 1838, his nephew Henry also becoming Worshipful Master in 1847.<sup>155</sup> They were also connected to the Tory Oak Club.

The Markham family were both directly and indirectly connected to the new joint stock companies which formed in Northampton. Christopher Markham was a director of the Northampton Union Bank and the Corn Exchange Company. The diagram shows the strong links between family members, the Borough Corporation and the Improvement Commission, and also to legal office and the joint stock companies, where they held directorships. The weaker connecting links – those which exist through third parties (indirect links) or where active involvement of the Markham family is limited – tied the family to the local aristocracy and gentry, and to institutions such as the General Infirmary. It is apparent from the evidence examined that, as individuals and as members of the legal profession, the family had links to the social, political and business arenas in Northampton which gave opportunity for the maintenance of social capital and status in Northampton.

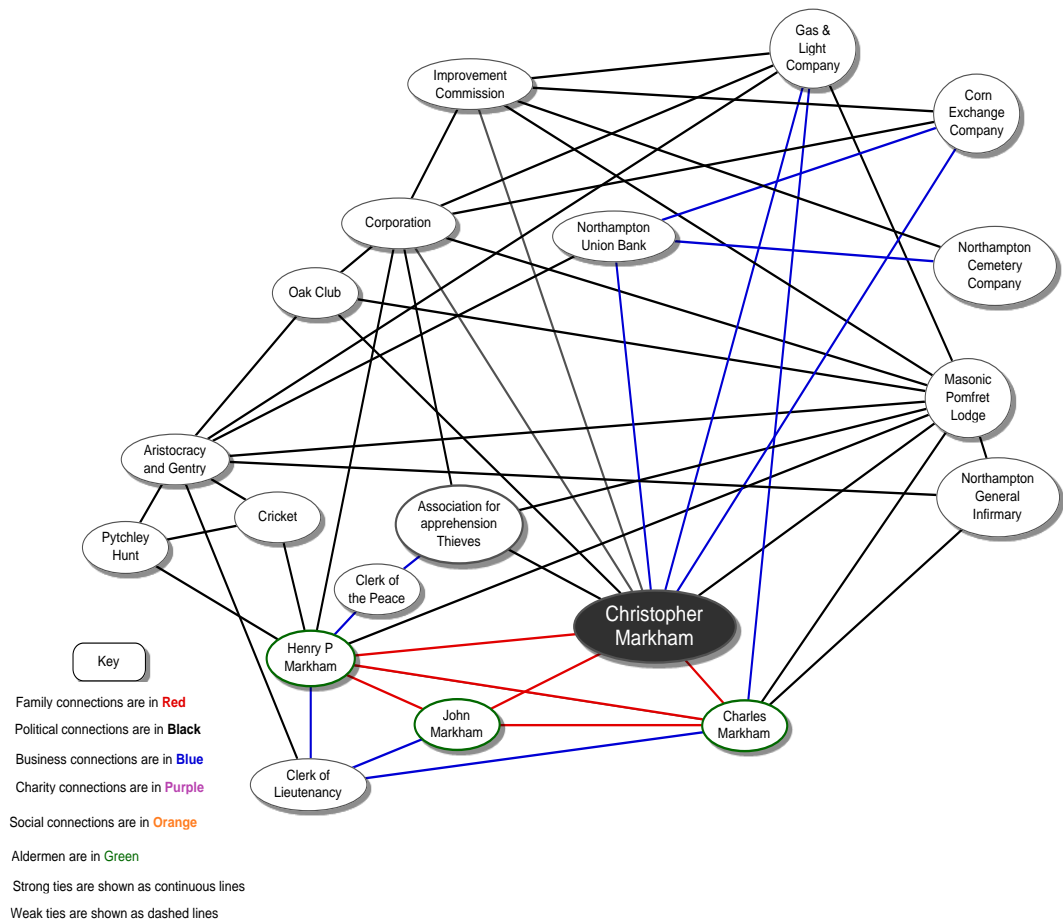
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<sup>153</sup> 'Obituary: Henry P. Markham', *Northampton Mercury* 29 January (1904), p. 5.

<sup>154</sup> Cox, *The Records of the Borough of Northampton*, pp. 554-570.

<sup>155</sup> Phipps, *A History of the Pomfret Lodge*.

Figure 5.2 Markham Family - Social Capital Network c1820-50



Sources: 'Obituary Henry P. Markham', *Northampton Mercury* (1904); *NBR 3/8 Orders of Assembly, Court of Mayor and Aldermen* (1811-1835); *NBR 15/1 Northampton Borough Corporation Minutes* (1835-1838); *NBR 15/2 Northampton Borough Corporation Minutes* (1839-1848); *NBR 43/1 Northampton Water Works Company Minute Book* (1838-1849); *NBR 14/05 Minute Book, Northampton Improvement Commissioners* (1825-1842); *NBR 14/6a Minute Book, Northampton Improvement Commissioners* (1842-1848); *NGH Northampton General Hospital, The One Hundred and Third Annual Report of the General Infirmary at Northampton with List of Subscribers* (1846); *NGH Northampton General Hospital The One Hundred and Fourth Annual Report of the General Infirmary at Northampton with List of Subscribers* (1847); *O(N) 50 Annual Subscription Receipts Northampton General Infirmary*; *Cam 905 Family History*, (1885); *MKM 122/1 Under Sherriff for the County of Northampton* (1840); *MKM 122/8 Under Sherriff for the County of Northampton* (1843); *Prospectus of the Northampton Corn Exchange Company* (1852); *Northampton Cemetery Company, Provisional Committee* (1845); Cox, *The Records of the Borough of Northampton*, pp. 554-570; Phipps, *A History of the Pomfret Lodge*.

Figure 5.3 shows some of the network overlaps which were in operation and connected to Northampton's joint stock companies. By adding the names of several Aldermen into the diagram it is possible to show the overlap of group membership. Although the joint stock companies did have non-corporation directors, their number is limited; the evidence suggests that the dominant group within each organisation consisted of those who had served or were serving Aldermen and those waiting to become Aldermen. There were strong connections between the Water Company directors, Improvement

Commission and the Borough Corporation.<sup>156</sup> Alderman Thomas Sharp, for example, was directly connected to five organisations which gave him indirect access, through third parties, to a further 12 organisations and groups. George Rand was an Alderman when the Gas Light Company began, but he lost his position in the Corporation following the 1835 Corporation Act.<sup>157</sup> However, Rand's network contacts with local politicians, bank and building society directors and others remained until he lost his position as a director of the Northampton Water Company in 1838.<sup>158</sup> From a social capital perspective, taking Bourdieu's 'access to resources' into account, Rand's networks remained active and thus a means through which he could gain social capital. However the loss of political office apparently contributed towards a loss of status within the community. His experience is exceptional, though: after 1838 there is no mention of him in the local newspapers, nor is there evidence that he continued as a director or shareholder with any of Northampton's joint stock companies. It is possible that he moved away from Northampton or he may simply have become an ordinary member of the community. Nevertheless by 1838 George Rand was no longer a member of Northampton's political or business elite.

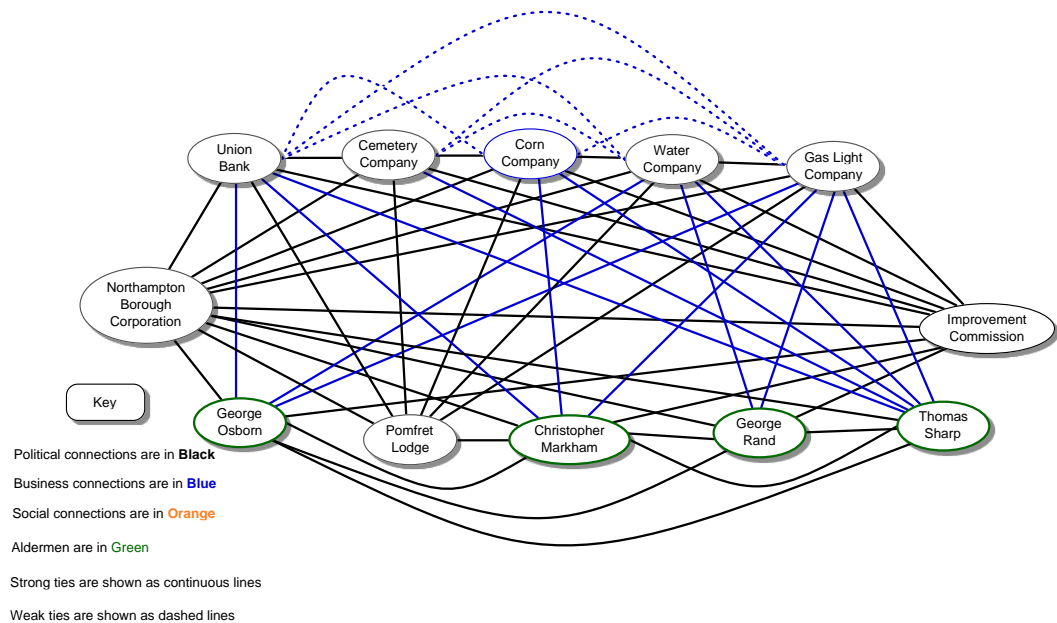
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<sup>156</sup> *NBR 43/1 Northampton Water Works Company Minute Book (1838-1849).*

<sup>157</sup> *O(N) 118 Northampton Gas Light Company Minutes (1831-1849); O(N) 118 Northampton Gas Light Company (1831); NBR 15/1 Northampton Borough Corporation Minutes (1835-1838); NBR 15/2 Northampton Borough Corporation Minutes (1839-1848).*

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

Figure 5.3 Network overlaps.



Sources: *NBR 3/8 Orders of Assembly, Court of Mayor and Aldermen* (1811-1835); *NBR 15/1 Northampton Borough Corporation Minutes* (1835-1838); *NBR 15/2 Northampton Borough Corporation Minutes* (1839-1848); *NBR 43/1 Northampton Water Works Company Minute Book* (1838-1849); *NBR 14/05 Minute Book, Northampton Improvement Commissioners* (1825-1842); *NBR 14/6a Minute Book, Northampton Improvement Commissioners* (1842-1848); *NGH Northampton General Hospital, The One Hundred and Third Annual Report of the General Infirmary at Northampton with List of Subscribers* (1846); *NGH Northampton General Hospital The One Hundred and Fourth Annual Report of the General Infirmary at Northampton with List of Subscribers* (1847); *O(N) 50 Annual Subscription Receipts Northampton General Infirmary*; *Cam 905 Family History* (1885); *MKM 122/1 Under Sherriff for the County of Northampton* (1840); *MKM 122/8 Under Sherriff for the County of Northampton* (1843); *Prospectus of the Northampton Corn Exchange Company* (1852); *Northampton Cemetery Company, Provisional Committee* (1845); Cox, *The Records of the Borough of Northampton*, pp. 554-570; Phipps, *A History of the Pomfret Lodge*.

Figure 5.3 also shows that the two organisations with the greatest number of connections were the Borough Corporation and the Improvement Commission. It is through membership of those two bodies that individuals could establish, exercise and demonstrate reciprocal trust, essential for gaining and maintaining social capital. Regular interaction ensured that individuals not only established, but maintained behavioural conformity within the respective groups, allowing members to have confidence in their business interactions with each other and avoid recourse to legal action. In essence the Borough Corporation and the Improvement Commission members not only overlapped but were inter-changeable, and therefore provided stability and sustainability amongst their members. Repeated interaction between the organisation's memberships fostered trust and provided the political, business, social

and cultural norms which identified the members of the Borough Corporation as members of the elite.

## **Conclusion**

The chapter has shown that the urban elite in nineteenth-century Northampton continued to be those with business and social status in the community who saw political office as the pinnacle of standing within the town and the position of Alderman as the confirmation of standing and status as a local elite. As expected the introduction of the Municipal Reform Act in 1835 had altered the construct of Northampton's political elite. The practice of self-selecting members that was evident in the 1770s ceased when the Reform Act was introduced. Regular municipal elections for political office interrupted the Aldermen's previous practice of acting as gatekeepers of civic power by opening access to those previously excluded from power. The introduction of regular elections also meant greater public participation, appointing political elites had moved into the hands of the electorate, which legitimised the position of councillor and Aldermen, and thus confirmed the Borough Corporation and its members as those with the authority to hold and use power in the 1840s. The introduction of the Municipal Reform Act of 1835 also meant that civic office may have become even more sought after as a prize for Northampton's business elite than it had in the 1770s. Using networks through which social capital might be accessed therefore grew in importance.

There were several networks which the political elite used to gain and maintain status, and a general convergence of civic and business network membership during the 1840s. It is apparent that the Aldermen, councillors and those in waiting for political office used Northampton's Improvement Commission as a means of accessing potential social capital and as a means of propagating their status in the community. Borough Councillors and Aldermen, and the members of the Improvement Commissioners were often the same men, suggesting that the introduction of the Municipal Corporation Act and the later Improvement Commission Act of 1842/3, which had introduced election to office, had not to any extent damaged the networks of the Aldermen or councillors and may indeed helped to reinforce existing social capital network ties. However, business reputation and status continued, as in the 1770s, to be important for gaining political status in the 1840s. The introduction of regular elections to political office meant that

business success may have taken on greater significance for both the members of the Borough Corporation and the voting public, and for maintaining elite status. Using existing strong networks, several Aldermen and councillors formed joint stock companies, often to provide utilities for the town. It is probable that these had not just a business, but a political purpose for the Aldermen and councillors: the maintenance of their status within the community. By becoming directors of the utility companies they were investing not only for their own economic benefits, but in projects from which the public could benefit. In this way, they were investing their social capital to gain status and electoral votes, which suggests that the existing and potential political elites of Northampton were recognising the public as a consumer voter during the 1840s.

The 1835 Municipal Corporation Act of 1835 not only changed the construct of the Borough Corporation in Northampton but may also have contributed toward members of the Borough Corporation responding to the change by strengthening their network ties by overlapping those ties through their secondary business interactions – for example, joint stock companies. The overlapping networks between the Aldermen, Councillors, Improvement Commissioners and elite businessmen suggests that, rather than losing power when political office ceased, outgoing Aldermen may have continued to influence political decision making in Northampton; in doing so they were able to maintain their status within the community. The continued interaction not only strengthen the exchange of existing social capital between the individuals but may also have contributed to them having an opportunity to access further networks and access to potential social capital through which status could be gained maintained and propagated.

Finally, it was through their social capital networks that Aldermen were able to maintain their status in Northampton. This ‘snap shot’ of nineteenth-century Northampton has also shown that the political elite did respond to political change by utilising those networks to invest in business ventures that would appeal to the voting public and by so doing maintain their access to power and elite status. The analysis has given us a better understanding of how individuals gained and maintained status within the community.

## **Chapter 6: Urban Elite in Twentieth-Century Northampton**

### *Introduction*

This chapter builds upon the two previous chapters and aims to produce a better understanding of network membership and its importance in producing social capital that was used for gaining, maintaining and propagating elite status in Northampton during the 1920s. This was a period of political and business change after World War I. The Borough Corporation remained an important arena which provided the legitimisation and recognition of status and power for local elites. However, it was an organisation in transition: from being dominated by the social hierarchy of successful businessmen, it slowly shifted towards a more socially inclusive structure so that, by the end of the twentieth century, it better reflected the social composition of the wider community. There were several important factors which may have impacted upon and changed the way in which the political elite operated specific networks to gain social capital, and which are important to this case study.

Firstly, the town had grown rapidly during the nineteenth century. In 1801 the population was 7,020, by 1901 that number had increased to 87,000 and by the 1920s the number had reached 90,932.<sup>1</sup> Increase in the population was the main reason that the number of wards within the Borough increased from the three which the 1835 Corporation Act established, to twelve by 1912.<sup>2</sup> It was not, however, until 1898 that those changes began to take place, the town then being divided into six wards.<sup>3</sup> In 1900, a provisional order further extended the Borough's municipal boundaries to include three wards from newly acquired parochial areas which included half of Kingsthorpe, all of St James' End and Far Cotton, and much of Abington, producing a total of nine wards.<sup>4</sup> In 1912, the local government, under the Northampton Corporation Act, re-assessed the Borough wards and further divided the borough into 12 wards: Castle, North, St Crispin's, St Michael's, South, Kingsthorpe, Far Cotton, St Edmund's South, St James' Kingsley and Delapre.<sup>5</sup> Each ward had three councillors

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<sup>1</sup> *Northampton Mercury*, June (1841); M. Andrew, *Town and City Memories: Northampton*, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Borough of Northampton: Description', *A History of the County of Northampton: Volume 3* (1930), pp. 30-40; <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=66254> [accessed 30 October 2011].

<sup>3</sup> 'The Borough of Northampton: Description', pp. 30-40; *Kelly's Directory of Bedfordshire, Hunts and Northants, with maps 1928* (London: Kelly's Directories, 1928), p. 150

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> 'The Borough of Northampton: Description', pp. 30-40.



and one Alderman which brought the number of councillors to 36 and the total of Aldermen to 12. Nevertheless, the political term of office continued as it had under the Corporation Act of 1835. Another important legal change was The Representation of the People Act 1918 which increased the size of the Parliamentary electorate and the number of those able to vote in local council elections.<sup>6</sup> Prior to the 1918 Act, Northampton's electorate consisted of 13,464 men; after its introduction, the number jumped dramatically to 46,007.<sup>7</sup> The *Northampton Mercury* noted that 18,793 women also became part of the electorate for the first time.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the town's political elite town would need to appeal to a larger and more diverse electorate to maintain status.<sup>9</sup>

Although business success was no longer a prerequisite for political office in the 1920s, it continued to remain an important factor for many of the Borough Corporation members and the wider electorate. Following the introduction of the Joint Stock Companies Act 1844, which the Aldermen of the period had successfully used, there were several more Government Laws introduced which had a bearing on the operation of businesses in the town. The first was the Limited Liability Act 1855 which increased the number of company shareholders from 12 to 25 and limited the financial liability between shareholder and creditor to that of the unpaid portion of their shares.<sup>10</sup> Revised again in 1856, The Joint Stock Companies Act included the provision for a suffix 'Ltd' for all incorporated companies to display. Six years later, the Companies Act 1862 included the provision under section 167 that, 'the liquidator of a company was to bring criminal proceedings against directors and others who were alleged to have committed offences against the company', e.g. corrupt practices and fraud.<sup>11</sup> Changes in legislation relating to joint stock company law could affect the methods through which individuals maintained status and social capital in the business arena.

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<sup>6</sup> *Representation of the People Act 1918; An Act to Amend the Law with respect to Parliamentary and Local Government Franchises, and the Registration of Parliamentary and Local Government Electors, and the conduct of elections, and to provide for the Redistribution of Seats at Parliamentary Elections, and for other purposes connected therewith* (1918).

<sup>7</sup> 'New Register of Voters under the New Act', *Northampton Mercury*, 3 November (1918), p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Representation of the People Act 1918.*

<sup>10</sup> *The Limited Liability Act (18 & 19 Vict c 133)* (1855).

<sup>11</sup> *Companies Act of 1862 (25 and 26 Vic c 89), section 167* (1862).

Even so, as Micklethwait and Woolridge have noted, British business preferred to rely on interpersonal relations and were slow to convert to limited liability.<sup>12</sup> Quail's research into the recruitment of managers in the early twentieth century shows that often, when a business did convert to a Limited Liability Company, the directorships often remained within family. Quoting from Urwick's 1927 observations on British industry: 'the principle organisation in industry was myself, my father, my son and my wife's nephew'.<sup>13</sup> This is a contemporary illustration of normal business practices during the interwar years, but important to this chapter is that Northampton's local businessmen – including Aldermen and councillors - increasingly sought to protect their economic base by becoming Limited Liability Companies (LLCs).

There were other changes in the business arena that affected both the local politicians and the electorate. World War I had affected trade, both locally and internationally. The town's main industry continued to be shoe and boot manufacturing which had received many government contracts. However, following the cessation of hostilities and throughout the 1920s the industry struggled as government contracts ended.<sup>14</sup> To address the problem local businessmen used an organisation set up in 1915, the Northampton Chamber of Commerce.<sup>15</sup> Following a similar practice to that of Leicester, this body produced a monthly trade journal, '*The Northamptonshire Journal of Commerce: The Key to the Worlds Markets*'.<sup>16</sup> Its publishers boasted of a circulation which included the Counties of Northamptonshire and Leicestershire, and even Canada. Importantly, Chamber membership was open to all companies or business within the county of Northamptonshire. However, advertisements related to the boot and shoe industry dominated the journal which reported on subjects that were of importance to the boot and shoe industry's manufacturing and distribution interests.

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<sup>12</sup> J. Micklethwait and A. Woolridge, *The Company: A Short History of a Revolutionary Idea* (New York: Publisher, 2005) p. 82.

<sup>13</sup> L. Urwick, 'Promotion in Industry', *Public Administration*, 5 (April 1927), in *The Making of the British Middle Classes: Studies of Regional and Cultural Diversity since the Eighteenth-century*, in J. M. Quail, Chapter 10, ed. by A. Kidd and D. Nicholls (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Ltd, 1998), p. 173; 'Obituary, John Marlow', *Northampton Independent*, 6 July (1945), p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Andrew, *Town and City Memories*, p. 53.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.northants-chamber.co.uk/who-we-are> [accessed 11 August 2009].

<sup>16</sup> 'The Key to the Worlds Markets', *Northamptonshire Journal of Commerce 1924* (Northampton: Northampton Mercury Co. Ltd., 1924).

This chapter draws on archival material, including Corporation Year Books, local newspapers and group membership lists, to examine elite networking and status during these years of profound economic and political change, when big business and local politics were increasingly distinct from one another.<sup>17</sup> The first section analyses the means through which Northampton's political elite could gain and maintain social capital. It analyses the political, social and business networks to which the Aldermen of 1920s Northampton were connected. Section two explores the new avenues of networking which the Aldermen utilised during the 1920s and discusses the overlap of network membership which contributed towards status as elite within the community.

### **Section 1: Old and new route to becoming an elite**

#### *Education as a means of social capital.*

Prior to World War I, education was in many respects a privileged affair.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, the vast majority of individuals attended local authority run elementary schools. Northampton followed national trends in which 91 per cent of the population received an elementary school education, although less than 9 per cent attended secondary schools.<sup>19</sup> Although limited, the evidence relating to school education shows that several of Northampton's Aldermen left school at the age of 12. For example, the obituary of Horace Walter Dover, Mayor of Northampton in 1924, states: 'He started life with no particular advantage of education'.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, Dover was a successful businessman and politician, and his contemporaries recognised him as a member of Northampton's local elite. His obituary also notes that he was not a native of Northampton, but came from Buckingham, and who was articled to a model maker in London where he established his early networks.<sup>21</sup> It therefore seems unlikely that the networks which he established during his school and apprenticeship years contained individuals from Northampton.

Arthur William Lyne became a Corporation member in 1920, and went on to become an Alderman and mayor. He left school at the age of 13 with little more than an

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<sup>17</sup> Stevenson, *British Society 1914-45* (London: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 355.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid* p. 249.

<sup>19</sup> N. Branson, *Britain in the Nineteen Twenties* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1975), p. 120.

<sup>20</sup> 'A Gentleman Passes', *Northampton Independent*, 8 April (1933), p. 8.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*.

elementary education, yet in 1945 he became a Member of Parliament for Burton-on-Trent.<sup>22</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that Lyne had established any school friendships with those who were to become Northampton Borough Council members in later years. Furthermore, as Dover and Lyne's schooling ended at the age of 12 and their respective apprenticeships were in different industries, and geographically distant, it seems highly unlikely that their educational background was a determinant to gaining status in Northampton prior to and during the 1920s.

Unlike elementary schools, secondary schools charged fees through the interwar years, although a few scholarships were available in Northampton and grants were available in most schools.<sup>23</sup> The financial commitment effectively ensured that schools recruited a greater number of individuals entering into secondary education from middle class backgrounds rather than from the working classes.<sup>24</sup> Evidence from the local press suggests that several Aldermen did attend Northampton Grammar School: Aldermen Fred Kilby and John Martin, for example, were members of the same class and Alderman Charles Scott attended the school as a 'scholarship boy'.<sup>25</sup> Although Bourdieu suggests that similar education experiences produce similar cultural expectations, beyond the fact that these three men entered the political arena, there is little evidence to suggest that they shared cultural expectations and aims which produced or contributed to an exclusivity of network associations during their school years or after. Each served as a member of a different political association: Kilby was a Liberal Councillor and Alderman, Martin a Conservative, and Scott a Socialist and Northampton's first Labour mayor.<sup>26</sup> Although it is possible that their schooling may have contributed towards a culture of civic duty, there is little to suggest that it produced a political culture or homogeneity of identity from which Northampton recruited its political elite.

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<sup>22</sup> J. Kinball, *Honorary Freemen of the County Borough of Northampton* (Northamptonshire Public Libraries, 1966), p. 13.

<sup>23</sup> 'Educational Scholarships', *Northampton Independent*, 15 March (1924), p. 6; Stevenson, *British Society*, p. 249.

<sup>24</sup> Branson, *Britain in the Nineteen Twenties*, p. 121.

<sup>25</sup> 'Obituary Charles James Scott', *Northampton Independent*, 8 November (1947), p. 8.

<sup>26</sup> 'Obituary Fred Kilby', *Northampton Independent*, 20 November (1936), p. 8; 'Obituary Charles James Scott', (1947).

### *Social capital and the political arena*

Between 1913 and 1919, in common with other borough and district corporations and authorities around the country, there were no council elections in Northampton. Those with seats on the Corporation retained them for the duration of World War 1. The Corporation replaced them only when necessity dictated, e.g. death of a sitting councillor. Following the cessation of World War I, the first council elections in the Borough of Northampton took place in November 1919.<sup>27</sup> The period of office remained as it had under the Municipal Corporation Act of 1835: councillors served a term of three years before seeking re-election and Aldermen a period of six years.<sup>28</sup> As previously mentioned, there had been an increase in the number of councillors and the number of Aldermen. This then gave an opportunity for those aiming for political status within Northampton and provided possible opportunities for maintaining and propagating status. Analysis of the *Corporation Year Books* and the Borough election results in the *Northampton Independent* showed that between 1919 and 1930, 54 individuals had served on the Borough Corporation as councillors and/or Aldermen.<sup>29</sup>

The development of party political associations during the nineteenth century saw a reduction in the number of 'independent' candidates standing for local election to the Borough Corporation of Northampton.<sup>30</sup> More commonly, candidates were drawn from local political party associations where selection was dependent upon well-constructed networks between association members and individual candidates. Selection relied upon a candidate having established himself not only within the local political association, but within the local community and in particular the ward in which he intended to stand as a candidate for councillor. Trust, reliability and honesty remained the key selection features. Interpersonal and business relationships, and their important role as employers, who Joyce suggests were 'often regarded as the legitimate leaders in

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<sup>27</sup> 'Municipal Election Results', *Northampton Independent*, 8 November (1919), pp. 18-19.

<sup>28</sup> *Kelly's Directory* (1928), p. 150.

<sup>29</sup> *Northampton Borough Corporation, Year Books* (1921-1931); *Northampton Independent*, 'Municipal Election Results', 8 November (1919), pp. 18-19; *Northampton Independent*, 'Municipal Election Results', 6 November (1920), pp. 7-8; *Northampton Independent*, 'Municipal Election Results', 5 November (1921), pp. 29-30; *Northampton Independent*, 'Municipal Election Results', 4 November (1922), pp. 31-32; *Northampton Independent*, 'Municipal Election Results', 3 November (1923), p.28; *Northampton Independent*, 'Municipal Election Results', 8 November (1924), p. 23; *Northampton Independent*, 'Municipal Election Results', 7 November (1925), pp. 24-25; *Northampton Independent*, 'Municipal Election Results', 6 November (1926), p. 21, p. 29; *Northampton Independent*, 'Municipal Election Results', 5 November (1927), p. 26. Hereafter referred to as election results and year.

<sup>30</sup> *Northampton Independent*, Election Results (1919-1927); *Corporation Year Books* (1919-1930).

society generally', provided the majority of Northampton's councillors with the good reputation necessary for success in the political arena.<sup>31</sup> Analysis of evidence collated from the *Northampton Corporation Year Books* and the local newspaper the *Northampton Independent* shows that, between 1919 and 1930, there were only eight individuals who were not businessmen but who served as either councillors or Aldermen. They were, journalist Samuel Champion, union representative William Townley, school master John Mott, union representative Arthur Lyne, colliery agent John Woods, journalist Charles Scott, Mrs. Alice Adams and Mrs. Amy Scott.<sup>32</sup> Therefore in total 86 percent of the Borough Corporation were businessmen and of the other 14 percent, 11 percent were employed and just 3 percent, the two women, were not in employment.<sup>33</sup>

Although under the Local Government Act of 1894 women had been eligible to serve on Parish and District Councils, it was not until the introduction of the *Qualification of Women Act* was passed in 1907 that they were legally able to become members of County and Borough Councils.<sup>34</sup> A. Baldwin's thesis on women councillors shows that few women in England and Wales actually managed to become Borough Councillors during the 1920s.<sup>35</sup> Her table gives information on the council name, the number of women per council and year, and revealed that Northampton's low figure of 2 women councillors in the 1920s was representative of many small and medium sized towns during the period.<sup>36</sup> We know little about their contribution to the Borough Corporation during the 1920s. Both were mentioned in the local newspaper and recorded in the Corporation Year Books as married women, but further information on either of them was mentioned.<sup>37</sup> Further, the local media did not include detailed reports of Corporation meetings where the women attended and may have contributed to any debates. There is no evidence of how they came to serve as Borough Councillors and nothing to suggest that they gained office through local political party association.

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<sup>31</sup> P. Joyce, *Work, Society and Politics*, p. 161.

<sup>32</sup> Election Results (1919-1927); *Corporation Year Books* (1919-1930).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> *Act of Parliament for the Qualification of Women: County and Borough Councils* (7 Edw. VII c33), October (1907); *Local Government Act, An Act to make further provision for Local Government in England and Wales 1894* (Vict. c 73, 56, 57), 5 March (1894).

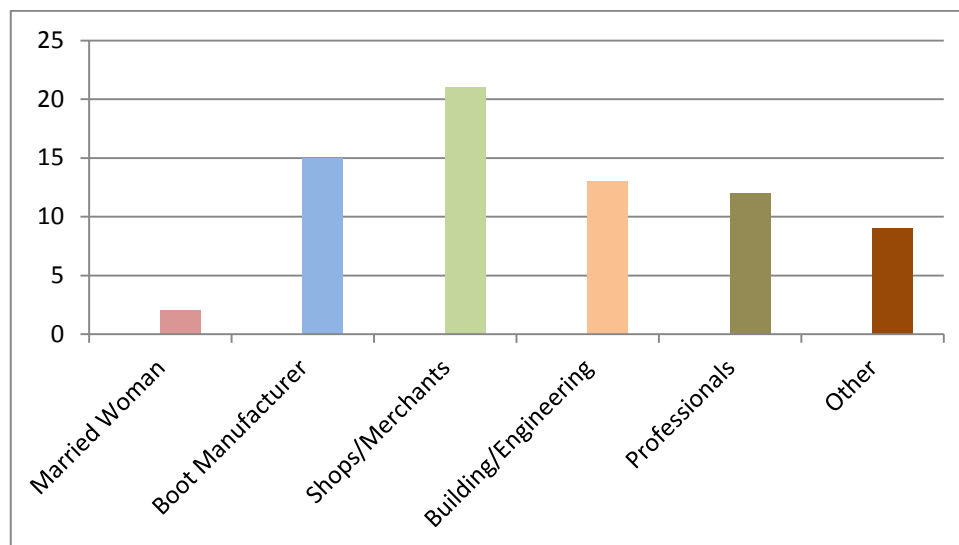
<sup>35</sup> A. Baldwin, 'Progress and patterns in the election of women as councillors, 1918-1938 (unpublished doctoral thesis: University of Huddersfield, 2012).

<sup>36</sup> Baldwin, 'Progress and patterns in the election of women'.

<sup>37</sup> *Corporation Year Books* (1919-1930).

Neither is there evidence which alludes to the means or networks they used to influence public opinion prior to their election. What is known is that Mrs Amy Rosaline Scott served two terms and was in office during the General Strike of 1926, and Mrs Agnes Alice Adams won a seat in the 1928 borough election. This suggests that they had acquired social capital, trust and reciprocity networks, which were generally gained through business activity, came through other means.

Graph 6.1 Percentages of Borough Councillors' Occupations 1919-1930.



Source: *Corporation Year Books* (1919-1930); *Election Results* (1919-1930); 'Obituary A. E. Marlow', *Northampton Independent*, 15 July (1922), p. 5; 'Obituary Alfred George Slinn', *Northampton Independent*, 14 November (1931), p. 11; 'Obituary John Woods', *Northampton Independent*, 5 December (1931), p. 9; 'Obituary William Harvey-Reeves', *Northampton Independent*, 6 January (1932), p. 3; 'Obituary H. W. Dover', *Northampton Independent*, 8 April (1933), p. 3 and p.8; 'Obituary Herbert Lea', *Northampton Independent*, 27 May (1933), p. 3; 'Obituary F. Kilby', *Northampton Independent*, 20 November (1936), p. 10; 'Obituary J. E. Pearce', *Northampton Independent*, 3 February (1939), p. 8; 'Obituary D. P. Taylor', *Northampton Independent*, 27 October (1944), p. 8; 'Obituary C. W. Phipps', *Northampton Independent*, 27 October (1944), p.8; 'Obituary J. Peach', *Northampton Independent*, 14 July (1944), p. 8; 'Obituary J. G. Dalton', *Northampton Independent*, 18 January (1946), p. 4; 'Obituary Charles James Scott', *Northampton Independent*, 8 November (1947), p. 8; 'Obituary G. W. Beattie', *Northampton Independent*, 28 February (1951), p. 8; 'Obituary Ralph Austin Smith', *Northampton Independent*, 30 November (1951), p. 8; 'Obituary Thomas Slinn James', *Northampton Independent*, 2 May (1953), p. 8; 'Obituary Arthur William Lyne', *Northampton Independent*, 7 February (1958), p. 5; 'Obituary A. E. Catt', *Northampton Independent*, 30 May (1962), p.8; 'Obituary Cyril Chown', *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 5 May (1988), p. 2; 'Northampton Town Boot Manufacturers Association', *Supplement to the Shoe and Leather Record* Northampton (1929). Hereafter the obituaries will read obituary plus name and year.

Occupationally, the Corporation, as in previous decades, was comprised of individuals from all business arenas within the town. Graph 6.1 shows that shopkeepers and merchants were well represented throughout the decade. Also relatively well represented were the building and engineering trades and 'professionals', including teachers, accountants, solicitors and similar. As expected the Boot and Shoe Industry

were also well represented during the decade, yet the biggest three biggest industrialists within Northampton's boot and shoe manufacturers during the 1920s, Manfield, Sears and Bostock, did not stand for election to the Borough Corporation.<sup>38</sup> Although James Manfield had served on the Borough Corporation prior to that date, it appears that no family member continued to perform civic duty as a Corporation member in the interwar years.<sup>39</sup> Overall, however, Graph 6.1 supports Stevenson's assertion that the majority of the local political elite still came from the manufacturing and commercial arenas.<sup>40</sup> This mix of occupations offered the opportunity for Corporation members to gain an almost holistic insight into the various industries and business needs and opportunities both within and for the town.

The period of service as a member of the Corporation's elected body was three years as a councillor, mayors being selected from within. Council members nominated candidates and voted their preference. However, from 1913, the Corporation chose the Mayor, not from the party with the majority of seats, but each party alternately.<sup>41</sup> Once a mayor completed a term, he served as an Alderman for 6 years, members selecting the remaining Aldermen from past serving mayors. From 1918, the Corporation selected one individual from the Labour council members to serve as Alderman in an attempt to produce a more representative distribution within the Corporation's upper chamber.

The Corporation's organisation remained hierarchical and, although a deciding vote lay with the mayor, it seems likely that network alliances did have a degree of influence upon decision making. Importantly, Borough Corporation membership also offered access into new and existing networks, both within the council and beyond; those potential networks could then, as Bourdieu suggests, give access to further social capital.<sup>42</sup> The period of civic duty as a Corporation member gave ample opportunity for the development of the dense bonding networks to which Granovetter's research refers (see the next section) and which appear essential in sustaining elite status.<sup>43</sup> However, the evidence also shows that those who lost their seats did not stand for office in the following years, but retired from direct political involvement, for example leading

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<sup>38</sup> Election Results (1919-1930).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Stevenson, *British Society*, p. 354.

<sup>41</sup> *Northampton Independent*, 15 November (1913), p16.

<sup>42</sup> Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital', pp. 241-258.

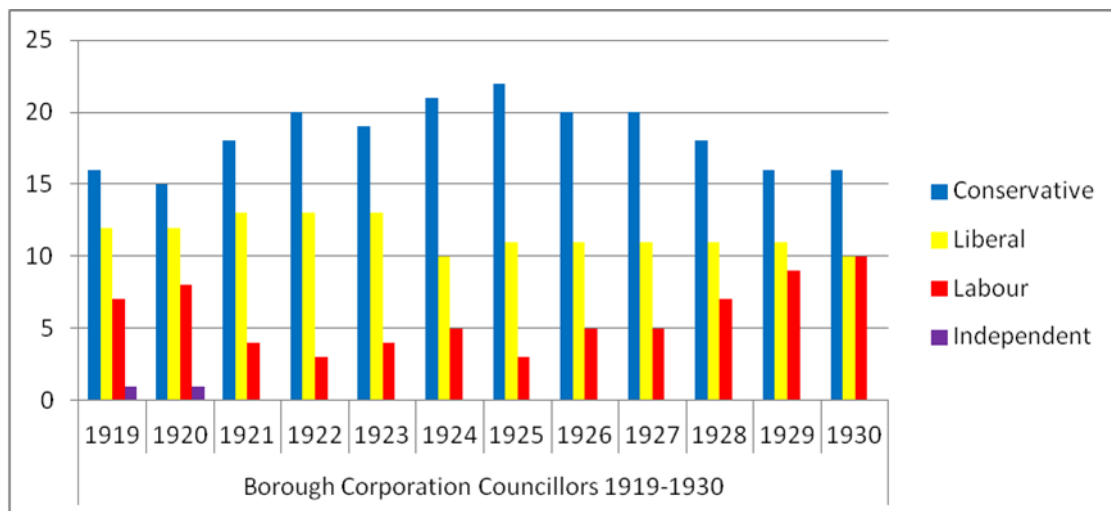
<sup>43</sup> Granovetter, 'The Strength of Weak Ties', pp. 1360-1380.



businessmen Manfield and Sears.<sup>44</sup> This is important because it suggests that the leading businessmen were leaving the political arena. The implication for this thesis is that, in Northampton, the political arena was losing its importance as a means of status for some business community members during the 1920s. We can further support this argument by referring to the recorded election returns and obituaries that show an increase of employed individuals and those who emanated from lower down the social ranks of society becoming members of Northampton's political elite, for example Arthur William Lyne.<sup>45</sup>

Throughout the 1920s, neither the Liberal nor the Labour Party held political control of the Borough. Over the 12 years, from 1919 to 1930, the Conservatives held power for six years, five of which were consecutive, 1924 to 1928; whilst the remaining six years saw no overall control by any political party.<sup>46</sup> Laybourn notes that, in 1922, the Labour Party was the second largest party in Britain; however, this is not reflected in the number of Northampton's councillors and Aldermen as can be seen in Graphs 6.2 and 6.3 which present the election results for 1919 to 1930 and the political allegiances of Aldermen.<sup>47</sup> The latter were especially dominated by Conservatives.

Graph 6.2 Election Results: Northampton Corporation 1919-1930.



Source: Election Results (1919–1930).

<sup>44</sup> Election Results (1919-1930).

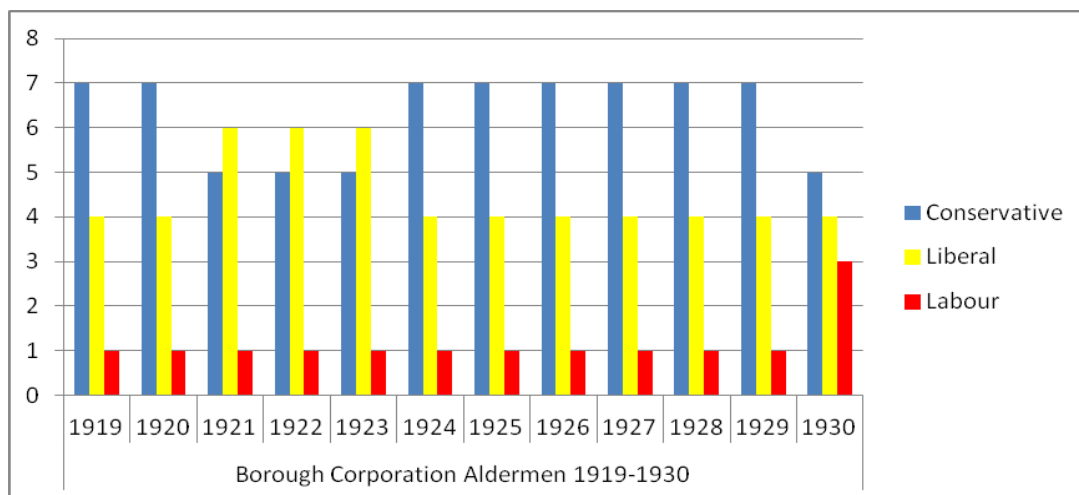
<sup>45</sup> Ibid; 'Obituary Arthur William Lyne' (1958).

<sup>46</sup> Election Results (1919-1930); *Corporation Year Books* (1920-1930).

<sup>47</sup> K. Laybourn, *Britain on the Breadline: A Social and Political History of Britain Between the Wars* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1990), p. 153.

The composition of the Corporation broadly reflected the General Election results of the period: the Liberals led a coalition government from 1919 until the election of 1922, when the Conservative party held the position of government until 1929. One possibility is that elite social capital networks at a local level, in particular the interaction between the local political elite and population, suffered as a result of World War I. The necessity of promoting a ‘united front’ during the war, which had led to the suspension of elections throughout the period of hostilities, and the impositions of the national government during that period, had revealed a degree of impotence of local politicians in local affairs. Adding a note of caution here is advisable: we cannot attribute wholly the loss of a Corporation seat following the end of the war to a possible reduction in the social capital network activities between sitting councillors and their respective wards. Nonetheless, only 17 Corporation members who served during the war retained their seats in the 1919 elections.

Graph 6.3 Political allegiances of the Northampton Borough Corporation Aldermen 1919-1930.



Source: Election Results (1919-1930); *Corporation Year Books* (1920-1930).

Of the ‘new’ men who were elected councillors that year, 36 per cent went on to serve two or more terms of office and six became mayor.<sup>48</sup> One of these new men who was not a leading trade or businessman was Arthur William Lyne. Although the journalist C. J. Scott had been the ‘Labour Party’ representative on the Borough Corporation of Northampton prior to the 1920s, it was Lyne’s unbroken service as a councillor and

<sup>48</sup> Election Results (1919-1930); *Corporation Year Books* (1920-1930).

Alderman, expanding the years 1920-1945 that was unusual. Lyne was different for two reasons; first, he was from the working classes and therefore not a member of the business or social elite of Northampton when he first gained his seat as a Borough Councillor; second his reconstructed networks are dominated by union and political party connections. It is for that reason that his network is worth analysing in detail.

Lyne left Kettering Road Elementary School at the age of 13 to work as an office boy for the shoe manufacturer G.T Hawkins. After a short period there, he moved on to Church and Co. before working for a third shoe and boot manufacturer, Hornby and West. Although having only a limited formal education, Lyne enrolled in engineering courses at Northampton Technical College.<sup>49</sup> At the outbreak of World War I, Lyne enlisted with the Northamptonshire Regiment, serving on the Western Front, and by the end of the war had reached the rank of sergeant. After the war Lyne, already a member of the Boot and Shoe Operatives Union and a member of the local Labour Party, stood and won as seat in the Northampton Borough Corporation election of 1920.<sup>50</sup>

Figure 6.1 (below) is a representation of Lyne's employment and political activity. Although it does not include the interpersonal and social connections, primarily because of the lack of available data, the diagram suggests that Lyne may have gained trust and reputation through his employment, union membership and during military service in World War I. First, Lyne was a member of the Labour Party which led, through network support, to selection for the Corporation. Second, he was an active member of the Trade Union which may have contributed to his appeal for the ordinary working man in Northampton. In relation to Pareto's definition of elites needing to be capable, Lyne proved his ability as a leader of men during World War I, rising from private to sergeant. Referring to Pareto's 'most active' as a necessity in gaining and maintaining elite status, Lyne remained a member of the Labour Party, continued as a trade union official and sat upon a number of committees once elected to the Corporation. Nevertheless, Lyne's prominence as a Northampton elite remained firmly in the political arena. Although a trade union member, Lyne's lack of direct membership to the Chamber of Commerce and other business associations suggests that his input to those organisations was limited. Even so, as a union official, Lyne had the opportunity

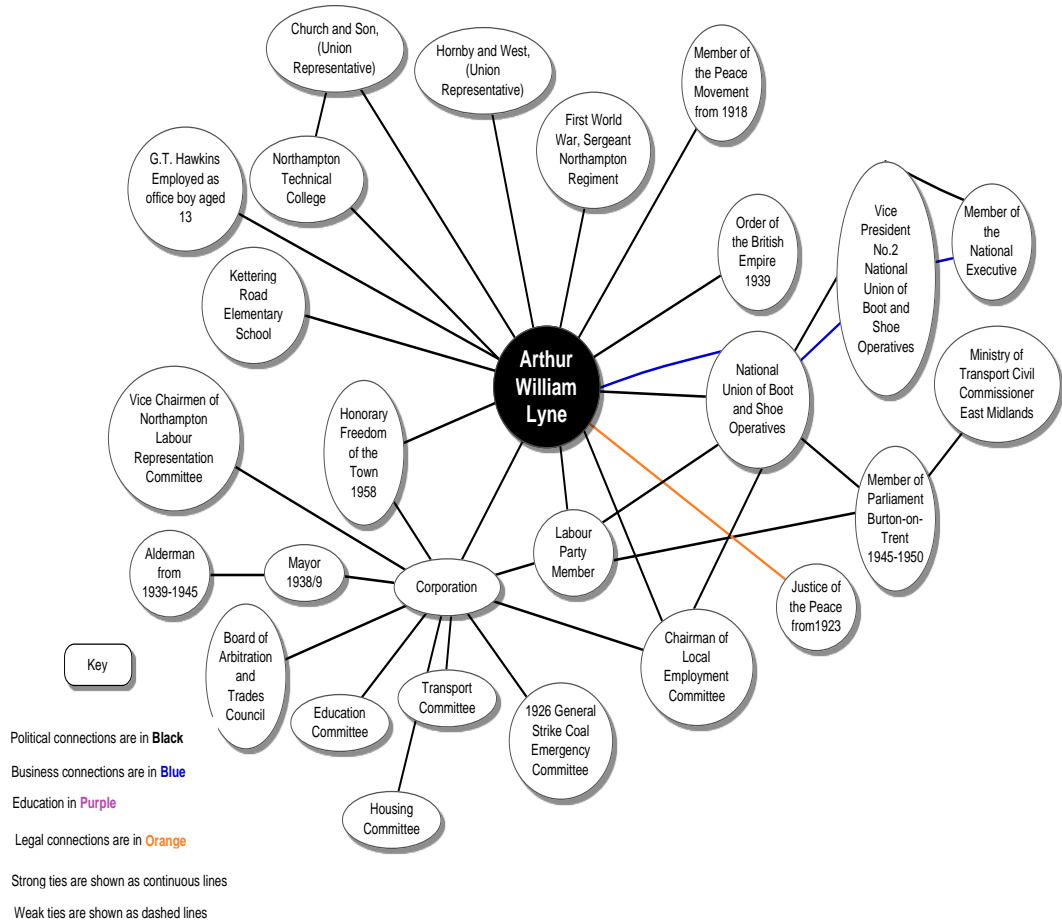
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<sup>49</sup> Kinball, *Honorary Freemen*.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

to act as a knowledge broker between the business community, members of the Boot and Shoe Union, and the Borough Corporation, raising his profile and status within the community.

Figure 6.1 Arthur William Lyne – Network Map.



Sources: 'Election Results' (1920-1930); 'Obituary Arthur William Lyne' (1958).

This raises the question as to whether we describe Lyne as an elite within the community and if so, in what way was he a member of the elite? Certainly, Lyne did not possess the attributes which had sustained the elites in Northampton during the 1770s and 1840s; that is, social and economic status as a successful businessman. He did not share the political, social, familial and economic connections enjoyed by the men of those periods and by many of his contemporaries in the 1920s. He was not 'middle class' but 'working class'. His attributes, therefore, came from a different quarter, from his social station within the community. From his position as a working class man, he was able to appeal to a sense of identity as a member of the same social

group. He had worked in the same industries as many of the electorate, worked to redress their needs as a union representative before the outbreak of World War I and continued to do so after as a Labour Party member of the Borough Corporation.<sup>51</sup> Lyne therefore fits the position of a member of the elite within the community in one respect only: that of local political elite in Northampton.

In summary, the increase in the electorate number in 1918 meant that a greater number of individuals participated in deciding who the local political elite would be. Reputation and trust between businessmen, as well as employer and employee, remained important. Recognition of status was through legitimate authority which one gained by Borough Corporation membership. The public's reaction largely determined elite authority. This suggests that elite status within politics remained the preserve of the 'the strongest, most active and most capable', holding the greatest social capital.<sup>52</sup> Analysis of the Corporation Year Books and election returns in the local newspapers showed that no single political party or business group dominated the Northampton Borough Corporation.<sup>53</sup> Political status during the 1920s was subject to party politics and public preference, but the evidence suggests that Northampton's political elite of the 1920s also required social capital based on business or occupational trust and reciprocity prior to entering into the political arena. Nevertheless the business ownership was in the 1920s no longer a requirement for selection as a council candidate or to win the public vote.

#### *Social capital and the business arena.*

Business organisations were a means of gaining business trust and reputation, providing possible access to potential economic and social capital. In 1919, there were 330 members of the Northampton Chamber of Commerce. Of those, 107 businesses were based in Northampton, 226 came from beyond the boundaries of the town and were based in various towns including Wellingborough, Kettering and Peterborough.<sup>54</sup> There were 44 different types of businesses registered in the 1919 Corporation Year Book. Of those, five were from the leather, boot and shoe industries, the remaining 39 trade

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<sup>51</sup> 'Obituary, Arthur William Lyne' (1958).

<sup>52</sup> Pareto, *The Mind and Society*.

<sup>53</sup> *Corporation Year Books* (1920-1930).

<sup>54</sup> *Industrial Northamptonshire* (Northampton: Chamber of Commerce Publication, 1919), pp. 258-264; *Corporation Year Book* (1919).

groups including brewers, grocers, tailors and other services.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, those in the boot and shoe industries dominated the Chamber of Commerce and the Council of the Chamber of Commerce consisted of the largest of those manufacturers. Many were also members of the Northampton Boot and Shoe Manufacturer's Association.<sup>56</sup> For some of the town's smaller businessmen who conducted their trade or business predominantly within the confines of the town or county, membership of the Chamber of Commerce did help to 'bolster and confer reputations', of those local businessmen.<sup>57</sup> Importantly the Chamber of Commerce membership offered potential network connections, through which information could flow, and access to resources including potential social capital. The Chamber determined acceptance through election by existing members; new businesses with little past history ran the risk of refused entry.<sup>58</sup> Trust and performance remained a requirement for entry into the Chamber of Commerce. Potential members required the expenditure of personal social capital through prior networking to gain access to existing and potential networks which Chamber membership could provide. Importantly membership had the potential to provide the opportunity for building or strengthening both weak and strong social capital ties with some of the town's more established business elite.

As with many groups and organisations of the period, the Chamber of Commerce was hierarchical in its structure, consisting of President, Vice-president and Treasurer. The main body of members elected these officers annually. Of the 38 members of the Borough Corporation, 14 were Chamber of Commerce members, four of whom were Aldermen: Horace Dover, A. E. Marlow, Fred Kilby and Harry Fox.<sup>59</sup> Civic ceremony remained important in displaying and propagating status. Whilst there were no ceremonies specifically designed for displaying organisational membership beyond that of the yearly mayoral inauguration, the business community and, in particular, Chamber of Commerce members, actively participated in the annual parade for charities.<sup>60</sup> An

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<sup>55</sup> *Industrial Northamptonshire*, pp. 258-264; *Corporation Year Book* (1919).

<sup>56</sup> *Industrial Northamptonshire*, p. 36; 'Northampton Town Boot Manufacturers Association, List of Members', *Supplement to the Shoe and Leather Record* (Northampton, 1929).

<sup>57</sup> Haggerty, *Merely for Money*, p. 236.

<sup>58</sup> *Northamptonshire Journal of Commerce* (Northampton: Northampton Mercury Co. Ltd., 1924), p. 5; *Northamptonshire Journal of Commerce* (Northampton: Northampton Mercury Co. Ltd., 1933), p. 5.

<sup>59</sup> *Industrial Northamptonshire*.

<sup>60</sup> M. Dickie, 'Town Patriotism in Northampton', 1918-1939: An Invented Tradition?' *Midland History*, 17 (1992), p. 114; *Northampton Festival Trades Exhibition, Carnival and Pageant, Official Souvenir Handbook, May 26th-31st, 1930* (Northampton: Brooking and Co., 1930).

occasion important to the whole community, and to which the Chamber of Commerce contributed, was the unveiling of the war memorial in 1926. Borough Corporation members and leading town citizens, including Chamber of Commerce members, attended the solemn occasion. They processed behind the town's civic dignitaries.<sup>61</sup>

The Northampton Chamber of Commerce and the Borough Corporation networked from 1919 to set in place a new committee group within the Borough Corporation with the specific aim of revitalising local industries.<sup>62</sup> They named the group the 'New Industry Committee' which consisted entirely of Borough Corporation members, such as shoe manufacturer James Peach.<sup>63</sup> Its aim was to bring new industry into the Northampton area.<sup>64</sup> The available data are insufficient for determining the success of the Committee during the 1920s, but it is clear that that the early committee members were Northampton businessmen and Borough Corporation members.

Examination of the information for Northampton suggests that many of the older and established businesses did behave organisationally as Urwick has observed.<sup>65</sup> For example John Marlow (junior) became a director of the family business Phoenix Shoe Works, owned by John Marlow and Sons Ltd. Personal reputation gained through business whether as an independent trader or as a director of a limited liability company could still have an influence on personal social capital networking in the 1920s. Whilst both the Chamber of Commerce and the New Industry Committee included some limited liability companies as well as members of family owned businesses, there was a reluctance on the part of established business to convert to Limited liability.<sup>66</sup>

This reluctance was not unique to the businessmen of Northampton where concerns and public perception relating to personal status, honesty and trustworthiness, financial trust and the reliability of the business itself all delayed conversion.<sup>67</sup> For example, it was not until 1920 that the boot and shoe manufacturer Manfield, established in 1844,

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<sup>61</sup> *Northampton Independent*, 12 November (1926), p. 8.

<sup>62</sup> *Corporation Year Book* (1919).

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Urwick, 'Promotion in Industry', p. 173.

<sup>66</sup> Haggerty, *Merely for Money*, p. 165.

<sup>67</sup> Urwick, 'Promotion in Industry'.

changed to a Limited Liability Company.<sup>68</sup> The *Northampton Independent* newspaper reported:

Messrs Manfield and Sons converted into company with a nominal capital of no less than £2,000,000. The multitude of the capital will surprise all except those with an inner knowledge of the valuable property owned by the firm in this country and on the continent. There will be no issue or shares as the conversion is a private one and a matter of convenience to facilitate the development of the business.<sup>69</sup>

Clearly, the newspaper article was intended not simply to inform the public of the changes, but to give a measure of reassurance to all those with business contacts and networks. Any public issue of shares could have encouraged questions of business viability or liquidity, producing negative reactions within public, private and business networks. We can see this repeated in several other established Northampton businesses; it was not until 1926 that the shoe manufacturer Church and Co. became a Limited Liability Company.<sup>70</sup> The *Northampton Journal of Commerce* reported that the company stated ‘family reasons’ for converting the business into a Limited Liability Company, adding that the issued shares were to members of the immediate family; none were available to the public.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, status and trust remained of paramount importance in the business, political and private arenas of network interaction. Whilst some personal social capital transferred into the Limited Company, it seems reasonable to suggest that the family made every effort to limit the loss in value of their personal social capital.

Newly formed business enterprises in twentieth-century Northampton were less averse to becoming Limited Liability Companies. Trust and honesty in a company’s performance, and the individual owners’ and directors’ reputations now played a role in shaping the perceptions of those who strove to be part of the elite circle. Note, however, that interpersonal networks between company directors and wider society,

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<sup>68</sup> *Northamptonshire Journal of Commerce* (1924), p. 1.

<sup>69</sup> *Northampton Independent* (1920), Messrs Manfield and Son, Directors were primarily family members, but also included the Northampton Managing Director A. S. Garrard and the Continental Director C. Tarrazi of Paris.

<sup>70</sup> Church and Co Ltd., *Northampton Journal of Commerce*, January (1926).

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*



including the business and political arenas, remained important to personal and company success and status. In 1909, W. Barrett and Co. Ltd began a boot and shoe manufacturing business with an issue of shares valued at £4,000. There were 20 founder shares, 2,500 preferred shares and 1,480 ordinary shares. In 1914, the company aimed to recapitalise and offered further share options. It issued 13,500 ordinary shares and 32,000 preference shares.<sup>72</sup> Throughout the 1920s, Barretts continued to expand its business outlets, buying premises around the country. By 1929, the company had added a 'mail order' for boots and shoes which extended to overseas clients and buyers.<sup>73</sup>

Although some of the larger manufacturers in Northampton gradually moved towards Limited Liability Companies, many medium and small family run businesses did not. Several passed from generation to generation, as in the cases of Alderman Ralph Smith and Alderman A. J. Chown. Smith took over his father Alfred's tailoring business in 1926 and A. J. Chown succeeded his father, taking control of their building business in the same year.<sup>74</sup> Although Ralph Smith's business was largely concentrated in Northampton, Warwickshire County Council, Bedfordshire County Council and others contracted Chown for work.<sup>75</sup> Social and economic capital remained within a fairly contained family unit, which Dickie suggests were often medium sized business, where personal face to face interaction contributed to individual personal reputation and trust – both essential for gaining and maintaining networks, and accessing potential social capital.<sup>76</sup> The organisation of individual businesses was therefore a reflection of society in general. As expected, the embeddedness of cultural practices, traditions and influences from the nineteenth century continued into the early twentieth-century; values of trust and known reputation remained intrinsic to acquiring, maintaining and propagating social capital, and were essential for status and recognition as a member of the political elite in Northampton.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> *Northampton Independent*, 21 February (1920), p. 23.

<sup>73</sup> *Supplement to the Shoe and Leather Record*, 29 November (1929). William Barrett was owner and Managing Director of the company. Barrett served as a member of the Corporation and was President of Northampton Football Club.

<sup>74</sup> 'Smith and Sons Celebrate 50 Years', *Northampton Independent*, 6 March (1926), p. 16.

<sup>75</sup> *Northampton Independent*, 6 March (1926), p. 27

<sup>76</sup> Dickie, 'Town Patriotism in Northampton', p. 111; A. Fox, *A History of the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives 1874-195* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957).

<sup>77</sup> Merrett, *et al.* 'Industry associations as facilitators of social capital', pp. 781-794; Rubinstein, 'Britain's Elite in the Interwar Period', p. 195.

Exempt from the nineteenth-century Joint Stock Company Acts, insurance companies and building societies received separate Acts of Parliament. It was not until the Building Societies Act of 1923 that Northampton Town and County Benefit Building Society converted to Limited Liability.<sup>78</sup> Since its inception in 1848, the business was overseen by local elites, primarily successful local businessmen with network links to the Borough Corporation and the local judiciary.<sup>79</sup> The practice did not alter following incorporation. Of the 28 board directors, 12 were members of the Borough Corporation, of whom eight were also Justices of the Peace. Of the remaining 16 directors, a further four were also Justices of the Peace.<sup>80</sup> The company directors' elite status helped inspire public confidence in the enterprise: 21,815 members borrowed £12,648.92 towards buying homes in the area between 1925 and 1930, and the company noted that shareholders and others had deposited £18,468,694 during that period.<sup>81</sup> Nonetheless, it is likely that trust in the company came via the directors' own political and business reputations and status. Whilst the company and the depositors gained economic credit, the directors also gained further social capital as successful company directors. This improved their ability to maintain elite status within the community.

Importantly, the rise in the number of Limited Liability Companies suggests that the owners and directors of larger companies may have been protecting primarily financial assets and family business. The directors of smaller companies, whilst also protecting financial and family business, could engage more fully in gaining and maintaining status as individuals within the political arena. The one possible benefit of becoming a Limited Liability Company was that it gave the business the appearance of contemporary modernisation and may have had a positive effect on public perception of a business which could contribute to the company's economic and social capital.

#### *Social capital and the social arena.*

Social activities were as important to status in the 1920s as they had been in earlier centuries, and provided the means through which individuals could enter, maintain and propagate status. There is no evidence amongst the archive material to suggest that inter-family connections through marriage, as occurred in the eighteenth and early

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<sup>78</sup> 'A Notable Achievement', p. 8.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid; *Corporation Year Books* (1921-1931).

<sup>81</sup> 'A Notable Achievement', p. 12.

nineteenth century, were a means through which Northampton's local elite maintained social capital. However, one enterprising individual, A. E. Marlow, sought marriage as an economic investment. Mr T. C. Thompson, when interviewed about his early life in Northampton, stated that Marlow had advertised for 'a wife willing to invest in his [Marlow's] business' and that in later years Mrs Marlow had clearly stated to willing listeners, 'that the factory was built on my money'.<sup>82</sup>

Marlow, having capitalised upon his marriage to become one of the larger employers within Northampton, entered into the political arena serving first as a councillor, followed by a term as mayor in 1905 and then as an Alderman. Pareto's definition of the elite as busy and able individuals that pursued, maintained and propagated status appears apt in respect of A. E. Marlow.<sup>83</sup> In the social arena, Marlow was a member of the Natural History and Field Club, and served as the Rotary Club chairman. He was also involved in the organisation of the carnivals, pageants and school speech days throughout the years 1918 - 1930.<sup>84</sup> Many of the groups to which Marlow belonged overlapped in their membership. For example, 5 members of the Boot and Shoe Manufacturers Association were also members of the Borough Corporation, Conservative Association, Chamber of Commerce and Justices of the Peace. These overlaps may have had the potential to produce the bonding network associations to which Granovetter refers in his research that contribute toward gaining social capital.<sup>85</sup> Figure 6.2 also shows Marlow's associations with Rushden Electric Light Company and with John Cave and Sons of Rushden, which provided Marlow's extended connections beyond the town of Northampton. It is difficult to establish the number of individuals who were actually members of the Masonic Lodge. The information comes from obituaries rather than any other source; however, of the 18 Aldermen who served as Justices of the Peace, 14 were also Chamber of Commerce members.<sup>86</sup> This produced a dense overlap of network membership which gave the 'strength' which Pareto suggests

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<sup>82</sup> T. C. Thompson, *Oral History, Tape No. b51 Side A*, Northamptonshire Library Services, (1988).

<sup>83</sup> Pareto, *The Rise and Fall of the Elite*, p. 36.

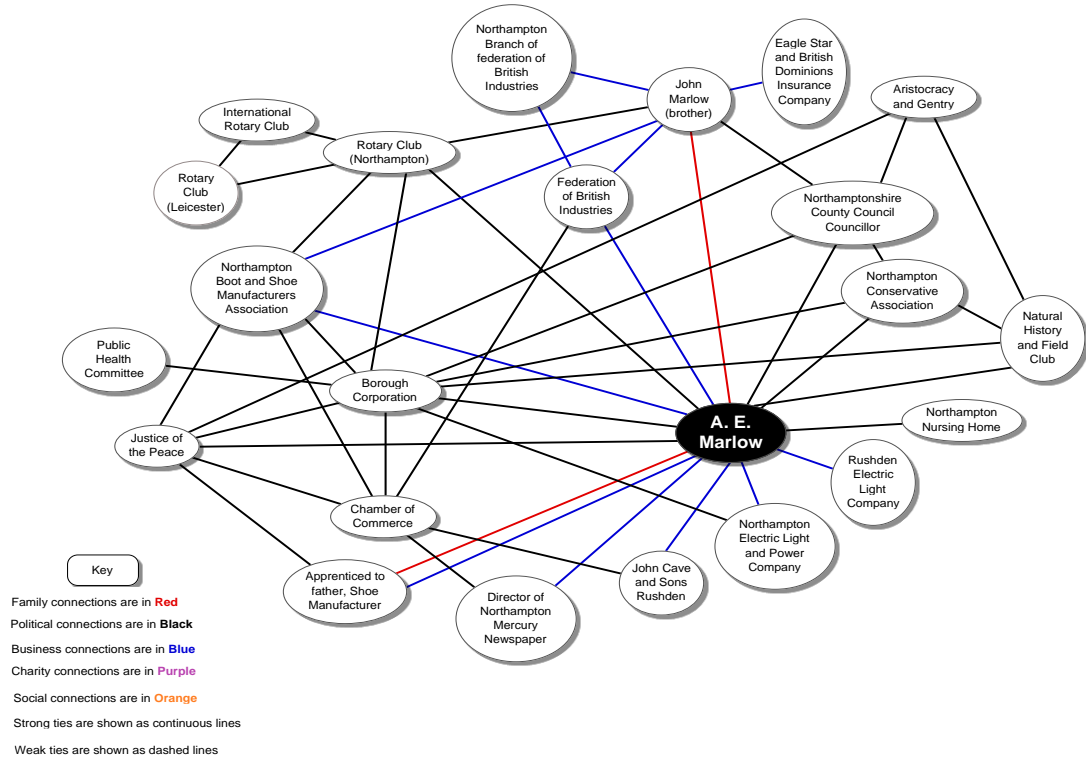
<sup>84</sup> 'Northampton School Speech Day', *Northampton Independent* 21 December (1918), p. 21, p. 23; *Northampton Independent*, 31 May (1921); *Northampton Independent*, 5 May (1926).

<sup>85</sup> Granovetter, 'The Strength of Weak Ties' pp. 25-56.

<sup>86</sup> *Corporation Year Books* (1921-1931); *Supplement to the Shoe and Leather Record* (1929); Obituaries of the Aldermen published in the *Northampton Independent* and listed in footnote 26 this chapter.

is an attribute of elites.<sup>87</sup> It provided the basis for Marlow to maintain status within the community.

Figure 6.2 Network Map Alderman A. E. Marlow.



Sources: *Corporation Year Books* (1921-1931); *Supplement to the Shoe and Leather Record* (1929); *Journal of the Northamptonshire Natural History Society and Field Club* (1921); *Industrial Northamptonshire*; Obituaries of the Aldermen published in the *Northampton Independent*.

Rubinstein argues that, ‘by the interwar years most [middle-class, elites], shared the same cultural assumptions, the same language and subtext’.<sup>88</sup> Subscribing to worthy causes in the 1920s was therefore a natural product of a paternalistic outlook of *noblesse oblige* on the part of Northampton’s elite and often translated into philanthropic activity, as it was in many of Britain’s towns and cities.<sup>89</sup> Such activity, whilst benefiting the local town, may also have contributed in the propagation of their status as local organisations gratefully received donations and local newspapers listed the donors’ names.<sup>90</sup> Dickie suggests that Northampton’s elite were very generous

<sup>87</sup> Pareto, *The Rise and Fall of Elites*, p. 36.

<sup>88</sup> Rubinstein, ‘Britain’s Elite in the Interwar Period’, p. 195.

<sup>89</sup> D. Nash and D. Reeder, eds., *Leicester in the Twentieth-Century* (Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1993), p. 163.

<sup>90</sup> ‘Subscriptions made for cancer appeal – dance run by Mrs Dover’, *Northampton Independent*, 15 March (1924), p. 29.

during this period.<sup>91</sup> Subscription and donations to groups and institutions, specifically social institutions and activities remained a means through which Northampton's elite could propagate status. Northampton's newspapers, *The Daily Echo*, *The Daily Chronicle*, *The Herald*, *The Mercury* and the *Northampton Independent* published membership lists and donations. Groups with their own publications, for example, *The Journal of the Northamptonshire Natural History Society and Field Club*, listed their members which included several Borough Corporation members.<sup>92</sup> What is not discernible from the few remaining records is the extent to which the club facilitated networking amongst its members.

Rothkopf has suggested that among some elites there is the desire to leave a permanent mark of their contributions and status upon the community.<sup>93</sup> This was seen in Northampton. Alderman Lewis, for example donated land in Dallington, an area within the Corporation's new boundaries, as a public park in 1923.<sup>94</sup> Another Alderman, James Manfield, donated a house and its surrounding land for a hospital dedicated for the use of crippled children. Manfield Hospital officially opened on 26 February, 1926, two years after this bequest was made. In 1927, manufacturers, builders and local printers donated money to build a maternity hospital.<sup>95</sup> It was not uncommon for boroughs elites to bequeath money to charities in which they had been involved.<sup>96</sup> All this suggests a tendency among at least some of Northampton's elite to repay the community in recognition of status bestowed. Social capital therefore transmitted from personal into public benefit; yet there is no suggestion that social capital had thus become community property as Putnam suggests in his research of Italy.

There were other avenues through which Northampton's elite were engaged in networking in the social arena. The evidence relating to membership of Freemasonry in Northampton in the twentieth century is sketchy at best. Kelly's Directory of 1928 states that the Masonic Lodge was erected in 1889 at a cost of £4,200, adding that 'all

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<sup>91</sup> Dickie, 'Town Patriotism in Northampton'.

<sup>92</sup> *Journal of the Northamptonshire Natural History Society and Field Club* (1921), pp. 36-19.

<sup>93</sup> Rothkopf, *Superclass: The Global Power Elite and the World they are making* (New York: Farr, Straus and Giroux, 2008), p. 79.

<sup>94</sup> 'Alderman Lewis' *Northampton Independent*, 4 August (1923), p. 7.

<sup>95</sup> S. Longworth, *The Gift of Manfield: The Story of an Orthopaedic Hospital 1925-1992* (Northampton: Park Lane Publishing, 2010). The Manfield Hospital opened on 26 February, 1926.

<sup>96</sup> 'Bequest of Alderman W. H. Dover', *Northampton Independent*, 15 July (1933), p. 6.

Masonic Lodges of the County of Northamptonshire met there'.<sup>97</sup> Obituary reports have identified a small number of individual Aldermen who were members of the organisation.<sup>98</sup> The *Northampton Independent* annually printed the names of the newly elected worshipful master, tyler, senior deacon and other senior members of the Northampton Lodge; however, the data could not support a detailed and comprehensive breakdown of political allegiance, occupation or networking between members. Nevertheless, the requirements for membership remained the same as those in earlier periods of the organisation and the benefits included access to the county aristocracy.

Freemasonry membership also entailed supporting charitable organisations, including an involvement with the annual carnival and pageant. This was a means of cementing social capital within the Freemason organisation. During a 1930 trade exhibition, carnival and pageant, the Freemasonry was one of several organisations which provided lunch for visiting dignitaries from the aristocracy and presidents of various business federations throughout the week.<sup>99</sup> Although Freemason membership was open to all men regardless of social position, political leaning or occupation, the group determined exclusion on prior practice and performance of trust and honesty, which individuals generally acquired through membership of other organisations, and through social and business interactions. Nevertheless, membership contributed towards maintaining access to social capital among contemporaries and offered the opportunity of forging new and maintaining existing network ties. This was a means of confirming status among the community. Although some obituaries refer to representatives of Masonic Lodges attending funerals of passed members, they are not recorded as attending in regalia, suggesting that, although membership was a means through which individuals could confirm and acquire social capital, visual public display of association was not essential in propagating status.

Another means through which local trade and businessmen aimed to stimulate the local economy and address some of Northampton's more local social issues was the Rotary Club, formed in 1921. David, Janiak and Wasmer's research suggest that Rotary Clubs, an idea incorporated from America, were intended to provide 'a substitute to local

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<sup>97</sup> *Kelly's Directory* (1928), p. 154.

<sup>98</sup> 'Obituary Alderman Fred Kilby', *Northampton Independent*, 20 November (1936), p. 4; 'Obituary Alderman H. W. Dover', *Northampton Independent*, 8 April (1933), p. 8.

<sup>99</sup> *Official Handbook of the Northampton Trade Exhibition* (1930).

social capital', and there was capital which individuals could gain in membership.<sup>100</sup> However, in Northampton, the Rotary Club appears in its early period to have had an air of exclusivity to it, although individuals might have gained some social capital in membership. Evidence suggests that existing network ties may have gained greater bonding strength. For example, an announcement in the *Northampton Daily Chronicle* 31 May, 1921, indicated:

Rotary club memberships are restricted in membership to one representative of each business, profession or distinct section thereof - to meet periodically at luncheon -generally once a week – and after the meal hear an address on some question relating to business, or to matters of general public interest.<sup>101</sup>

Between 1921 and 1930 the Rotary Club's presidency was held by four mayors: A. E. Marlow, William Reeves, Walter Dover and Fred Kilby. In total, 15 Rotary Club members served as Borough Corporation members. Occupationally, members were from the boot and shoe industry, as well as chemists, barristers, church men, men from the medical profession and police. Although the club did not keep minutes in the early years, the few existing records show that it was heavily drawn to the plight and needs of the town's war orphans.<sup>102</sup> Analysis suggests that club membership did not produce elite status in itself, but that membership helped to reinforce established bonding networks, and may have opened new networks as new members joined. Nevertheless, we can view Rotary Club membership as one small step in maintaining elite status.

A less obvious means of displaying status and, in particular friendship and business connections, was that of attending the funeral of known and respected local elite. The *Northampton Independent* regularly printed obituaries and often included lists of mourners who attended the funeral. To be seen and thus known as an associate of a local elite could act as a confirmation of an individual's own status and could increase the possibility of accessing potential of social capital.

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<sup>100</sup> Q. David., A. Janiak and E. Wasmer, 'Local Social Capital and Geographical Mobility', *Journal of Urban Economics*, 68:2 (2010), p. 193.

<sup>101</sup> 'Luncheon and High Ideals in Business', *Northampton Daily Chronicle* 31 May (1921), p. 3.

<sup>102</sup> R. Y. McNulty, *Rotary Club of Northampton: The First Fifty Years, 1921-1971* (Northampton: Honorary Secretary of the Club, 2011).

The evidence contained in newspapers and other documents used in this case study suggests that affiliation with an organisation in 1920s Northampton was one means through which one could exercise propagating elite status. All Aldermen of the period were engaged in donating their time and money in various gifts or groups which were intended to benefit the community. For the most part, groups and societies were open to new members and thus gave access to networks where, for instance, new men in town could acquire reputation and trust in business with little embedded social capital. Social activities, like business activities and interaction, demonstrated cooperation and a willingness to become included and recognised as one of the local community.<sup>103</sup> They were a means through which individuals could accumulate social capital. For the embedded, elite politician and businessmen, social interaction was a confirmation of status and a means through which one could maintain and propagate status.

## **Section 2 Personal Networks**

### *Guardianship Networks.*

Guardianship networks outside the family circle began to extend and developed during schooling and apprenticeship. These remained an important means of accessing cultural capital that Bourdieu suggested can give potential access to social and economic resources, and maintain status within the community.<sup>104</sup> Perhaps surprisingly, apprenticeships continued to be an important means of education through which individuals acquired business knowledge, and more importantly, through which they could initially access business networks. Alderman Ralph Smith was apprenticed to Brice and Sons of Northampton where he had access to existing networks in Northampton. It is likely that he further extended his network connections during a later period working in London before finally joining his father's tailoring business in Northampton.<sup>105</sup> Although apprenticeships provided knowledge of and access to existing networks, the trade specific education which apprenticeships provided during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were common practice which extended across the cultural divide of working and middle class. However, there is no evidence

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<sup>103</sup> Rubinstein, 'Britain's Elite in the Interwar Period'; Dickie, 'Town Patriotism in Northampton'.

<sup>104</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. 177.

<sup>105</sup> 'Brice and Sons Northampton Tailors', *Northampton Independent*, March (1916), p. 27.



in the archival material which can decisively show that there was an interconnecting network of apprentices in Northampton at any period of history.

For those who had left school with few qualifications or who simply wished to continue learning, there was a range of options. The Mechanics Institute, founded in 1832, had formed the principal focus of adult education in the town before it closed because of financial difficulties in 1876.<sup>106</sup> Self-education continued in the form of regular evening classes run from 1869 by the local museum, although it was not until 1894 that a Technical School was founded.<sup>107</sup> It was at this technical school, which in 1924 became Northampton Technical College, that Councillor Arthur William Lyne attended night school as an adult to study engineering.<sup>108</sup> However, there is no evidence to suggest that Lyne established long lasting friendships through which he was able to convert social capital in the pursuit of status. Importantly, there does not appear to have been a college alumni association through which technical elite graduates could have established networks. Educational networks played little or no part in the gaining and maintaining elite status in Northampton during the 1920s.

#### *Established networks*

The structure of networks to which Northampton Aldermen belonged differed little from those of earlier periods of history. Business, political and social groups were constructed hierarchically, consisting of leader followed by a deputy or deputies and the main membership. The leadership of the group - President, Chair or Worshipful Master - was generally an elected position and elections were annual affairs. As all members were group stakeholders, the choice of leadership, no matter how temporary, was a reflection upon the group. Selection for leadership would have been dependent upon a good personal of social capital and continuous development of existing and new contacts within networks. Election to a position of prominence was confirmation of status from the peer group involved.

During the 1920s, there were network overlaps between elite businessmen and the Borough Corporation which enabled, as Burt suggests, regular exchange of knowledge,

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<sup>106</sup> 'The Borough of Northampton: Description', pp. 30-40.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Kinball, *Honorary Freemen*, p. 13.

essential to the acquisition and maintenance of social capital.<sup>109</sup> For example, A. J. Chown was President of the Northampton Master Builders Association, Alderman of the Borough of Northampton, and a member of the Chamber of Commerce.<sup>110</sup> Although not a Northampton Rotary Club member himself, his son Cyril Chown represented the family in this organisation.<sup>111</sup> An agreement between the Northampton Borough Corporation and the Northampton Master Builders Association implemented a rota (ladder) system for building contracts, new public buildings and social housing during the 1920s.<sup>112</sup> This action shows that the Borough Corporation and local industry were working together. just as importantly as Chown was both Councillor and Master Builder it suggests that unlike the 1770s and 1840s insider knowledge and potential economic gain was being shared, such behaviour may have contributed in maintaining status and social capital within the community.

Figure 6.3 shows an example of the network overlap. The interconnectedness of business, political and social activities of Northampton's political elite was common during the 1920s. Typical of the networks which were in operation during the period is that of footwear manufacturer James Peach. He was a member of the Boot and Shoe Manufacturers Association and the Northampton Chamber of Commerce. Of his other activities, he was a member of the Board of Guardians, and acted as a governor of the Manfield and General Hospitals which brought him into contact with members of the social elite of the town and county, for example Sir Ryland Adkins.<sup>113</sup> His social activities included membership and promotion of the YMCA, and membership of the County Cricket Club, the Freemasons and the Conservative Association in Northampton.<sup>114</sup> Figure 6.3 also shows the weak network ties to which Peach was connected: the Master Builders and Master Butchers Associations and the County Council. The links were provided through his connections in the Borough Corporation where members of the above associations also served as councillors. The network links provide the opportunity for Peach to extend his personal network beyond that of his own business interest area. His activities and memberships suggest that he gained and

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<sup>109</sup> Burt, 'The Social Structure of Competition', pp. 57-87.

<sup>110</sup> 'Obituary A. J. Chown' (1978).

<sup>111</sup> 'New President of the Master Builders Association', *Northampton Independent*, 20 February (1926); *Rotary Club of Northampton: The First Fifty Years*, p. 10.

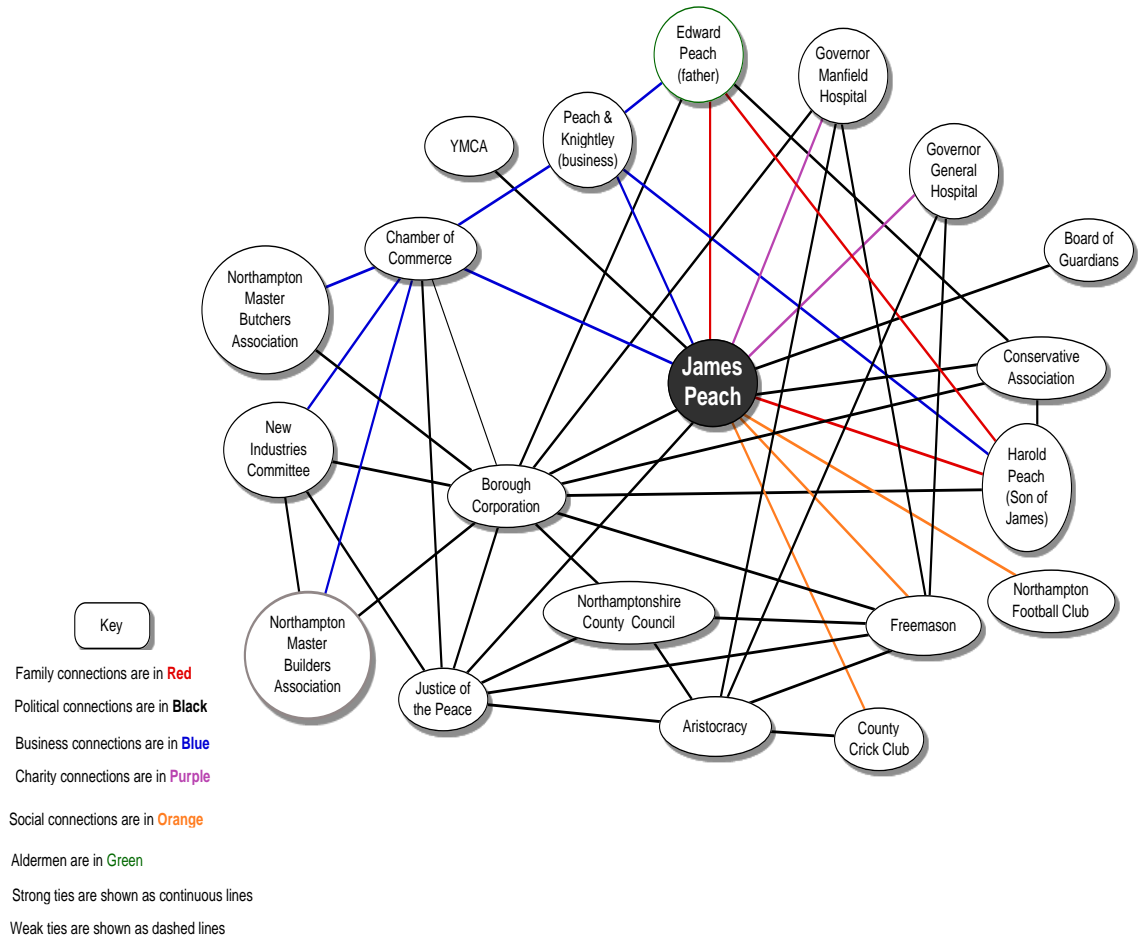
<sup>112</sup> *Northampton Corporation Minute Book* (1920); 'Obituary James Peach' (1944).

<sup>113</sup> 'Obituary James Peach' (1944); Longworth, *The Gift of Manfield*.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

maintained social capital through networking, as he became a member of Northampton's political elite in the 1920s.

Figure 6.3 Network Map of Alderman James Peach, Mayor in 1926.



Sources: 'Obituary James Peach', (1944), *Corporation Year Books* (1920-1930).

Membership of the Borough Corporation offered the opportunity to expand existing networks and gain access to new connections. Figure 6.4 shows the extent of the Borough Corporation connections. Whilst the true number of connections is impossible to depict in the diagram, it clearly shows that the Borough Corporation was a central organisation of access to other organisations and associations. Network connections between the business section of the community and the Borough Corporation are shown as weak ties. The stronger ties in the diagram have been shown between the Chamber of Commerce, the Master Builders, Master Masons, Master Butchers, and the Boot and Shoe Manufacturers Associations. The weakness of the ties between the Borough Corporation and the various business Associations and Chamber of Commerce is the

result of the fluctuation of Borough Corporation members who belonged to those organisations, whilst the strength between those organisations was determined to be their permanency.

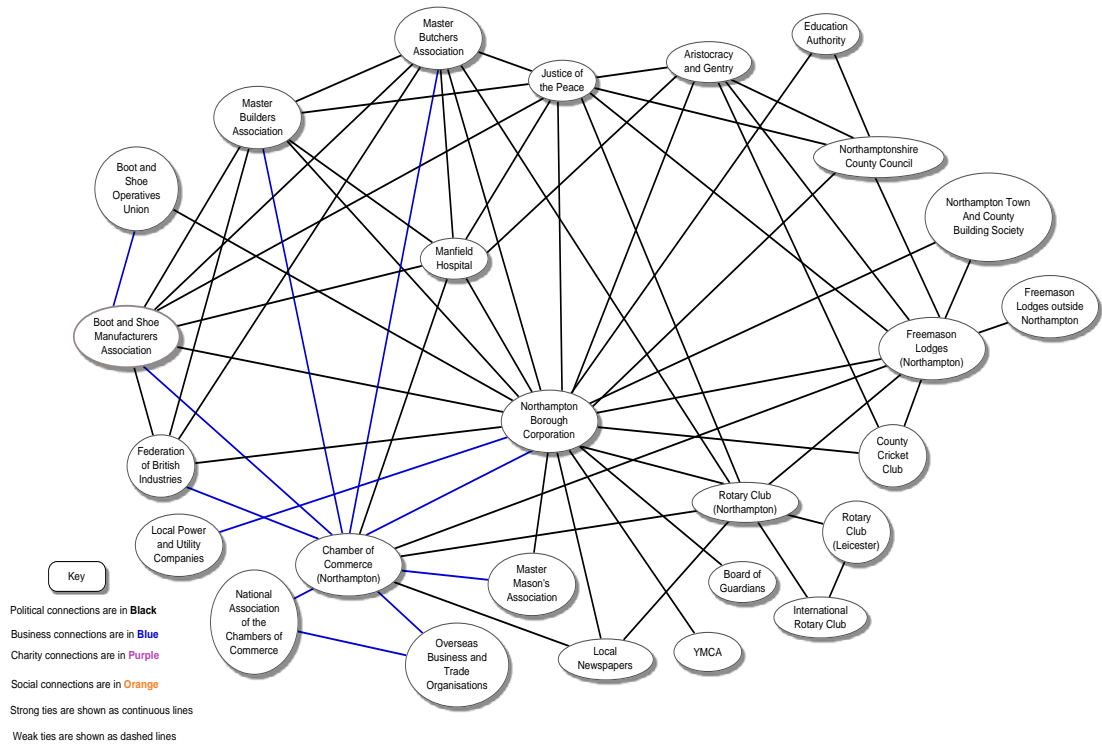
Figure 6.4 shows that, although the Borough Corporation was the main facilitator of network contacts, other organisations also facilitated network contacts; the Chamber of Commerce, for instance, was important in enabling business network ties. There were, however, limits to the networks to which the Chamber had access. We can see for example that, as an organisation, the Chamber of Commerce had no direct ties to the local power and utility companies, and its access to other networks such as the judiciary is also tenuous – there were probably some years when the membership of the Chamber of Commerce had no member serving as a Justice of the Peace. In contrast, several Councillors and Aldermen also served as Justices of the Peace. Moreover, Chamber of Commerce access to the County Council was via the Borough Council rather than through a direct connection. Thus the Borough Corporation as an organisation facilitated networks connections both for and its members.

In total 63 men served as members of the Borough Corporation between 1920 and 1930.<sup>115</sup> Graph 6.4 shows the number of Councillors and Aldermen who belonged to outside organisations. The network membership overlaps gave the Borough Corporation, as an organisation, its central position as a facilitator of social capital and the opportunity for individuals to maintain status within the wider community.

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<sup>115</sup> *Corporation Year Books* (1920-1930).

Figure 6.4 - Group and Organisation connections - Northampton Borough Corporation.



Sources: See sources for Graph 6.1

Graph 6.4 Membership numbers of Councillors and Aldermen to other organisations.

Sources: See Sources for Graph 6.1.

When the data is further examined, it is clear that 2 particularly well-connected Councillors belonged to 8 organisations outside the Borough Corporation. In total, 6 members of the Borough Corporation belonged to 6 other organisations, 3 members had direct contact with 5 other organisations; 4 members had 4 direct membership of outside organisations, 10 members of the Borough Corporation were connected to 3 other organisations, 20 had only two outside memberships, and 18 had membership only to their respective political associations. The evidence thus challenges Putnam's conclusions that the greater number of organisations to which an individual belongs, the greater the social capital.<sup>116</sup> The fact that the only other organisations to which all members of the Borough Corporation belonged were their respective political party associations suggests that, although the importance of political party association membership had been growing in importance since the nineteenth century, it was during the 1920s that the political party associations began to have true significance for gaining access to political networks. Indeed, although business and social networks continued to be important avenues for gaining social capital and status within the community, the primary means of becoming a member of Northampton's political elite, was via political Association membership.

One means of maintaining contacts that had the potential to strengthen network bonds between members of the Borough Corporation was through the use of telephones. Members of the Borough Corporation, similar to many business and tradesmen of the 1920s, were connected to the telephone. It is impossible to show how often individuals made contacts and for what purpose, but it is unlikely that telephone usage greatly reduced face to face contact between the Aldermen and Councillors who met regularly at council and other organisation meetings. Nevertheless, of the 87 men who served on the Corporation during the 1920s, 30 individuals had no direct telephone access, 27 individuals had telephone access only through their employment, 12 had home access only, and 18 had both home and work access to telephone communication.<sup>117</sup> Importantly, the telephone allowed for the quick dissemination of information, business orders and social interaction, and had the potential to add fluidity to network ties and strengths. In the telephone directory's commercial section, 340 businesses are listed.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Putnam. *Bowling Alone*.

<sup>117</sup> Telephone Directory, Northampton Group, Section 18 (1920, 1925, 1928); *Kelly's Directory* (1928).

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid*.

Of those, 184 were based in Northampton. As might be expected, the majority of these were part of the town's boot and shoe industry.<sup>119</sup> In essence, the informal networking through the telephone had the potential to reduce, as Coase suggests, 'policing and enforcement costs, including information gathering'.<sup>120</sup> For Northampton's business community and political elite, the use of telephones may have helped to reinforce the bonds of trust necessary for social capital exchange, which Granovetter suggests gives contemporaries approval, power and status.<sup>121</sup>

Although Burt's theory of 'structural holes' suggests that the number of organisations and groups to which an individual belongs does not determine position and status, brokerage was of greater importance in maintaining and propagating elite status.<sup>122</sup> The network overlaps of group and business organisations to which the Northampton Aldermen belonged during the 1920s suggest that several Aldermen may have adopted a solidarity of leadership and exclusivity where they determined group membership by election. The interconnectedness of groups and organisations through Borough Corporation membership provided business, political and social capital which individuals could utilise in maintaining and propagating their status as members of the political elite in Northampton.

## **Conclusion**

This study has analysed the political, social and business networks which the Northampton Aldermen constructed and utilised during the 1920s. The expansion of the electorate and changing party political structures gave an opportunity to a larger number of individuals seeking political status to enter into the political arena in Northampton. This offered the possibility for social capital network expansion and consolidation which individuals could use to propagate status.

Analysis of the evidence suggests that the introduction of a new political group, the Labour Party, did not during the 1920s threaten the existing status of the Liberal and Conservative members of the Borough Corporation. However, the introduction of the

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<sup>119</sup> Telephone Directory (1920, 1925, 1928); *Kelly's Directory*, (1928).

<sup>120</sup> R. Coase, 'The Nature of the Firm', *Economica*, 4:16 (1937), p. 386-405.

<sup>121</sup> Granovetter, 'Problems of Explanation', p. 26.

<sup>122</sup> Burt, 'The Social Structure of Competition', pp. 57-87.

Representation of the People Act of 1918 which increased the number of the electorate did potentially threaten the ability of the local political elite to maintain their status. Political office, more than ever before, had become reliant upon public preference. The local Conservative and Liberal Party Associations, established during the nineteenth century, took on a new importance during the early twentieth century providing access to potential social capital networks and in providing strength to those networks through which elite status might be obtained. The importance of those networks was evident from the electoral returns that showed independent candidates in the 1920s were far less successful in gaining a seat on the council, and thus less likely to become Aldermen, than had previously been the case. Membership of a local political party association had therefore become the main route into the political arena and thus to status as a political elite. Conversely, whilst business success still remained important in gaining status within the wider community, Alderman Lyne's history shows that the 'working class' were entering the political arena in Northampton, but the Aldermen of the 1920s still took great care in maintaining their economic base and business success as capital towards political status.

The loss of trade which World War I and its aftermath caused did influence business and business networks in Northampton. On a personal level, individual Aldermen protected their economic base by transferring their businesses into Limited Liability Companies. They did so cautiously and with the aim of reducing any loss of social capital which they had already gained. As members of the Borough Corporation, they increased their potential of gaining social capital with the electorate by establishing the 'New Industries Committee' and through holding regular trade exhibitions. There is also some evidence that the Chamber of Commerce and the Boot and Shoe Manufacturers Association worked alongside the Borough Corporation for the benefit of all the citizens of Northampton. It seems reasonable to suggest that the Aldermen/businessmen both aimed at winning new markets and economic capital, and ensured that their employees, who were members of the electorate, had economic security. This allowed these men to lay the foundation for maintaining social capital which they could expend during the run-up to municipal elections to gain political position and continued elite status within the community.



Analysis of the Aldermen networks shows the interconnectedness of groups, organisations and businesses during the 1920s. Individuals utilised the overlapping networks to gain and maintain status. It appears that those with the greater number of association membership were more likely to gain status as Borough Council Alderman. This supports part of Pareto's theory that the elite are the most active, but not Putnam's belief that individual membership of many associations produces a greater of social capital. Rather, membership of any organisation was instigated by the individual, their network connections and use and resulting social capital are therefore the possession of the individual, as Bourdieu contends. The Aldermen of the period were engaged in donating their time and money in various gifts or groups which were intended to benefit the community of Northampton.

Groups and societies were, for the most, open to new members and thus gave access to networks where men new in business or to the town could acquire reputation and trust with little embedded social capital. Social activities, like business activities and interaction, demonstrated cooperation and a willingness to become included and recognised as one of the local community. They were a means through which individuals could accumulate social capital. For the embedded, the elite politician and businessmen, the social interaction was a confirmation of status and a means through which one could maintain and propagate status. In particular, the evidence suggested that the overlapping group memberships of many of the Aldermen, Borough Corporation membership, justices of the peace, political association memberships, Freemason and the Rotary Club memberships, alongside membership of business organisations such as the Boot and Shoe Manufacturers Association, contributed towards maintaining status within the community as a member of the urban political elite.

## **Chapter 7 Urban Elite in the Twenty-First Century**

### *Introduction*

This chapter focuses on the period 2000-2012. Much had changed during the twentieth century, both locally and nationally, but of particular significance to this study was the introduction of the Local Government Act of 1972 nationally, which altered the composition of local Borough Corporations.<sup>1</sup> This involved the change of name from Borough Corporation to Borough Council and changes to the electoral boundaries and an increase in the number of wards, but most significantly perhaps the Act abolished the political office of Alderman.<sup>2</sup> It is for that reason that this chapter concentrates on the Borough Councillors and members of the Borough Council Cabinet.

In other changes occurring since the 1920s, local political party associations had taken on greater significance for individuals seeking political position on the borough councils. They had, in effect, taken over the role of guardianship network for those seeking to gain political office; it is therefore important examine the role of political organisations to construct a more informed understanding of their importance for gaining status within the community. There have also been changes in communication technology, whilst the 1920s saw an increase in the use of telephones as an avenue of networking, in the twenty-first century computers have been increasingly used to engage with individuals and groups.<sup>3</sup> How the technology has been used by the Borough Council and its councillors, and whether the Internet has enabled greater networking and therefore is a potential means of gaining or maintaining social capital is examined in this chapter. Whilst it is true that many changes have occurred between the 1920s of the previous chapter and the 2000s in the present chapter, it is also

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1972/70>, *Local Government Act 1972, Chapter 70 (1972), An Act to make provision with respect to local government and the functions of local authorities in England and Wales; to amend Part II of the Transport Act 1968; to confer rights of appeal in respect of decisions relating to licences under the Home Counties (Music and Dancing) Licensing Act 1926; to make further provision with respect to magistrates' courts committees; to abolish certain inferior courts of record; and for connected purposes*, 26th October 1972 [accessed 12 November, 2011].

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> M. Castells, *The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture Volume I: The Rise of the Network Society*, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010); A. Quan-Haase and B. Wellman, 'How does the internet affect Social Capital', in *Social Capital and Information Technology*, ed. by M. Huysman and V. Wolf (Massachusetts: The MIT Press Cambridge, 2004).

important to note that social capital is influenced by the prevailing social norms and values of a given time and place.<sup>4</sup>

The aim of this chapter remains the same as the previous chapters: to examine how individuals gain, maintain and propagate their status, and to consider which networks have enabled the councillors to access potential social capital. As with the previous chapters the analysis is set out in two sections. The first examines the route to gaining status and the second discusses personal networks and reproduces the established networks of the Borough Council and a borough councillor, Sally Beardsworth. The purpose of visually reconstructing the councillors' network is to show the network connections that were in operation through which potential social capital could be accessed and used to maintain status within the community. The reason for selecting Councillor Beardsworth is the longevity of her continued service in civic office; it provides a unique opportunity to assess the importance of different network membership and how technology, in particular the use of the Internet, facilitated loose network connections between a councillor and the electorate.

Between 1920 and 2010 the population of Northampton grew rapidly, from 90,932 to 205,200. This increase was due to several factors. First, there had been a natural increase in birth rates since the 1950s. Second, there had been considerable immigration; with the aim of stimulating both population and industry growth in towns outside of London, new housing projects around the country during the 1960s and 1970 were instigated to accommodate incomers. As with towns such as Warrington and Telford, Northampton was in 1968 designated by the government as a 'New Town', in an attempt to encourage further migration from the capital.<sup>5</sup> Third, smaller parishes were incorporated into the Borough of Northampton, enlarging its area and adding to its population.<sup>6</sup> In part because of its growing size, Northampton Borough Council applied for unitary status under the 1990s local government reforms, but was unsuccessful.<sup>7</sup> An

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<sup>4</sup> Laird, 'Putting Social Capital to Work', p. 686.

<sup>5</sup> *London Gazette*, no.44735, 13th December (1968), p. 13433 [accessed 12 November 2011]; *London Gazette*, no. 44576 (1968), p. 4907 [accessed 12 November 2011]; *London Gazette*, no. 44529 (1968), p. 2088 [accessed 12 November 2011].

<sup>6</sup> *Local Government Act 1972, Chapter 70* (1972).

<sup>7</sup> J. V. Beckett, *City Status in the British Isles, 1830-2002* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), p. 167, p. 171.

application for city status made in 2000 was also unsuccessful so that today Northampton remains the third largest town in England without city status.<sup>8</sup>

By the twenty-first century there had also been many changes in the types of business in operation in Northampton. Although Northampton had become synonymous with shoe manufacturing, the industry had all but disappeared from the town. Some companies do still operate in Northampton; for example Church's Shoes, founded in 1873, still manufactures and distributes classic styles of shoes and boots.<sup>9</sup> Instead, the main industries in the twenty-first century are concentrated in finance, distribution and retail, and include companies such as Barclaycard, Nationwide Building Society, Travis Perkins, Avon, Schweppes and Carlsberg. The oldest of these companies is the Nationwide Building Society, which began life in 1848 as the Northampton Town & County Freehold Land Society. Business growth and development is and has been a major role of the Borough Council and was clearly in operation during the 1920s and 1930s, as is evident from the trade exhibitions discussed in the previous chapter. Since 2006, however, large housing developments, new road infrastructure and the majority of regeneration projects in and around Northampton have come under other bodies of authority including: the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation (WNDC), the East Midlands Development Agency (EDMA), and more recently Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP).

## **Section 1: Route to Elite Status**

### *Education as a means of social capital*

Li, Savage and Pickles, and Bourdieu have all suggested that attending a higher education college or university is more likely to produce a cultural identity that can be used to maintain the elite.<sup>10</sup> However, the biographical data which the Borough councillors published on their web pages suggest that a little over one-third did not progress beyond secondary education.<sup>11</sup> For example, councillor Dennis Meredith left

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<sup>8</sup> Office of National Statistics, line 1129, 'KS01 Usual Resident, Population: Census 2001, Key Statistics for Urban Areas', <http://www.northamptonshireobservatory.org.uk/docs/docNorthamptonshire%202006-based%20Population%20Projections%20-%20Draft%202080213123217.pdf> [accessed 10 August 2011].

<sup>9</sup> Church, <http://www.church-footwear.com/churchs.html> [accessed 19 December 2011].

<sup>10</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*; Y. Li, M. Savage and A. Pickles, 'Social Capital and Social Exclusion in England and Wales 1972-1999', *British Journal of Sociology*, 54:4 (2003), p. 519.

<sup>11</sup> Northampton Borough Council, <http://www.northamptonboroughcouncil.com/councillors/>

school at the age of 16 after secondary school, councillor Sally Beardsworth left school and attended college to train as a hairdresser, Councillor Vivienne Dams, went on to university becoming a doctor and Councillor Jenny Conroy attended university as a mature student.<sup>12</sup> Whilst Bourdieu's study of cultural capital as a facilitator of social capital networks is relevant to those at higher levels of power, for example members of the national government, there is no evidence to suggest that it relates to members of Northampton's Borough Council. This suggests that, as in the previous chapters, educational background and qualification is no bar in obtaining elite status as a member of the civic administration of the Borough Council in the twenty-first century.

### *Social capital and the political arena*

Between the 1920s and the present day, there have been many changes to the formal institutions of local government. This thesis does not discuss those rules and regulations in any detail, but it is important to note the legal boundaries relating to prospective councillors. They are that the prospective Borough councillor must be a British citizen over the age of eighteen and they must have been registered on the Electoral Roll one year prior to standing as a candidate. They may not stand if they have not been discharged from bankruptcy, if they have served a five year term of imprisonment, or have had a three month suspended sentence immediately prior to an election as a Borough councillor.<sup>13</sup> It is clear then that, although institutions do provide a means of exempting and excluding individuals from group membership, those same mechanisms also enable the majority of individuals to stand for election as a borough council candidate.

The Borough Council continues, as it has for many centuries, to be a hierarchical organisation. Nevertheless, the Local Government Act of 1972 has altered its structure so that Northampton's Borough Council now consists of 47 councillors covering 23 wards within the town. The abolition of the office of Alderman means that it is from the 47 councillors that a council cabinet and the Leader of the council are chosen.<sup>14</sup>

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*mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1* [accessed 29 June, 2011].

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/Council/councillors> [accessed 10 March 2012].

<sup>14</sup> 'Consultation Reports Executive Decision Making at the Council', [http://www.northampton.gov.uk/site/scripts/documents\\_info.php?documentsID=891&pageNumber=18](http://www.northampton.gov.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentsID=891&pageNumber=18) [accessed 18 September 2010]; 'NBC Cabinet Announced' <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00gjz7l> [accessed 16 May 2011];

The Leader of the Council is not, however, the Mayor of Northampton; the annual rotation of Mayoral selection continues as it has since 1913.<sup>15</sup> The Leader of the Council is chosen by the political party which holds the greatest number of council seats, and the Cabinet members are chosen by the Leader of the Council. Between 2007 and 2011, the Cabinet consisted of members from the Liberal Democrats, and since the May 2011 borough election, it has comprised Conservative councillors. The Cabinet can comprise between two and nine members.<sup>16</sup> Between 2004 and 2007, there were eight Cabinet members; the Liberal Democrats then installed a Cabinet of seven members initially and eight from June 2009; and since 2011 the Conservatives had a total of six Cabinet members. Each Cabinet member is responsible for a specific portfolio, e.g. housing, planning, and regeneration.<sup>17</sup> The period of office is generally for four years, although there are occasionally Cabinet reshuffles.<sup>18</sup> The evidence does not give any indication of the criteria which are used to decide who will be Cabinet members. It is possible that an individual's selection to a Cabinet position is based upon a previously demonstrated set of skills, or it is equally possible that selection may be the result of good social capital which exists between prospective Cabinet candidates and the Leader of the Council – in effect, cronyism.

The mayor, although the 'First Citizen' of the town, has no direct political power during his/her term of office other than the casting vote should the Council's body reach an impasse following a vote. As the position of mayor holds little power, the role is a symbolic recognition of status and regarded as an honourable appointment. The mayor's role is to represent the town and its interests and to attend civic and social gatherings. Status is conferred during an inauguration ceremony the symbols of office such as the Chain of Office are placed upon the new mayor and an oath of office is

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*Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 'New Cabinet Unveiled to Lead Northampton Borough Council', 12 May (2011); 'Northampton Council's Leader Outlines Plans for Cabinet' <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-northamptonshire-15546163> [accessed 02 April 2012].

<sup>15</sup> *Northampton Independent*, 15 November (1913), p. 16.

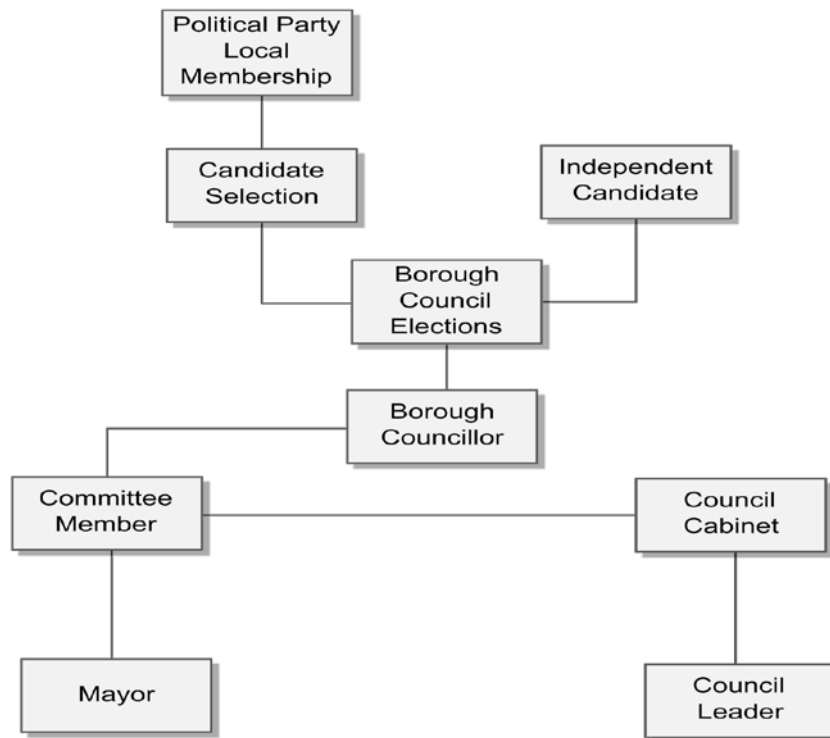
<sup>16</sup> 'Consultation Reports Executive Decision Making at the Council'; 'NBC Cabinet Announced'; 'New Cabinet Unveiled to Lead Northampton Borough Council'; 'Northampton Council's Leader Outlines Plans for Cabinet'.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.northamptonboroughcouncil.com/councillors/ieListMeetings.aspx?Cid=528&Year=2007&J=17> [accessed 13 May 2012].

<sup>18</sup> Cabinet Minutes first became available on the Northampton Borough Council website in 2005. In May 2009 there was a cabinet reshuffle by the Liberal Democrats. Malcolm Mildren left the Cabinet and David Perkins and Paul Vernsberry became part of the Cabinet. There have also been reshuffles within the Conservative Cabinet; 'NBC Cabinet Announced'; 'New Cabinet Unveiled to Lead Northampton Borough Council'; 'Northampton Council's Leader Outlines Plans for Cabinet'.

publically sworn. The media assists in propagating status, generally the local newspaper, the *Chronicle* and *Echo* record the event in writing and in photographs.<sup>19</sup> Figure 7.1 shows the political route to becoming a member of the Borough Council.

Figure 7.1 Route to political status 2000s



Source: <http://www.northamptonboroughcouncil.com>.

There have been a total of 110 Borough councillors between 2000 and 2012. They have come from a variety of occupational backgrounds including teachers, managers, business proprietors, union representatives and health care workers.<sup>20</sup> Graph 7.1 shows the numerical figures for the Borough Councillors' occupational status serving between 1995 and 2012 during which time there have been 19 business directors, 14 self-employed, 5 retired, 12 unknown occupations and 60 employees.<sup>21</sup> A further

<sup>19</sup> 'The seven hundred and seventy-second First Citizen Takes Office', *Chronicle and Echo*, 21 May (2012), p. 13.

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.northamptonboroughcouncil.com/councillors>; <http://www.facebook.com>; <http://www.linkedin>. For ethical reasons the councillors' individual home pages for Facebook and LinkedIn are not included in the references.

<sup>21</sup> From the data analysis, those listed as Employees have not gained employment positions above the position of middle-management. Business Directors refer to Company owner/director; self-employed refers to those whom run their own business, but that business is not registered as a company; unknown occupation is where the available data could not identify an occupation.

examination of the councillors' occupations revealed that 9 held senior management positions, 12 held middle management positions such as shop managers, 34 had employment below middle management, of which 14 were in professional occupations that included teachers and nurses, the remainder included union representatives, customer assistants, caretakers and security officers.<sup>22</sup> A few members of the 'working-class' had been able to gain seats on the Borough Corporation in the 1920s. By the turn of the twenty-first century, it appears that there is no socio-economic class barrier to civic engagement or office as a Borough Councillor. This contrasts with Li, Savage and Pickles' research into civic engagement from 1972 and 1999. They concluded that the socio-economic group most likely to engage in civic participation emanated from the middle classes.<sup>23</sup> However, breaking down further the occupation status of Northampton Borough Council Cabinet members, Graph 7.2 clearly shows that the greater number of those who served as portfolio holders were employed rather than employers.<sup>24</sup> Again this suggests that gaining a senior position as a member of the Council Cabinet is not dependent upon occupational status. Where, in the past, the elite had a combination of economic, social and political status, in the present day, it separates into spheres of elite. Therefore, the twenty-first century Northampton Borough councillors are members of the 'political elite', but are not the social and/or the economic elite.

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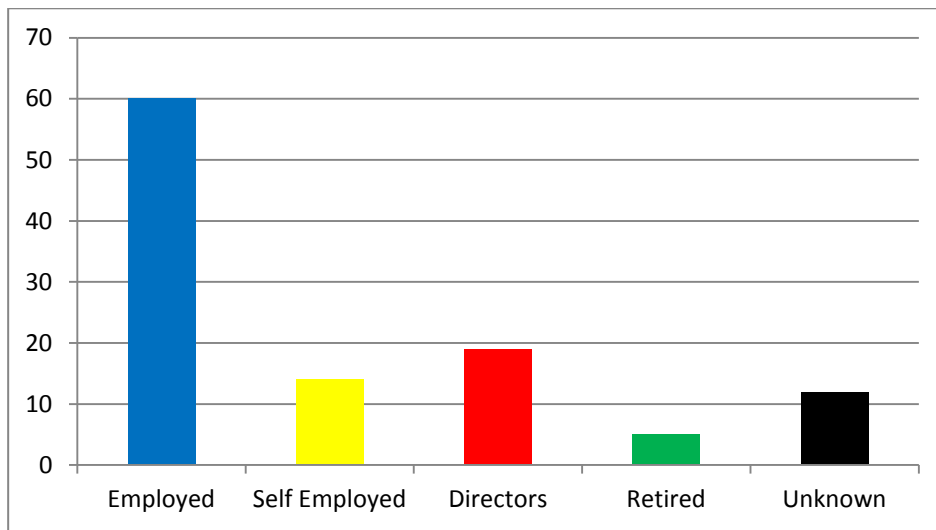
<sup>22</sup> <http://www.linkedin.com>; 'Register of Interest', <http://www.northamptonboroughcouncil.com/councillors/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1> [accessed 29 June, 2012].

<sup>23</sup> Li, *et al.* 'Social Capital and Social Exclusion', p. 519.

<sup>24</sup> 'Election Results', *Northampton Chronicle and Echo* (May, 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2011); *Northampton Borough Council Year Books* (2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2011); <http://www.linkedin.com>; 'Register of Interest', <http://www.northamptonboroughcouncil.com/councillors>.

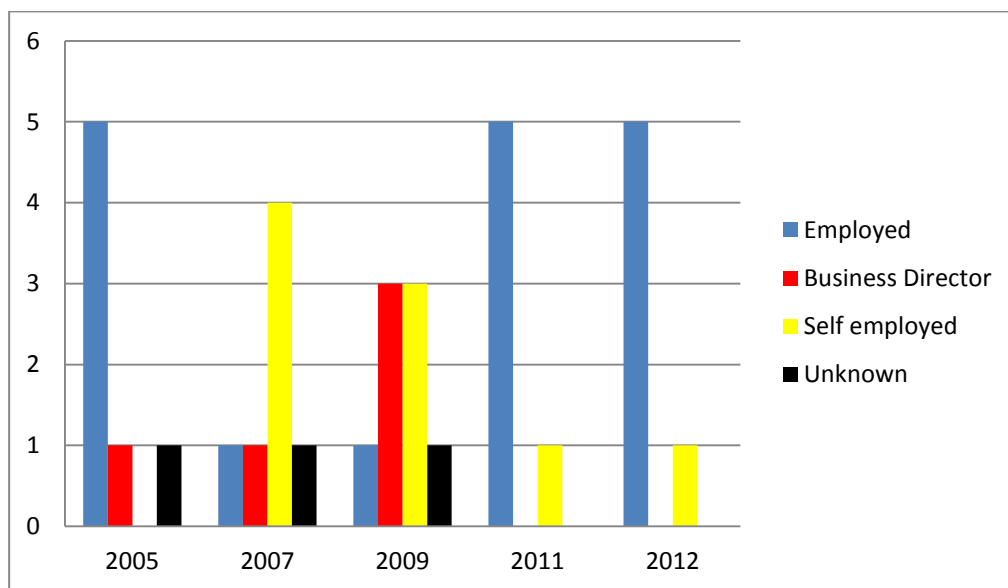


Graph 7.1 Occupational Statuses of Northampton Councillors 2000-2012.



Source: Individual members' pages, <http://www.linkedin.com>; 'Declaration of Interest', <http://www.northamptonboroughcouncil.com/councillors/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1> [accessed 09 October 2012].

Graph 7.2 Employment Statuses of Cabinet Members.

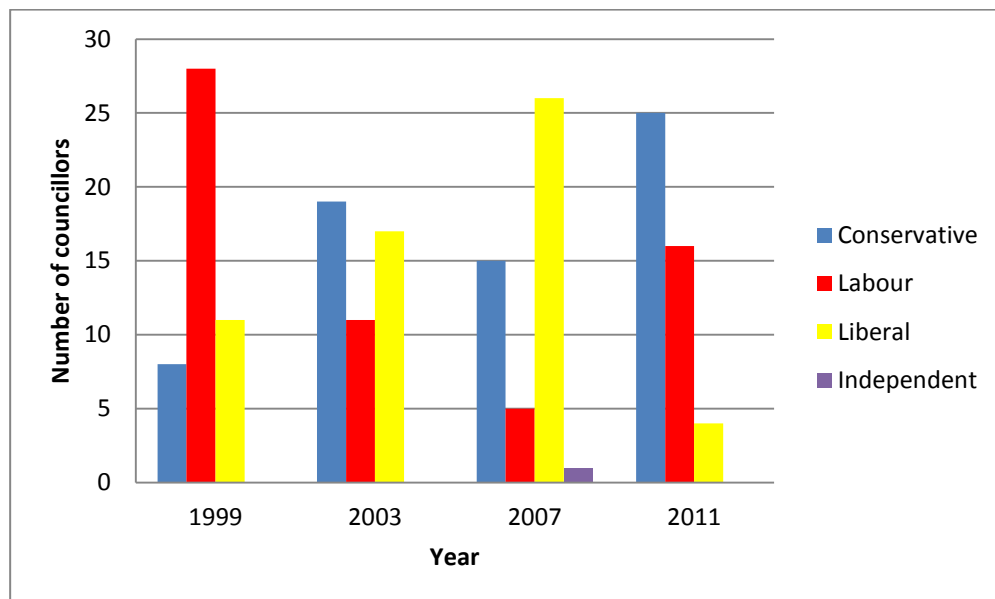


Source: *Northampton Borough Council Year Books* (2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2011); <http://www.linkedin.com>; <http://www.facebook.com>: 'Register of Interest', <http://www.northamptonboroughcouncil.com/councillors>.

Since 1999, all three parties have held control of the Borough Council: first the Labour party, then a period of no overall control, followed by the Liberal Democrats and now the Conservatives (Graph 7.3). These shifts have tended to reflect the national political trends during the period. Liberal Democrat councillor Marianne Taylor, who lost her

seat in the 2011 election, commented in the *Chronicle and Echo*, ‘the [election] result is a lot do with people looking at the national picture, but that’s life’, whilst councillor and Sally Beardsworth, commenting on the same local election results, said, ‘I think there’s always a protest vote against any government... but that’s democracy’.<sup>25</sup>

Graph 7.3 Northampton Borough Council Political Construct.



Source: ‘Election Results’ (May 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011); <http://www.northamptonboroughcouncil.com/councillors>.

The average period of time that a councillor served during 1999-2012 was eight years, equivalent to two terms of office. However, it is clear that those individuals who stood for and won their seats as Independent served office for a shorter period of time. This suggests that, although investment of time networking in a specific ward could produce a required result for the candidate, the lack of network support and strength which membership to an established political group provided, became a handicap at re-election.

Consistent with Pareto’s theory of a circulation of elites, which he describes as ‘individuals moving between the state or position of elite and non-elite, and where events or circumstance cause the replacement of the elite’, change is in some ways the

<sup>25</sup> ‘Election 2011: Crushing defeat for the Lib Dems as Conservatives sweep to power in Northampton’, *Chronicle and Echo*, 7 May (2011), pp.5-6.

inevitable the result of regularly-held democratic elections.<sup>26</sup> National politics may have influenced fluidity in the ‘changing of the guard’ of Northampton Borough councillors during the 2000s; but the results also reflect the level of satisfaction among the local electorate with the Borough Council’s performance on local issues. This suggests that, although individuals may have social capital, the circulation of political elites is increasingly in the hands of the local borough electorate. However, this does not detract from the fact that whilst in office local politicians do have the status as local elite within the community. It also serves to confirm that that good networking is essential between the electorate and the politician if status is to be maintained in the face of political trends. For example, Councillors Tim Hadland, Winston Strachan and Sally Beardsworth were able to capitalise upon the public perception of them as trustworthy and capable individuals in their respective wards and maintained their seats on the Council during the periods when both national and local political trends were not favourable to their respective political parties.<sup>27</sup>

The previous case studies have shown that individuals could inherit social capital, although this might have been diminishing by the early twentieth century. Were such transfers still possible in the twenty-first century? A survey of information contained in *Year Books*, newspaper reports from the *Chronicle and Echo*, the councillors’ own personal web pages on *LinkedIn* and *Facebook*, and the personal profile pages on the Borough Council’s own web site pages, revealed no instances of a parent to offspring exchange of social capital between the Northampton Councillors. However there was an exchange of capital between spouses. Between 1999-2006/7 three married couples served as Borough councillors.<sup>28</sup> During 2007/8-2010/11 that number had risen to five, but the recent 2011 elections returned no married couples as Borough councillors.<sup>29</sup> The benefit of husband/wife teams as councillors has an attraction both for the political party whom they represent and for the team as individuals. First, a tight network tie through marriage already exists and the individuals do not have to manufacture their network, although they must maintain it. Second, the individuals have established trust between themselves which can reduce ‘concerns over the potential actions of others’

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<sup>26</sup> Pareto, *The Rise and Fall of Elites*, p. 36.

<sup>27</sup> ‘Election Results’, May (2007) and (2011); *Northampton Year Books* (2007, 2011).

<sup>28</sup> *Northampton Borough Council Year Books* (1999-2011).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

and in doing so may produce a greater likelihood of unity of purpose and direction.<sup>30</sup> Third, a marriage enables transference of social capital between the two, if required, whether it is within the confines of the council chamber or more public spheres of activity. This then suggests that, unlike the earlier periods where social capital tended to be transferred vertically between individuals, in the present period that transference of capital is moved horizontally.

Councillors and Cabinet members have access to potential social capital through serving on one of eighteen cross-party committee and forum groups within the Council, and provide the opportunity for the councillors to strengthen network ties. Twenty such groups have been in existence since 2000 and each councillor has sat upon at least one group during his/her period of office.<sup>31</sup> Kingdom's research on local government highlights that there is 'no formal training' for the position as a local Borough councillor and that training is very much 'on the job'.<sup>32</sup> Graph 7.4 shows the number of committees upon which the councillors serve and demonstrates that councillors serve, on (mean) average of 3.98 committees each year. Although Graph 7.4 specifically depicts 2012, the results are similar for each year between 1999 and 2012. As Woods has noted, the key spaces, in this case committee membership, becomes a means through which individuals exercise power and demonstrate status.<sup>33</sup> It is in those committees that individuals produce closer network ties and gain status.

Kingdom also recognised the importance of hierarchy within local government committees and the role which committees played in the 'education and socialisation' of newly elected councillors. He noted that 'chairs' of committees can become 'influential figures'; however, the position of 'chair' is not automatic.<sup>34</sup> From a social capital perspective, it requires an expenditure of time on network development and cementing within the committee group. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, it is the Leader of the Council who selects the Cabinet members. It therefore seems reasonable to suggest that, in serving on the committees, individuals use and display to other members the skills which they bring to the job. Equally, individuals can develop skills

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<sup>30</sup> P. Doreian, 'A Note on Actor Utilities and Network Evolution', *Social Networks*, 30 (2008), p. 106.

<sup>31</sup> [www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/council/councillors](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/council/councillors).

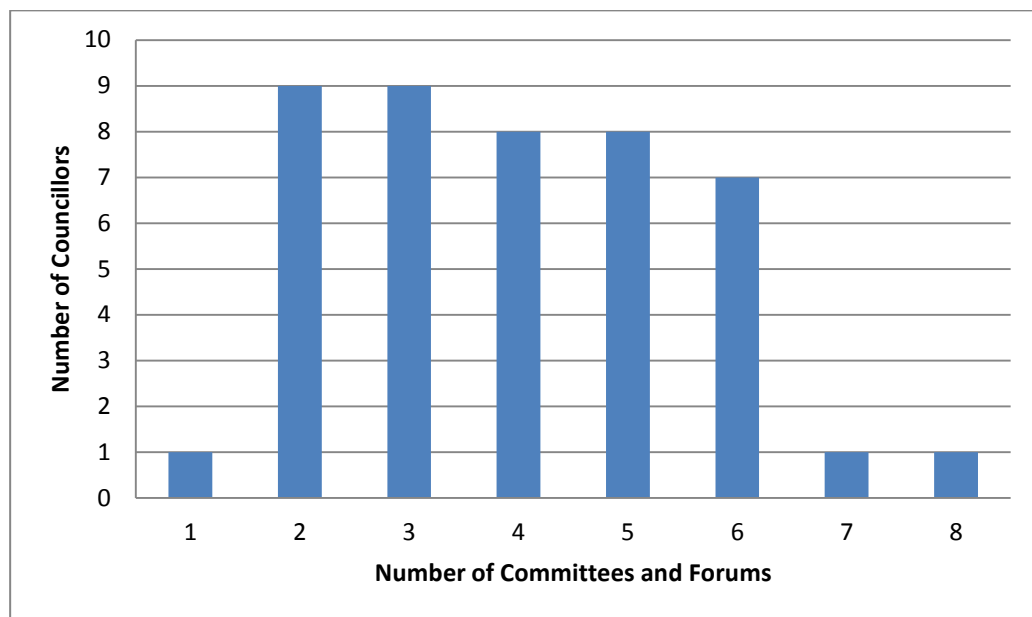
<sup>32</sup> J. Kingdom, 'England and Wales', in *Local Government in Liberal Democracies: An Introductory Survey*, ed. by J. A. Chandler (London: Routledge 1993), p. 19.

<sup>33</sup> Woods, 'Rethinking Elites', p. 2107.

<sup>34</sup> Kingdom, 'England and Wales', p. 19.

whilst a committee member. Therefore, individuals may transfer the human capital aspect of social capital into status if their selection as a Cabinet member is the result of skill which they acquired through committee memberships. However, that status may not extend beyond the Borough Council into the wider public arena.

Graph 7.4 Committees per Councillor.



Source: <http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/council/councillors/committee> [accessed 10 March 2012].

Also important in maintaining social capital and thus status within the Borough Council is serving on the committees of outside bodies, in particular, the County Council and the various regeneration organisations. As a member of such an institution, individuals obtain social capital through acting as a knowledge broker between the outside body and the Borough Council. Of the 110 borough councillors who have held office from 1999-2012, 35 have also served as County Council members whilst sitting on the Borough Council; of those, only one individual, Sally Beardsworth, has continuously remained as both a Borough and County Council member.<sup>35</sup> It is reasonable to suggest that the individual had actively used their social capital to establish and maintain network connections from 1999-2012, that contributed towards elite status.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> 'Election Results, Northampton Borough Council' (1999-2012); 'County Council Election Results' (1998-2009).

<sup>36</sup> Section 2 of this case study further discusses the network connections of this councillor, Sally Beardsworth.

*Social capital from the business arena.*

Although there is a cycle of business start-ups and closures, since the 2008 banking problems many retail companies have closed. Companies that have generally hit the headlines because of closures have included national companies such as Woolworths, Focus, JJB Sports, but at a local level smaller company businesses such as Church's China have also ceased trading in Northampton.<sup>37</sup> By April 2009, the local newspaper, the *Chronicle* and *Echo* was reporting that 'one in six town centre shops are now empty'.<sup>38</sup>

Business growth and development is and has been a major role of the Borough Council just as it was in the 1920s.<sup>39</sup> However there has been a move away from the practice of using the Council as a means of accessing personal business information and therefore economic gain, and towards business conducted in the interests of the community.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, following the introduction of the Local Government Act of 2000, the Borough Councillors must not use Council information and local development policies for personal business advantage.<sup>41</sup> Where personal business interests have the potential to overlap with council policies, the councillors are bound to declare an interest and voluntarily remove themselves from the discussion or voting process.<sup>42</sup> For example, Councillor Choudary declared a personal and prejudicial interest on the licencing of private hire and hackney cabs. In November 2011 the entire Cabinet declared interest, as members of outside bodies that included the Enterprise Zone Board, Northampton Safety Partnership, Local Strategy Partnership, West Northants Planning Committee all of which had a vested interest in the topics on the agenda: the new buss interchange, community centres management appointments, and Northampton playing fields.<sup>43</sup> Although the Cabinet's declaration did not involve the possibility of individual business

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<sup>37</sup> 'Churches China to Close Down after 152 Years', *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 29 October (2010), p. 5.

<sup>38</sup> 'One in Six Town Centre Shops Now empty', *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 6 April (2009), pp. 4-5.

<sup>39</sup> See Chapter 6.

<sup>40</sup> See Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

<sup>41</sup> Following the *Nolan Committee's Third Report on Standards in Public Life*, July (1997) the completion of a 'Declaration of Interest' form became a legal requirement for all serving Councillors under the Local Government Act (2000), Section 81.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> 'Licensing Committee; Declarations of Interest', <http://www.northamptonboroughcouncil.com/councillors/ieListDocuments.aspx?> [accessed 27 December 2011]; 'Cabinet Meeting', <http://www.northamptonboroughcouncil.com/councillors/ieListDocuments.aspx?> [accessed 27 December 2011].

gain for any councillor, it seems evident that the Borough councillors conform to regulatory and behavioural practices. Whilst on the one hand the 'Declaration of Interests' has meant as an organisation the Borough Council is more open, it also limits the opportunity for the councillors to use business information as a means of accessing potential social capital directly.

Nevertheless, as an organisation the Borough Corporation continues to have an interest in promoting businesses in Northampton as a Business Alliance Partner of the Chamber of Commerce, with which it has strong ties. The interaction between the two organisations is evident by the fact that both the Northampton Borough Council web site and the Chamber of Commerce web site have hyperlinks to various business websites and partnerships sites which offer business advice and training.<sup>44</sup> For example, the Council web site information page ran an advertisement for a business training event in November 2009, in conjunction with the Borough Councils and included the NFEA, Northampton Borough Council, Business Link, Job Centre Plus and Northamptonshire Enterprise Limited.<sup>45</sup> Although the Chamber of Commerce has between 2000 and 2012 represented the interests of approximately 1000 Northamptonshire businesses, during the same period no member of the Borough Council has sat as a member of the Chamber's Board. Therefore no councillor acted as a network bridge between the two organisations and the potential social capital that may have been available could not be accessed by them.

Business as a means of social capital for the Northampton Borough Councillors has been limited since the 1960s, when National Government initiated economic regeneration projects.<sup>46</sup> Klein has suggested that it was during the late twentieth century that 'economic development was no longer regarded as gradual [a local affair] but was to be stimulated.'<sup>47</sup> In the case of Northampton, that meant a government sponsored Development Corporation. In 1968, the government designated Northampton a 'new town' and the Northampton Development Corporation (NDC)

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<sup>44</sup> <http://www.northants-chamber.co.uk/membership> [accessed 07 February 2012].

<sup>45</sup> Business course advertisement on the Borough council web site in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce, [http://www.northampton.gov.uk/site/scripts/news\\_article.php?newsID=203](http://www.northampton.gov.uk/site/scripts/news_article.php?newsID=203), 13 November (2009), [accessed 03 July 2011].

<sup>46</sup> P. G. Klein, '0530 New Institutional Economics', <http://encyclo.findlaw.com/0530book.pdf> [accessed 23 November 2011].

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, p. 461.

started to operate shortly thereafter.<sup>48</sup> During its twenty year life period, no Borough councillors sat on the NDC board. This lack of inclusiveness stems from established economic perspectives which date from the nineteenth century – ‘that economic development would be governed either by the state or the markets’, but not through the combined interaction of both.<sup>49</sup>

More recently, stimulation for growth in the wider region began in 1999, when the government set in place nine Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) covering large areas of the country.<sup>50</sup> The East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA) included the counties of Northamptonshire, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Rutland and Nottinghamshire.<sup>51</sup> Whilst urban developments in America during the same period received the majority of their funding from corporate and private bodies, funding for the EDMA came from several government departments and it also received supplementary funding from Europe.<sup>52</sup> However, as with the earlier NDC, the EDMA’s accountability was to central government rather than to local borough councils; it thus fragmented local elite power. Although Hemphill, *et al* noted that the regeneration of Belfast involved leadership by national and local Government, (Borough Council), Northampton’s economic regeneration run by the EDMA had no Borough Councillors as members of its board.<sup>53</sup> In 2009 the EDMA divided into sub-partnerships and the Northamptonshire Partnership (NP) began operation.<sup>54</sup> When established, the NP consisted of 22 members, with representatives from local Borough and County Councils, the voluntary sector and the business sector.<sup>55</sup> This provided opportunities to some Borough councilors to establish networks with members of the business community on a more personal basis through which potential social capital could be

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<sup>48</sup> Ministry of Housing and Local Government, *New Towns Act* (1965); *The Northampton New Town (Designation) Order* (1968); *London Gazette*, no. 44529 (1965) [accessed 12 December 2011].

<sup>49</sup> S. Bowles and H. Gintis, (2002) ‘Social Capital and Community Governance’, *The Economic Journal*, 112 (2002), p. F419.

<sup>50</sup> <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110705080620/bis.gov.uk/policies/economic-development/englands-regional-development-agencies> [accessed 05 July 2011].

<sup>51</sup> <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120119134312>; <http://emda.org.uk/projects/details.asp?filevar=603> [accessed 05 July 2011].

<sup>52</sup> Cava and Mayer, ‘Integrated Social Contract Theory’, p. 265; <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmeastmid/406/40608> [accessed 24 March 2010].

<sup>53</sup> Hemphill, *et al*. ‘Leadership, Power and Multi-sector Urban Regeneration Projects’, p. 62.

<sup>54</sup> <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120119134312/emda.org.uk/srps/default.asp> [accessed 09 June 2012].

<sup>55</sup> [http://www.niconsortium.org.uk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=78&Itemid=55](http://www.niconsortium.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=78&Itemid=55) [accessed 09 June 2012].



accessed. Since the NP's inception the Borough Councils representative on the Board has been the incumbent Leader of the Borough Council. In June 2010, the government announced that the EMDA and all its sub-partners, which included the NP, would cease activities in 2012.<sup>56</sup> Whilst it is probable that individuals developed some network connections, it is also possible that many network connections will fade over time.

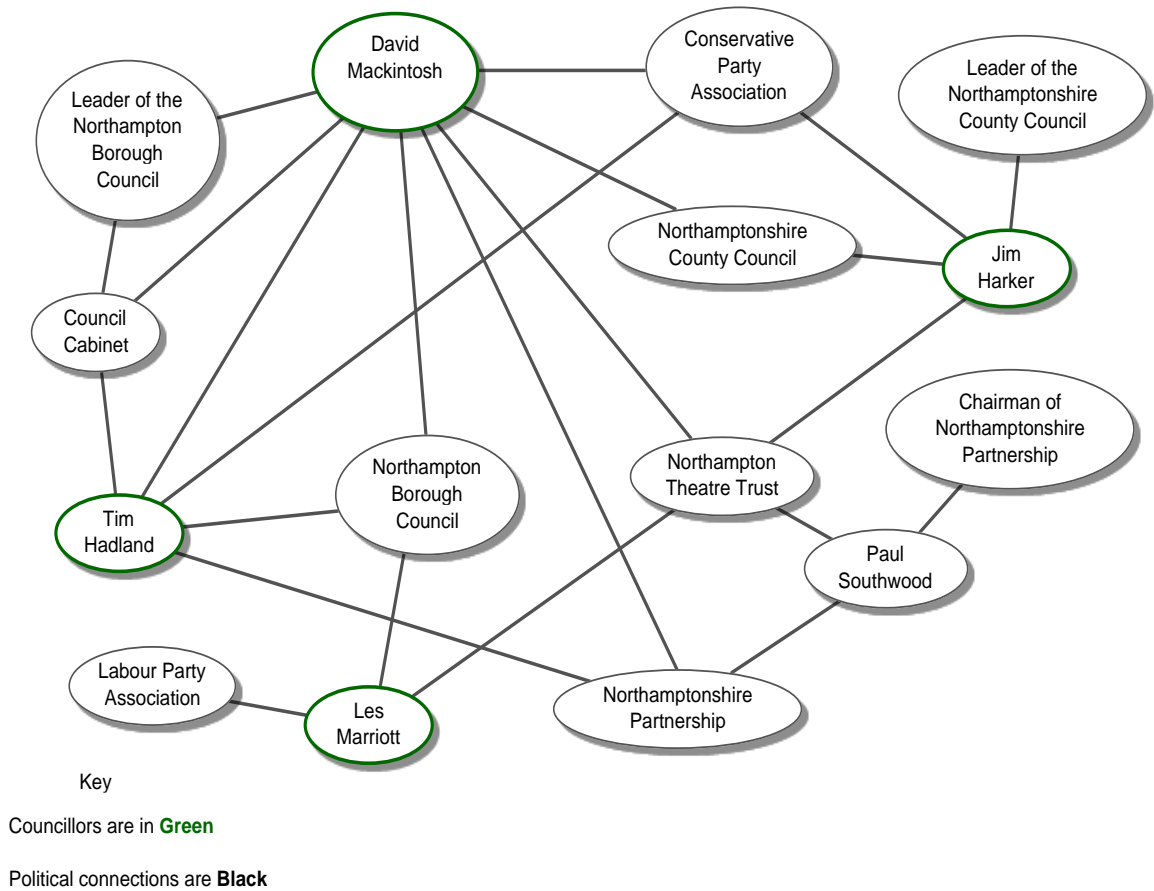
Figure 7.2 is an example of the overlapping network between the Borough Council and the Northampton Partnership. As of 2011, the representative for Northampton Borough Council on the board of the Northamptonshire Partnership is Borough Council Leader David Mackintosh.<sup>57</sup> He is Leader of the Council Cabinet and sits on two other committees within the Council: the appointment and appeals committee, and standards committee. He is a County Councillor, a position that he gained in 2009, prior to becoming a Northampton Borough Council member in 2011. Mackintosh is also a member of several charities, one of which is the Northampton Theatre Trust where he serves as a board member alongside Paul Southwood, Chairman of the Northampton Partnership, and Northampton Borough Councillors Tim Headland (Leader of the Borough Council, January 2006 to May 2007 and member of the Northampton Borough Cabinet since May 2011) and Les Marriott (Deputy Mayor in 2012, and Mayor designate for 2013). Leader of the County Council, Jim Harker, is also a Northamptonshire Theatre Trust board member. The regular interaction between these men has the potential to produce both bonding and bridging ties between the political, business and social arenas which they can develop and employ to maintain personal status.

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<sup>56</sup> <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120119134312/emda.org.uk/main/> [accessed 05 July 2012].

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.northamptonshireep.co.uk/business/board-members/board-members> [accessed 29 June 2012].

Figure 7.2 Map of network overlaps – David Mackintosh, Leader of Northampton Borough Council 2012.



Source: [www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/Council/councillors](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/Council/councillors); [www.northamptonshireep.co.uk/about-nep-0](http://www.northamptonshireep.co.uk/about-nep-0); <http://www.northamptonconservatives.com> [accessed 15 December 2012]; <http://www.northamptonboroughcouncil.com/councillors/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1> [accessed 15 December 2012]; <http://www.royalandderngate.co.uk/en/RoyalDerngateTheatres/TheTheatres/boardmembers> [accessed 15 December 2012].

Running consecutively to the EMDA, in 2004 the government instigated a new ‘quango’, the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation (WNDC). Its role was again to handle economic and social development and regeneration. The geographical area of responsibility of the WNDC covered Northampton, Daventry and Towcester, and thus produced an overlap in the geographical areas of responsibility with the EDMA. As with the EMDA, the WNDC had control of major planning projects in Northamptonshire, although there was no overlap between the two bodies in specific regeneration project planning and responsibility.<sup>58</sup> The major difference between the two development agencies was that of funding. As Kruger and Buckingham’s research

<sup>58</sup> ‘Creating Sustainable Communities: An Urban Development Corporation for West Northamptonshire, A Decision Document’ (London: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2004), p. 15 and p. 17.

on economic regeneration shows of America and Britain, there had been a fundamental change in the funding and responsibilities of regeneration projects.<sup>59</sup> The result of that change meant that, although the WNDC received funding from the main government, the government placed greater emphasis upon financial investment from county councils and businesses.<sup>60</sup>

WNDC established partnerships with the local borough councils, Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce, the University of Northampton, West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit and the Northamptonshire Partnership. Its board consisted of business representatives and local Borough Councillors from all three Borough Councils. Northampton had three Council members serving on the board.<sup>61</sup> Leach and Wilson have noted that the new mode of close working has required local politicians ‘to become more adept at coalition building’; WNDC board members and the Northampton Borough Councillors therefore had the opportunity to establish new networks, thus raising their status within the Borough Council.<sup>62</sup> As members of the board, three Borough Councilors, Tim Hadland (also a member of NP), Richard Church and Joy Capstick, acted as conduits of information; they were the bridging linkage that crossed the network structural holes between the two organisations.<sup>63</sup> Their role as knowledge brokers between the Borough Council, County Council and WNDC provided opportunities for establishing new networks and raising their potential access to social capital within already existing networks, thus offering the prospect of status enhancement within the Council.

The ‘life span’ envisaged for the WNDC was 10 years and in March 2012, the WNDC transferred planning and other powers back to the local Borough Councils of Towcester, Daventry and Northampton.<sup>64</sup> Government had, however, already set in

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<sup>59</sup> R. Krueger and S. Buckingham, ‘Towards a ‘Consensual’ Urban Politics? Creative Planning, Urban Sustainability and Regional Development’, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 36:3 (2012), p. 486.

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.wndc.org.uk/northampton/carlsberg-to-expand-in-the-northampton-enterprise-zone/> [accessed 27 August 2011]; <http://www.wndc.org.uk/northampton/funding-secured-for-northampton-station/> [accessed 11 August 2012]; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, ‘Creating Sustainable Communities’, p. 5.

<sup>61</sup> <http://www.wndc.org.uk/about-us/partners> [accessed 27 August 2011].

<sup>62</sup> Leach and Wilson, ‘Urban Governance in England’, p. 134.

<sup>63</sup> Burt, ‘The Social Structure of Competition’, p. 65-7.

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.northants-chamber.co.uk/news/article/wndc-transfers-powers-to-northampton-borough-council> [accessed 21 August 2012]; <http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/news/>

place smaller more locally orientated and business-led Local Enterprise Partnerships. The first, Northamptonshire Enterprise Limited, had a relatively short life before the Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership (NEP) replaced it in 2011. It has since received the status as a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).<sup>65</sup> The LEP's purpose is to stimulate economic recovery through 'private sector led' initiatives and job creation. However, Northamptonshire County Council is the primary funder and project leader; the opportunities for Northampton's Borough councillors to gain access to potential social capital that may be generated through business networks is therefore limited.<sup>66</sup>

### *Social capital in the social arena*

In contrast to the previous case studies, the evidence suggests that the political arena dominated the social activities of the Borough Councillors in the twenty-first century. The political party organisations and associations in Northampton assist in the maintenance of status much as they did in the 1920s. They provided the opportunity for establishing political connections and the maintenance of those connections; they are also organisations that engage with social activities for their members. One means of technology which each of the political party associations use is that of the Internet. As a means of disseminating information the Internet is an ideal conduit, although there is more cascading of information than there is interactive communication. The use of the Internet means there is no initial face to face contact, but once a connection has been made, the individual may initiate further face to face meetings. It thus provides a means of communication between local political party association members and the wider public.

Analysis into Internet use as a means of communication shows that two of the three main political parties in Northampton, the Conservative Association and the Liberal Association, have produced dedicated 'party' web sites.<sup>67</sup> The Labour Party has no dedicated web site and instead uses Facebook as a conduit of information. Its site informs the public of recent activities, but information about present or prospective

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*Newsreleases/Pages/2655.aspx* [accessed 21 August 2012].

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.northamptonshireep.co.uk/location-why-northamptonshire/northamptonshire-local-economic-partnership> [accessed 29 June 2012].

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.northamptonshireep.co.uk/about-nep-0> [accessed 29 June 2012].

<sup>67</sup> <http://www.northamptonconservatives.com> [accessed 5 February 2012]; <http://northamptonlibdems.org.uk> [accessed 5 February 2012]; <http://www.facebook.com/northamptonlabour> [accessed 5 February 2012].

local councillors is absent from the site.<sup>68</sup> The site does not invite the public to join social activities, although it does invite them to leave messages.

By contrast, the Liberal Democrat dedicated web site lists their representatives on the Borough and County Council, and gives a brief bibliographic profile of each. The site also informs the general public of upcoming social events such as the monthly 'Fish and Chip Quiz Night'.<sup>69</sup> Through this, the local party association is able to increase networking activity. Similarly, the local Conservative Association web site also provides bibliographic information of their representatives on the Borough and County Council. In doing so their respective web sites have taken over the role of the local newspapers in previous decades.<sup>70</sup> The social activities to which association members and the general public are invited to participate are more numerous than the other political groups. They included Pimm's parties, coffee mornings and political forums.<sup>71</sup> Castells suggests that this form of networking activity is a 'bridging tool' between the politician and the general public which 'produces horizontal networks of communication'.<sup>72</sup> More importantly, in using the Internet, the local political party associations in Northampton, in particular the Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives are inviting the public to engage with them both through Internet contact and at face to face social gatherings. The web pages include photographs of recent association events. Whilst these are, undoubtedly, part of the association propaganda, they also contribute towards reinforcing public perception of the councillors as legitimate members of local government, in particular through photographs of local councillors and leading Members of Parliament. As such, these photographs are a means of maintaining the public profile of a Borough Councillor and contribute towards maintaining status within the community. Photographs which show association members, again specifically the local councillor's involvement with charitable activity, suggests that the web site is attempting to produce an almost tactile approach towards the voting public and inviting engagement from the public more generally.

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<sup>68</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/northamptonlabour>: accessed 05/02/12; <http://northamptonlibdems.org.uk/en/event/month/2012/05> [accessed 05 February 2012];

<http://www.northamptonconservatives.com/events> [accessed 05 February 2012].

<sup>69</sup> <http://northamptonlibdems.org.uk/en/event/month/2012/05> [accessed 05 February 2010].

<sup>70</sup> See, the obituaries in Chapter 5 for example.

<sup>71</sup> [www.northamptonconservatives.com/events](http://www.northamptonconservatives.com/events) [accessed 05 February 2012].

<sup>72</sup> M. Castells, 'Communication, Power and Counter-power in the Network Society', *International Journal of Communication*, 1:1 (2007), p. 246, p. 257.

The local newspaper is another means through which Borough councillors can advertise their social capital and propagate their status. For example, the *Chronicle and Echo* reported on the campaign to save local post offices. As part of the report the newspaper listed the names of the councillors. This action helped contributed towards maintaining the councillors' status.<sup>73</sup> In 2007, the *Chronicle and Echo* reported on the Borough Council's official engagement to mark the abolition of slavery.<sup>74</sup> In 2010, Mayor Jamie Lane invited a reporter from the *Chronicle and Echo* to accompany him on a typical day of mayoral appointments and engagements.<sup>75</sup> It seems reasonable to suggest that Mayor Lane, whilst informing the public about the job generally, was also displaying his status as first citizen and thus propagating his elite status. Publicity is important for gaining status and the maintaining of that status; however it is not possible without engaging with the activity of networking.

Charitable activities remain a means through which individuals can gain social capital; yet few Borough councillors use all of those activities as a means through which they propagate their elite status. For example Sally Beardworth and Geraldine Davies have done work for a Rape and Incest Crisis Centre but beyond listing that activity on the register of interests have not publicised their personal involvement to the wider public and therefore have not gained social capital from the wider public.<sup>76</sup> Analysis of the 'The Register of Interest', available on the Borough Council's web site, reveals that 66 per cent of those who held the position of Borough Councillor between 2000 and 2012 were engaged with at least one charitable organisation. It also revealed that two Borough Councillors were Freemasons and three were members of the Northampton Rotary Clubs.<sup>77</sup> Although this information is not prominently displayed, it is freely available. One individual who is actively encouraged to promote his/her involvement with charitable causes is the Mayor of Northampton. Each year the new mayor selects two charities to support and actively and openly conducts fund raising events on their

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<sup>73</sup> E. Omara, 'Campaign to Save Post Offices', *Chronicle and Echo*, 26 November (2007), p. 10.

<sup>74</sup> 'Mayor Colin Lill Leads a Procession through Northampton Town Centre to Mark the 200th Anniversary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade', *Chronicle and Echo* 26 March (2007), p. 2.

<sup>75</sup> *Chronicle and Echo*, 3 October (2010).

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.northamptonboroughcouncil.com/councillors/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1> [accessed 15 December 2012].

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.northampton.gov.uk> [accessed 28 June 2012].

behalf.<sup>78</sup> Whilst the practice increases a charity's profile on the public stage, it also raises the mayor's profile and thus status.<sup>79</sup>

More often, individuals propagate status at civic ceremonies. The most regularly held annual events are the Mayoral Inauguration and Remembrance Sunday. On both occasions, the mayor and the councillors wear the insignia of office. The mayor and deputy mayor and councillors who 'chair' committees dress in their respective civic robes. The mayor no longer processes with other councillors through the street to All Saints Church following the inauguration; however, the local newspaper does report the inauguration event and takes photographs which it prints in the newspaper.<sup>80</sup> There is a civic evening event on the day of the mayor's inauguration each year. Borough councillors, friends, dignitaries and representatives from various county institutions such as the Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Northampton's serving and past Members of Parliament, senior representatives of charities, including the Royal British Legion, also attend.<sup>81</sup> This gives public and institutional endorsement and recognition to the office and elite status of mayor, enabling him or her to engage in network building which may be outside his or her usual areas of interest or activity.

Remembrance Sunday also requires the mayor and the councillors to don their finery of office. The national and local importance which the public associates with 11 November insures that large numbers of people are present when the wreath laying and march-past take place. The officials display their status to the public by the order in which wreaths are laid.<sup>82</sup> Indirectly, this gives public confirmation that the institution of the Borough Council is legitimate and proper, thus validating the status of the councillors as elites within the community. Rarely is there opportunity for the furthering of status beyond that of first citizen; however, in November 2010, former Mayor of Northampton Terry Wire became a Deputy Lieutenant of the county and thus elite both in the town and county.<sup>83</sup> This suggested that he had accrued substantial

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<sup>78</sup> *Chronicle and Echo*, 'New Mayor is Sworn In', 22 May (2008), p. 13; Wayne Bontcroft, 'Tearful Mayor Takes on Duty', 20 May (2005), p. 13; 'The Seven Hundred and Seventy-second First Citizen Takes Office', 21 May (2012), p1; 'Charity Dinner Helps Mayor's Appeal', 25 August (2011), p. 7.

<sup>79</sup> 'The Seven Hundred and Seventy-second First Citizen Takes Office'.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 'New Mayor is Sworn In'; 'Tearful Mayor Takes on Duty'.

<sup>81</sup> Evening civic event following the Mayoral Inauguration on 24 May (2002).

<sup>82</sup> 'Hundreds Gather for Remembrance Sunday', *Chronicle and Echo*, 12 November (2007).

<sup>83</sup> Wayne Bontcroft, 'Former mayor among newly appointed Deputy Lieutenants of Northamptonshire', *Chronicle and Echo*, 30 November (2010), p. 13.

social capital whilst serving as a Borough councillor in the years which preceded his appointment of office.

## **Section 2: Personal Networks**

### *Guardianship networks*

The main route to becoming a member of the political elite in Northampton during 2000-2012 was through membership of local political party association. Although a few individuals sat as independent councillors, the majority of Borough Councillors were successful because of the support they gained from membership of a political association.<sup>84</sup> Local political associations were the arenas where prospective candidates cultivated group norms, values and aims. The associations provided the means of accessing potential social capital networks that could be used towards elite status. They provided the initial political training ground. Regular interaction with association members in activities such as canvassing on behalf of others and participation in social events was the means through which individuals established trust, demonstrated ability and forged network alliances. It was through that same interaction that introductions to contacts could be made and networks initiated that could be developed into established networks. Membership of a political association provided strength not simply in the number of potential networks that were available, but also the support that was required for selection as a ward candidate. As a guardianship network the political association members were investing social capital. Selection as ward candidate was not only an endorsement of group trust, but a reciprocal investment in political ambition for the groups to gain influence in local politics, and for the candidate to gain position as a councillor, thus becoming a member of the local elite. In summary, the investment of social capital between the party political association and new member and the training that the association provided suggests that the associations had become the guardianship networks of twenty-first century politicians.

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<sup>84</sup> See Election results (2000-2012).



### *Established networks*

Legal recognition, through election to office, still requires public recognition. As Woods has noted, it is the manipulation of popular beliefs and prejudices – which Letki clarifies as a ‘belief that authorities, institutions and social arrangements are proper and just’ – that help to maintain elite status.<sup>85</sup> Andrews, Cowell and Downe have suggested that, since 1997, the government has been promoting ‘active citizenry’ with the aim of strengthening civil society; this they suggest has stimulated local government modernisation.<sup>86</sup> As part of this modernisation, the Borough Council as an organisation has incorporated technology into its normal working practices. Since the mid-1990s, every Council in England has produced a web site through which the general public is able to follow Council business and access information in Council facilities and Northampton is no exception.<sup>87</sup> Each web site has pages holding data on Borough and City councillors and is a way through which individuals can propagate status and may access social capital. As Castell’s research has shown, modern politics has become based in ‘communication through mass media’.<sup>88</sup> In his analysis of the network society, Castells notes that technology has rapidly changed the way in which individuals interact over time and space; more importantly, he notes the rapidity with which networks are made and dissolved.<sup>89</sup> This suggests that, without a physical network interaction, a ‘face to face’ meeting as a follow up to a communication between councillor and public, the majority of the loose networks which individuals established during a councillor’s term of office will quickly dissipate. Although cyber interaction establishes a link which Granovetter would describe as a ‘weak bridging tie’, it is unlikely that individuals can maintain such links to any degree where they could elicit (in the majority of cases) social capital or propagate status beyond an initial introduction.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Woods, ‘Rethinking Elites’, p. 2106; Letki, ‘Investigating the Roots of Civic Morality’, p. 308.

<sup>86</sup> R. Andrews, R. Cowell, and J. Downe, ‘Support for Active Citizenship and Public Service Performance: An Empirical Analysis of English Local Authorities’, *Policies and Politics*, 36:2 (2008), p. 227.

<sup>87</sup> Northampton Borough Council’s first web site was called ‘The Executive’ and was launched in 2001. Regularly updated, the present web site is [www.northampton.gov.uk](http://www.northampton.gov.uk). Birmingham City Council’s first web site was named ‘Birmingham Assist’ and was launched in 1996. It has since been continuously developed and updated and is now named [www.birmingham.gov.uk](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk). Bedford Borough Council first launched its web site in 1998.

<sup>88</sup> Castells, ‘Communication, Power and Counter-power in the Network Society’, p. 240, p. 255.

<sup>89</sup> Castells, *Rise of the Network Society*, p. 507.

<sup>90</sup> Granovetter, ‘The Strength of Weak Ties’.

What the Internet does provide is easy public access to the Northampton Borough Council.<sup>91</sup> The organisation's web pages contain the details relating to all Borough councillors.<sup>92</sup> As recognition is important to maintaining and propagating status, photographs of each serving councillor are on the web site so that the public can recognise their local government representatives. The front page of each councillor's web page includes contact details and office hours. Behind the front pages, the councillors have inserted a short biography, lists of committees on which they serve, both within the Council and as member of an outside body. Each serving councillor must complete a Register of Interests, listing business, charity and other interests.<sup>93</sup> The web pages are therefore a means through which individuals demonstrate status to the wider public.

Borough councillors' office hours are limited to a few hours per week, placing time limits on face to face contact. Email is therefore important in initiating and maintaining loose connections. Between 1999 and 2000, three Northampton Borough councillors gave email as a means of contact. All three were personal email addresses. By 2001, that number had risen to 16 councillors, again with the email addresses being private rather than government based.<sup>94</sup> The number of councillors using email continued to grow from 2001 and 2012, and presently the public can contact all Northampton Borough councillors via email. The suffix @northampton.gov.uk clearly signifies a membership connection between individual and Council which the general public can recognise.<sup>95</sup> The Council does not stipulate a retention period for email communication; however, their ITC department retains emails for four years.<sup>96</sup> Individual councillors can access and refer to these, enabling a continuity of communication, information and the building of loose network ties between councillors and constituents. Many people subscribe to email accounts. In Britain, some of the most popular are Hotmail.com, Virginmedia.com and Gmail. Those users remain

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<sup>91</sup> <http://www.northampton.gov.uk>.

<sup>92</sup> <http://www.northamptonboroughcouncil.com/councillors/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1>.

<sup>93</sup> The Register of Interests became compulsory for local councillors under *Local Government Act 2000, Chapter 22, Part III, Chapter V, Supplementary, Disclosure and Registration of Members Interests etc.*, p. 81.

<sup>94</sup> *Northampton Borough Year Books* (1995-2011).

<sup>95</sup> *Northampton Borough Year Books* (1995-2011); [www.northamptonboroughcouncil.com/councillors/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1](http://www.northamptonboroughcouncil.com/councillors/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1).

<sup>96</sup> Information was obtained data from Northampton Borough Council under the Under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and the Environmental Information Regulations (2004). A licence for reuse was granted under the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations (2005) *PSI licence number PSI-RL30*.

largely unidentified to the general public; however, as Woods noted of physical space, buildings and or institutions legitimise elites.<sup>97</sup> So, an email suffix may produce a similar elite identification to the general public and thus aid in propagating status. Importantly, as a benefit for the councillors, it serves to separate their personal/private emails from Council communications.

As a means of producing interactive, although loose, connections with the general public, the local Labour and Conservative party associations also established Twitter accounts, which invite the public to comment and ask questions of the political party and the local Borough councillors.<sup>98</sup> Although as previously mentioned web sites tend to primarily be disseminators of information, there is also the potential of initiating network contacts. The Internet has opened access to increasing accountability and visibility of local politics and politicians, which Leach and Wilson suggest were 'previously invisible to the general public'. In doing so the Internet has enabled to Borough Councillors to propagate their status as elites.<sup>99</sup> About 45 individual councillors have utilised networking sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn as a means through which they can maintain and propagate their elite status (see Graph 7.5). Of those, 14 councillors use Facebook only, 23 have accounts with LinkedIn and 8 councillors have accounts with both web sites. Graph 7.6 shows a further breakdown of the political allegiance of those Northampton Borough councillors who have and continue to use Facebook and LinkedIn as social media sites.

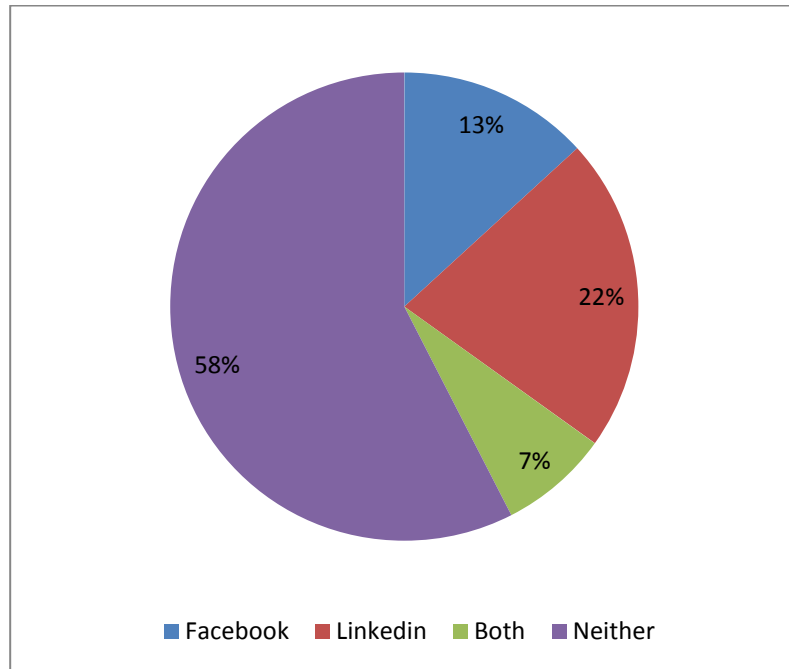
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<sup>97</sup> Woods, 'Rethinking Elites', p. 2117.

<sup>98</sup> *Twitter.com/nptn\_labour* and *Twitter.com/@NSCAssociation*, Northampton the Liberal Association did not appear to have an active Twitter account by April 2012.

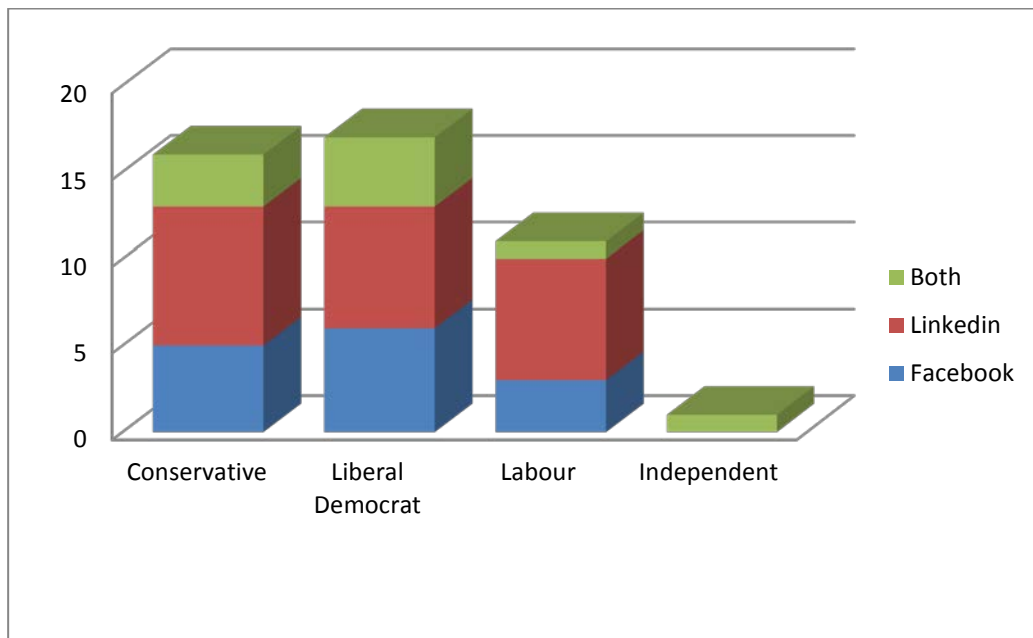
<sup>99</sup> Leach and Wilson, 'Urban Governance', p. 135.

Graph 7.5 Northampton Borough Councillors 2000-2012 Connected to Networking Web Sites.



Source: <http://www.facebook.com>; <http://linkedin.com>; <http://northamptonboroughcouncil/councillors>.

Graph 7.6 Breakdown of Networking Sites by Political Party.



Source: <http://www.facebook.com>; <http://linkedin.com>; <http://northamptonboroughcouncil/councillors>.

A further breakdown of the number of Cabinet members in 2012 who use the networking sites LinkedIn and Facebook revealed that three members subscribed to those sites. The portfolio holder for Housing, Mary Markham, was on Facebook; Brandon Eldred, the portfolio holder for Community Engagement, was on LinkedIn, and the Leader of the Council, David Mackintosh, was connected to both sites.<sup>100</sup> The networking sites offer a potential means through which individuals can propagate status, although as previously mentioned, face to face contact remains an essential element of maintaining social capital networks.

There is also evidence that individuals had, as Bourdieu has suggested, severed network connections.<sup>101</sup> On 26 October, 2011, Borough Council Leader David Palethorpe resigned his position, using Twitter to make his announcement: ‘Have just resigned as Leader of NBC Conservative Group following disloyalty and self-interest of some members of the party.’<sup>102</sup> The newspaper followed up on the story and four days later and informed the public that the Conservatives had spoken of ‘concerns about the councillor’s style of leadership and his habit of decision making ‘on the hoof’’.<sup>103</sup> The newspaper continued with, ‘From his point of view, Councillor Palethorpe has argued he has always tried to be ‘inclusive and collegiate’ in his decision making’.<sup>104</sup> This suggests that the network bonds within the group had been damaged, a few weeks later the bonds between Palethorpe and his political association and the Cabinet members were severed when he crossed the political floor and joined the Labour opposition group.<sup>105</sup> This would necessitate his establishing new networks within the Labour group – a time-consuming process because, as Glaeser’s suggests, once a person moves neighbourhoods, or in Palethorpe’s case political party, a person’s social capital depreciates until such time as new networks are established.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> <http://www.facebook.com>; <http://linkedin.com>; <http://northamptonboroughcouncil/councillors>.

<sup>101</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*.

<sup>102</sup> Wayne Bontcroft, ‘Breaking News: Council Leader David Palethorpe Quits’, *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 26 October (2011), p. 5.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> Wayne Bontcroft, ‘Inside Story: The Autumn of Discontent’, *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 30 October (2011), pp16-17.

<sup>105</sup> Nick Spoons, ‘Ex-Tory Leader David Palethorpe Defects to Labour Weeks after Being Ousted’, *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 1 December (2011), p. 13.

<sup>106</sup> E. L. Glaser, D. Laibson, and B. Sacerdote, B. ‘An Economic Approach to Social Capital’, *The Economic Journal*, 112:483 (2002), p. 450.

A loss of social capital may also have happened to two councillors in 2009. Councillors Malcolm Mildren and Jean Hawkins resigned from the Liberal Democrat party in a protest over Councillor Tony Woods remaining a Council Cabinet member having been found guilty of two breaches of conduct. Rather than remain a member of the Liberal Democrat Group Mildren became an Independent and Hawkins a Conservative. The event which led them to change parties had begun the previous year and the local newspaper coined it 'Astragate'.<sup>107</sup> Councillor Woods was Leader of the Council from May 2007, when the Liberal Democrats took political control of the Borough Council, until his resignation on 26 October, 2009.<sup>108</sup>

In 2008, Woods had parked his car in a local car park and allowed it to remain there for three months untaxed. Following two complaints by members of the public and requests by the Chief Executive of the Council for him to remove the vehicle, he refused to do so until after he had received a fixed penalty fine.<sup>109</sup> Council members appointed an independent investigation of the complaints against Tony Woods and the investigator, Mr Phillip Mears found that:

He used the space in a way that the Council would not have approved of and for his own personal advantage. I [Mears] have therefore concluded that he did make improper use of his official position. My finding is that Councillor Woods did not bring his office or authority into disrepute...but Woods failed to comply with the code of conduct for members of the Council which says councillors should not use their position to secure an advantage and should act in accordance with the reasonable requirements of the authority when using its resources.<sup>110</sup>

Called to a special hearing before the Standards Committee, which concluded after eight hours, Woods was found guilty of two breaches of the Code of Conduct and

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<sup>107</sup> Wayne Bontcroft 'Councillors Leave Party in Protest', *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 19 October (2009), p14.

<sup>108</sup> *Year Books* (2009, 2011).

<sup>109</sup> 'Astragate: Ex-leader John Dickie Outlines the Reasons for his Complaint Against Underfire Tony Woods', *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 19 August (2009), p 5.

<sup>110</sup> 'Astragate: Council Leader Pledged to Move his Car... But Did Nothing for Two Months', *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 18 August (2009), p. 3.

ordered to give a written apology to all councillors.<sup>111</sup> His position as Leader of the Council was untenable. The following day Woods resigned his position; however, he remained in office until the 26th of the month. In the meantime, the Liberal Democrats elected a new Leader of the Council, Brian Hoare, who immediately announced that Woods would remain a Council Cabinet member.

For Councillors Mildren and Hawkins, the decision led them to resign from the local Liberal Democrat party. Mildren went on record saying of Woods that his agreement to remain part of the Cabinet was ‘symbolic of a leader who was not aware of what people were thinking’ and, ‘now we know he's going to be propelled immediately back into the Cabinet, probably doing pretty much what he was before’.<sup>112</sup> In an organisation where members expect conformity to recognised standards and practices, contravening those norms can carry, as Granovetter suggests, the price of a damaged reputation and loss of position within the group.<sup>113</sup> The loss of trust between Woods and many within the Borough Council led him to resign his position as Leader of the Council, and although he remained in the Cabinet for a short period, he soon lost all position both within the Council and as a member of outside bodies including his position as a WNDC board member, trustee of the Northampton Theatre Trust and membership in the West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee. In the 2011 Borough Council elections, Woods lost his seat and his status as a political elite in Northampton. Both Councillors Mildren and Hawkins were also unable to retain their seats on the Borough Council which suggests that they too may had not have been able to establish strong network ties through which they could maintain their political status.<sup>114</sup>

Local political party associations and council groups occasionally experience division within local party associations. Tony Clarke, an ex-Labour Member of Parliament (1997-2001) and Borough Councillor prior to 1997, stood for election as a local Borough councillor for Northampton’s Castle ward in 2007. Having not been selected as a candidate by his local party association, he stood as an Independent Labour

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<sup>111</sup> ‘Astragate: Woods Forced to Make Full Apology’, *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 5 October (2009), p 3.

<sup>112</sup> Wayne Bontcroft, ‘Councillors Leave Party in Protest’, *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 19 October (2009), p. 14.

<sup>113</sup> Granovetter, M. ‘Problems of Explanation’, p. 44.

<sup>114</sup> *Year Books* (2009, 2011).

candidate, and won the seat.<sup>115</sup> However, differences between Independent Labour Councillor Tony Clarke and the main Labour group within the Council came to a head in early 2008, leading to Clarke's expulsion from the National Labour Party. The split became clear to the general public following a report in the local newspaper headlined, 'Farcical end to council meeting after row over seat' on 27 June 2008. In essence, although no longer a member of the Labour group, Clarke took his usual seat in the Council chamber. The Labour group objected, refused to take their seats and a row ensued. The Conservative group walked out and eventually the mayor was forced to declare the meeting closed without conducting any Council business.<sup>116</sup> In December 2008, the *Chronicle* and *Echo* reported that the main parties had left Clarke out of the decision making process.<sup>117</sup> As an Independent, Clarke did not have the numerical support within the Council chamber to affect Council decisions or receive answers to posed questions. It seems clear that, in standing in the Borough election without the endorsement of the local Labour Party Association, some may have perceived Clarke as undermining or usurping the rights of the local association. The ties which Clark built with the local Labour Party Association whilst he represented Northampton as a Member of Parliament had not the strength or density of network membership through which Clarke could utilise his social capital to maintain status within the council membership. Gaining and maintaining network connections can provide potential social capital through which status as a political elite as a Borough councillor may be maintained therefore the next section reconstructs and analyses the network of one councillor.

#### *Councillor Beardsworth's Network*

One of the longest serving Northampton Borough Councillors is Liberal Democrat Sally Beardsworth. Figure 7.3 shows her network connections within Northampton's political arena. Councillor Beardsworth first held a seat on the Borough Council as a Liberal from 1983-1987, alongside another first time Liberal, Councillor Richard Church. In 1993, Beardsworth again stood as a candidate in the Borough elections and

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<sup>115</sup> Nick Spoons, 'Labour Ousts the Political Heavyweights', *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 8 May (2007), p. 3.

<sup>116</sup> 'Farcical End to Council Meeting after Row over Seat', *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 27 June (2008), p. 2.

<sup>117</sup> 'Independent gets Harsh Treatment', *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 29 December (2008), p. 10.



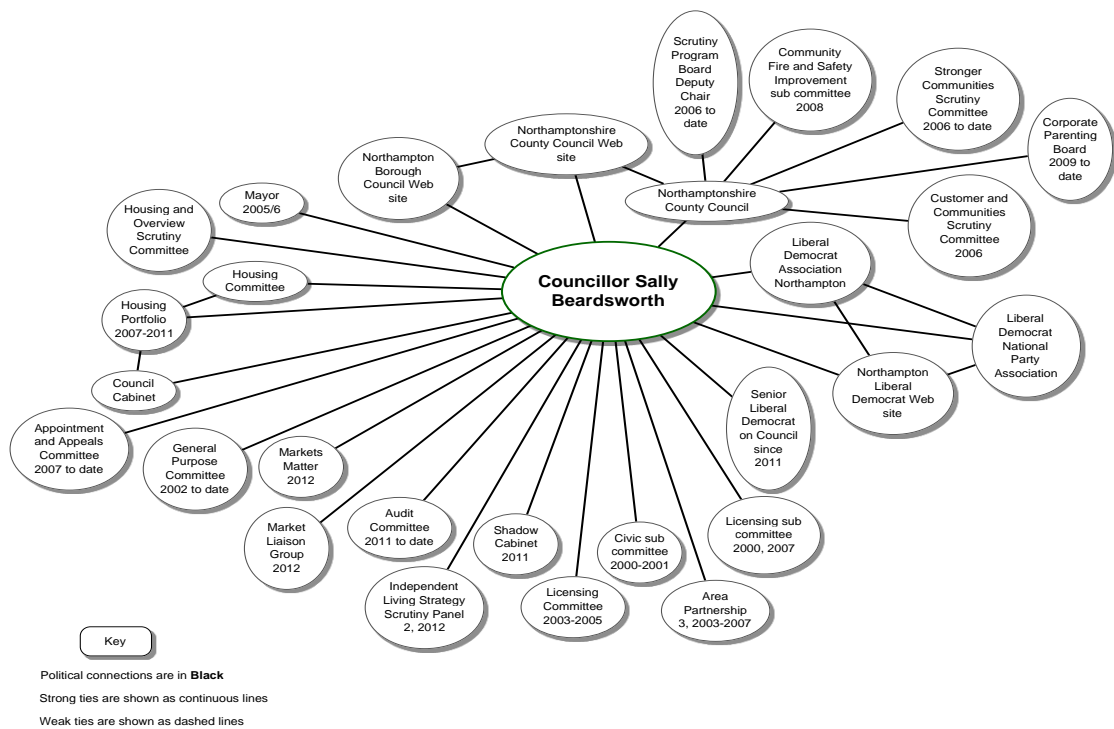
won the ward seat of Kingsthorpe, which she retains to the present.<sup>118</sup> In 2001, she stood for and won election to the Northamptonshire County Council, a position which she also retains to the present day. In 2005/6, Councillor Beardsworth became mayor of Northampton and the following year became a member of the Council Cabinet as portfolio holder for Housing. In 2011, she became the leader of the Liberal Democrats within the Borough Council and a member of the Shadow Cabinet. Records for all Borough and County Council committees are not available; however, since 2000, Councillor Beardsworth has been a member of 12 committees on the Borough Council and six committees on the County Council (see Figure 7.5). She has worked as a committee member alongside most of those who served a period of office as a Northampton Borough councillor. As a member of the civic sub-committee, Beardsworth worked alongside Conservative Councillor Tim Hadland and Labour Councillors Terry Wire, John Dickie, and Liberal Democrat Councillor Richard Church. As a member of the committee for Area Partnership 3 she again served with Church. Both Beardsworth and Church also served alongside Conservative Councillor John Casswell on the Housing, Licensing and General Purpose Committee.

Although it is not possible to determine the actual strength of the ties which developed during a period of committee membership, the overlap of membership which existed between Church and Beardsworth was more likely to have been stronger than the connections between the committee members who were not of the same political group. Nevertheless, working as part of a team on an all-party committee gave an opportunity for Beardsworth to be 'seen to cooperate' and was thus a means through which she mutually exchanged trust between members and which contributed to maintaining social capital stock and status within the group.

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<sup>118</sup> Political party union between the Social Democrats and Liberal Parties in 1988 produced the Liberal Democrats; <http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/Council/councillors> [accessed 10 March 2012]; <http://cmis.northamptonshire.gov.uk/CMIS5Live/MyCouncillor.aspx> [accessed 10 March 2012].

Figure 7.3 Network Map Committee Memberships of Councillor Sally Beardsworth.



Source: <http://cmis.northamptonshire.gov.uk/cmis5live/MyCouncillor/tabid/62/ScreenMode/Alphabetical>; <http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/Council/councillors> [accessed 10 March 2012].

As with all Northampton Borough councillors who have served on the County Council, Councillor Beardsworth provides bridging ties between the political arena of the County and the Borough. The longevity of her service on the County Council will have helped her to develop network ties within the County Council. As a member of the Scrutiny Program committee she has worked alongside Robin Brown (2003-2012) who represents Braunston, Gina Ogden (1967-2012) the representative for Weedon Beck and Woodford. On the Corporate Parenting Board, Beardsworth has worked alongside Winston Strachan Councillor for the Northampton ward of Castle, and both have also serve together on the Customers and Communities Scrutiny Committee and the Fire and Safety Improvement sub-committee.<sup>119</sup>

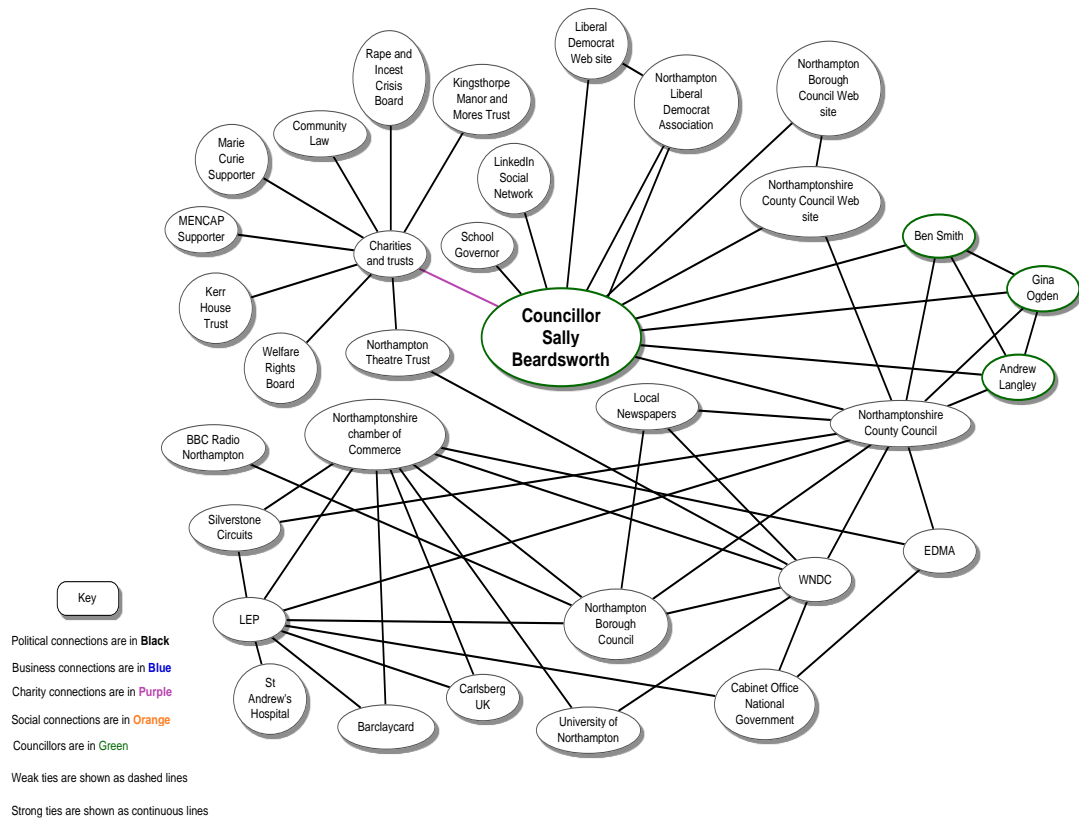
Councillor Beardsworth also had access to information and loose network ties to the EDMA via the County Council. Such ties also exist via both the Borough and County Council to the Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce, WNDC, the LEP and the

<sup>119</sup> <http://cmis.northamptonshire.gov.uk/cmis5live/MyCouncillor/tabid/62/ScreenMode/Alphabetical>. This page gives details of all the county councillors. The longest serving Northamptonshire County councillor is Conservative Councillor Gina Ogden (1967-2012). Others with long service include Conservative Ben Smith (1987-2012) and Andrew Langley (1980-2012).

University of Northampton. Although the network ties are weaker connections, they still provide Beardsworth with potential social capital and status among the recently elected Borough councillors, through her ability to impart information to those with little knowledge of the outside bodies, and to the interaction and importance of those groups in the regeneration of the Borough and the County. It is the disseminating information that provides the means for establishing loose network ties and through which she makes available social capital for development in future use. Her longevity of service and the hierarchical structure of the Borough Council enhances her status within the council, but the knowledge which she has gained over the years has been important in making her an elite among Northampton's political elites.

The diagram below, Figure 7.4, is a reconstruction of the connections to which Councillor Beardsworth has access. It shows her direct connections to organisations such as Northamptonshire County Council and indirect connections to The University of Northampton via the LEP and Chamber of Commerce. Although those connections are weak ties they may produce stronger network ties if developed. In turn, she could utilise these at some later date for the purpose of gaining and maintaining social capital. The diagram also shows the interconnectedness of other groups which are involved with the Borough Council. For example, it is clear that both the Borough and County Council have connections to the Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce, the LEP and the University of Northampton. However, it is clear that there are few overlaps in the board memberships of those groups outside the membership overlaps of the Borough councillors.

Figure 7.4 Network Map Councillor Sally Beardsworth, and Interconnected Groups



Source: <http://cmis.northamptonshire.gov.uk/cm5live/MyCouncillor/tabid/62/ScreenMode/Alphabetical;>  
[www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/Council/councillors;](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/Council/councillors;)  
<http://northamptonlibdems.org.uk>

Whilst only covering one individual, Figure 7.4 shows that, by using her network connections Sally Beardsworth is able to cross structural holes between networks, thus facilitating connections between councillors and the organisations. In particular she is able to disseminate information among those of her own political group should she chose. However as each councillor has developed his or her own network connections with various groups and organisations, with varying degrees in the strength of ties, the above diagram can only be seen as being a representation of many of the existing networks which extend between the councillors, council and other organisations and groups. Nevertheless, the network connections of all councillors have the potential to provide access to social capital and the potential to maintain their status as political elites in Northampton.

## Conclusion

The elite of Borough Councillors remained a small group of individuals, although it is clear that Pareto's circulation of elites was relevant to the twenty-first century. Indeed, there had been a fundamental circulation of elites as Borough Councillors from what had been a predominantly middle class membership in the 1920s to a far more 'working class' membership by the 2000s, most councillors now having employment positions below that of middle management. Regular elections were an important aspect of the circulation of elites, even if the results of these often reflected the national political trends and swings. This suggests that, regardless of the amount of social capital which a candidate had expended or how extensive his or her networks might be, the progress towards elite status as a Borough councillor could be and was delayed for some individuals for a period of four years or more. This is important because it suggests that, although Pareto's circulation of elites had occurred in Northampton during 2000-2012, the process was not necessarily directly influenced by the lack of elite attributes. Nevertheless, the attributes which Pareto associated with the elite's ability, strength, and activeness were also relevant.

It was apparent that there had been a change in the type of the guardianship networks that potential councillors had used to access potential social capital. Although the local political associations had been important in the 1920s, by the 2000s they had become the primary means of accessing political contacts and self-promoting, and acted as guardianship network facilitators. It was again through party political association that councillors gained initial strength associated with elites. The recognition by other association members as being capable of becoming a member of the borough council potentially enabled the instigation of networks and, once an association member had become a councillor, those same networks within the association could be further developed.

There had also been a change in the type of networks that the borough councillors used to maintain their status. The majority of network connections within the Borough Council were maintained through membership of a committee. The cross-party committees, which generally had less influence, were where newcomers began their political career. Serving on several committees enabled a councillor to potentially

access more social capital networks. Regular committee meetings reinforced the behavioural norms and values, so that, the greater the number of committees on which a councillor served, the greater their potential to propagate their status or gain promotion to the cabinet. This then suggests that the elite are the most active – as Pareto argues.

Access to potential social capital through business connections were with outside bodies and provided potential access to social capital that could contribute towards maintaining status. An important means of maintaining social capital and therefore status was by bridging structural holes between networks. Network brokerage, in particular, membership on the LEP board or on the County Council, also added to the accruelement of an individual's social capital and offered the opportunity to strengthen personal network ties and the possibility to access the resources of 'others'. However, the diagrammatic reconstruction and analysis of the networks showed that the majority of the councillors' connections with businesses and business organisations were predominantly weak ties that did not appear to have been developed into strong network ties; nevertheless they will have provided some degree of social capital for a councillor.

In the twenty-first century councillors have continued to access and develop social capital networks through face to face interaction; such exchanges of social capital provided the strength to their networks. However, the councillors have also used modern technology as a means of networking. The new method of networking became available to the councillors during the late 1990s and universally used by the councillors in the latter half of the 2000s, the Internet and emails. Although this new technology has probably produced more weak tie networks than it has strong ties, it has become a common means of communication between councillors and between councillors and the wider public; it has also become a means that the councillors have used to propagate their status. As the councillors have email addresses that connect them with the Borough Corporation as a government organisation it legitimises the status of the councillors as the political elite in Northampton. Just as importantly it means that elite status in the twenty-first century is as Wood's study suggested bound in political office and therefore not a combination of social business and political status as in previous centuries.

## Chapter 8 Conclusion

### *Introduction*

The literature suggests that the elite associated themselves with power.<sup>1</sup> The single organisation that has been associated with the legitimate holding and use of power in Northampton was the Borough Corporation / Council. This body, to which the general public accorded a real and symbolic identification as elite, also gave by association the Aldermen and councillors their identity and status.<sup>2</sup> We can view regular borough elections after 1835 as the electorate's tangible endorsement which legitimised the position of the Aldermen and councillors, thus recognising them as the power elite within the community. This thesis examined the political urban elite in Northampton at different points in history, the Aldermen and Cabinet members of the Borough Corporation / Council.

Building on the conclusions reached from the analysis of each case study, the aim here is to ascertain if over the *longue durée* there have been changes in the composition of the local elite and assess the influences which have impacted gaining, maintaining and propagating status. This concluding chapter examines whether there have been significant changes in the methods by which elites have gained social capital and transformed it to produce elite status. It also examines the changing importance of political, business and family networks.

As might be expected, there has been a change in the socio-economic composition of Northampton's Aldermen over 200 years. At the start of the period, the Aldermen were drawn exclusively from Northampton's economically successful business and tradesmen. By 2012, neither social standing nor business success had importance in recruiting Northampton's political elite, and socio-economic inclusion rather than exclusion had become more important. The impetus for becoming a member of the political elite had also changed. It was no longer based on the need for personal socio-economic status, as had been the case in the 1770s, but rather on the desire to improve the community's socio-economic conditions. What we can see from the research is a

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<sup>1</sup> See, Dahl, *Who Governs*; Mosca, *The Ruling Class*; Pareto, *The Rise and Fall of Elites*; Woods, 'Rethinking Elites'.

<sup>2</sup> Woods, 'Rethinking Elites', p. 2107.

separation of spheres. As Woods noted in his research of local elite in Somerset, the elite are recognised by their function.<sup>3</sup>

This separation began during the 1910s and 1920s. During the earlier periods - the 1770s and 1840s - elite status was gained when the combination of business and social success brought recognition in the community and was then translated into political office.<sup>4</sup> It was in combining these three areas that elite status was fully recognised by the community. The 1910s and 20s were decades when the combination of success in all three areas of activity was no longer necessary; the largest industrialists - the boot and shoe manufacturers - were less interested in standing for political office, and men of little or no business skill were entering into the political arena, for example trade union representatives. The importance of social position in the community was diminishing as a prerequisite for political office and individuals from the working classes began enter the Borough Council. There was thus a separation of political and socio-economic status: political elites were defined solely through their office rather than this being underpinned by established social standing. In the twenty-first century political elite status in the community remains associated solely with the holding of political office. The borough councillors are the only visible group with direct power in the community and therefore hold status within the community as members of the local elite.

The evidence examined over the four periods showed that the Borough Corporation's Aldermen and councillors were not a homogenous group at any period of history. Their educational experience through school and university - which Bourdieu's research on cultural capital has suggested influences cultural identity, social norms and values - was varied in all periods of the study. Shared values and social norms came from the experiences of Aldermen and councillors as members of Northampton's wider community and reflect the shared norms and values which prevailed within British society during the respective periods. The underlying requirement for gaining and maintaining essential networks for political, economic and political status remained the same throughout all the periods examined: reciprocated trust, honesty and reliability.

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<sup>3</sup> Woods, 'Rethinking Elites', p. 2107.

<sup>4</sup> Ruggiu, 'The Urban Gentry in England', pp. 249-271.



It is clear that the occupations and occupational position also varied, and no single occupational group dominated the council at any period. It is also apparent however, that trade and businessmen remained the recognised leaders in the community up to and including the 1920s, and dominated the Corporation's membership.<sup>5</sup> It was not until the end of the nineteenth century that employed men entered into the political arena of the towns' corporations in Birmingham, Leeds and Wolverhampton. In Northampton, this did not occur before the first decade of the twentieth century.<sup>6</sup> By the twenty-first century, there were more individuals that were employees as councillors and cabinet members than there were employers. There had been therefore a change in the composition of Northampton's elite over the *longue durée*.

### *Social capital*

The literature review discussed both Putnam's and Bourdieu's concepts of social capital.<sup>7</sup> It is clear from the evidence presented in this thesis that Putnam's three components of social capital - moral obligations and norms, social values and social networks - were intrinsic to building networks of trust in all the periods covered and need to be interwoven with Bourdieu's concept of social capital as intimately bound up with economic and cultural capital.<sup>8</sup> Combining and comparing the two concepts throughout the thesis has helped to produce a clearer view of how elites gained and maintained status at different points in history and how they responded to socio-economic and political change. It also facilitated an evaluation of social capital, network and elite theory on which this thesis is based.

The evidence from Northampton accords with Bourdieu's argument: the elite and potential elite gained social capital through a combination of social, cultural and economic resources based upon levels of trust that were equal to or exceeded the social capital of other individuals, and that trust was manufactured through regular interaction or networking.<sup>9</sup> Bourdieu's definition of social capital is problematic, however, in particular his ideas about the 'possession of a durable network'.<sup>10</sup> In reality, it appears that social capital has varying degrees of use duration that are dependent on the

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<sup>5</sup> P. Joyce, *Work, Society and Politics: the Culture of the Factory in Later 19th-century England* (London: Methuen, 1982), p. 161.

<sup>6</sup> Garrard, *Democratisation in Britain*, p. 71.

<sup>7</sup> Bourdieu, 'Forms of Capital'; Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. 447; Bourdieu, 'Forms of Capital'.

<sup>10</sup> Bourdieu, 'Forms of Capital', p. 251.

regularity of interaction and the degree of reciprocity between individuals and groups and the intended use of a network. For example, it is possible that the Aldermen may have initiated some networks with intended short duration specifically with members of the voting public prior to local Borough Council elections. Such networks will have been weak ties that produced short-term social capital aimed at gaining votes. Long-term network ties, such as membership of a political association, are likely to be developed to produce strong network ties through which social capital can be maintained over the long-term. This has important implications beyond this case study, because it intimates that social capital as a medium and short-term resource is a commodity which may have a limited life span. That said, it remains uncertain what factors precipitated a given lifespan or which types of groups and organisational networks were more prone to short durational social capital gain and use.

What is clear, however, is that short-term social capital may be related to periods of selection and or election, in the case of local politicians; or, in the business arena, to the period between the ending of an apprenticeship and beginning a business. The greater the time that elapses between the two events, then the greater the amount of social capital that is lost. One example of this is the use of job references in the present day, which operate in a similar manner to the nineteenth-century apprentice use of a network link with past employer; both need to be relatively current or they lose value as capital. There is therefore a time limit to the productive use of some forms of social capital –it may effectively depreciate over time. Nevertheless, it is apparent that short-term networks are just as productive in generating social capital as the durable networks which Bourdieu asserts are important for producing and delivering social capital.<sup>11</sup>

It was not possible to measure the degree of reciprocation between individuals in this study but it seems reasonable to suggest that it was context specific. By this I mean that individual needs dictate the type and amount of social capital that a person expends, in time and/or knowledge, and the returns that one requires. Whether the exchange of social capital is equally balanced ‘pound for pound’ immediately or delayed exchange – that is, as in a favour owed – is less important than the outcome. If an intended outcome is successfully achieved, the balance may be of little importance; however

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<sup>11</sup> Bourdieu, ‘Forms of Capital’ p. 251.

unsuccessful and unproductive exchanges can lead to distrust and to severing of network ties, as is apparent from the case of two of Northampton's councillors. Strong network ties between the conservative councillor David Palethorpe and other conservative councillors on the borough council became weakened and some were severed when he changed his political allegiance from Conservative to Labour. Similarly, Councillors Mildren and Hawkins severed their network ties with councillor Tony Woods after he was found guilty of two breaches of conduct.<sup>12</sup> This suggests that some networks and links are expendable. As social capital is formed through the manipulation of the combination of social, economic, and cultural resources, and maintained at least in part through reciprocation of capital, those involved in the above examples may have considered continued association as negative or damaging to their own ability to instigate, maintain and manipulate social capital resources.

Reviewing the four case studies, it appears that the Aldermen and councillors gradually altered their perception of the general public as a reservoir for social capital. Although business networks remained an important means of gaining social capital throughout the periods examined, there was a change over the *longue durée* as the Aldermen and Borough Council responded to social change. This change occurred following the introduction of the 1835 Corporation Act. The Act itself reduced the number of serving aldermen, introduced regular political elections and placed political status into the hands of the electorate. Added to this were the opportunities afforded by the provisions of the Joint Stock Companies Act, which helped to create what might be termed the consumer-voter. We can see that in the 1840s the Aldermen had responded to business opportunities by initiating several joint stock companies. As profitable businesses, these undoubtedly enhanced their own economic position, but they were also responding to middle-class consumer-voter demands for modern conveniences. The Aldermen were thus responding to the economics of supply and demand, whilst at the same time appealing to the consumer vote and thus maintaining their social capital and elite status.<sup>13</sup>

By the 1920s, the Borough Council and its members, the Aldermen and councillors, fully recognised the voter as a political consumer. The water and tram companies had

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<sup>12</sup> See Chapter 7.

<sup>13</sup> The projects were community based the finance and management remained in private hands, ownership was not that of the Borough Corporation.

already been transferred into the jurisdiction of the Borough Council and public ownership of the gas company was a topic of discussion throughout the 1920s. Added to this, we can see the introduction by the Borough Corporation of the 'New Industry Committee' not simply as a response to economic losses of the manufacturers and traders, but a reaction to a possible increase in unemployment amongst the electorate following World War 1. Private business remained the means through which individuals demonstrated status; however, business success which brought employment was of importance to the voting public. Therefore, the Aldermen who were both successful in the private business arena and who engaged with the regeneration of trade on behalf of the employees were more likely to accumulate social capital and maintain status within the community. Importantly it is clear that, unlike the 1840s where the organisation of the Borough Corporation was an observer in business activities, by the 1920s it had become a more active player, both as an organisation and through the councillors and Aldermen, at least in part because the electorate were seen as consumers and not merely voters.

We can again see a change occurring in the twenty-first century. The evidence presented in chapter 7 concurs with the research conducted by Hemphill and Cava on local government and regeneration in that business and politics have separated into well-defined areas of activity.<sup>14</sup> Community regeneration projects have become the responsibility of the Borough Corporation and other agencies; although the individual councillor and Cabinet members may belong to internal business committee networks and external business organisations, there is limited scope for them gain and utilise social capital in maintaining and propagating status with the wider public. Individual councillors are therefore less able to use business as an avenue of appealing to the consumer voter as a means of accessing social capital.

Recognising the electorate as a consumer of information the Aldermen and councillors have used various means of communication. Although not necessarily a direct means of gaining social capital, that is through face to face contact, the Aldermen and Councillors have used the available media as a means of maintaining and propagating their status. Analysis of the evidence used in this research project suggests that the

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<sup>14</sup> Cava and Mayer, 'Integrated Social Contract Theory' pp. 263-278; Hemphill *et al.* 'Leadership Power and Multi-sector Urban Regeneration', p. 50-80.

local newspapers have remained a relevant means of initiating potential social capital networks throughout the periods examined. As was the common practice of local Parliamentary electioneering in the eighteenth-century, individual council candidates rather than the Borough Corporation instigated and paid for electioneering adverts in the local newspapers after the introduction of the 1835 Corporation Act. It may also have been the potential of accessing potential social capital and the opportunity for maintaining networks that led the borough Aldermen and councillors to install telephones in their homes and places of work during the 1920s. Certainly the telephone meant quicker communication between councillors and between the councillors and members of the public. But there is also the possibility that the telephone may have contributed towards strengthening network ties between individual councillors and Aldermen. It was not until the latter half of the 1920s that the Borough Council followed the initiative of the councillors and installed telephones in the Town Hall and council offices. Again in the twenty-first century it was the borough councillors who embraced the modernity by setting up email contact addresses via the Internet several years before the Borough Council began their web site and issued all borough councillors, department and personnel email contact addresses. The actions of the Aldermen and Borough councillors suggest that they may have intended to maintain and possibly propagate their status as elites by using and embracing the available technology. The extent to which media may have contributed towards instigating new social capital networks cannot be ascertained; however it is possible that some new productive social capital networks were influenced by the ease of communication and later developed by the Aldermen and councillors of Northampton Borough Council. Nevertheless the use of the media forms only a small networking aspect and although it may contribute toward connectivity it is not an essential element in the construct of the networks previously discussed.

### *Networks*

Networks are the most vital element of social capital. It is through networking that potential social capital is accessed and thus potential elite status is gained and maintained. Yet networks and networking activities remain difficult to reproduce, measure and analyse. First, the networks reconstructed in this study form only part of the webs of contacts that drew together individuals – they are the links for which we have archival evidence. Second, and of equal importance to the thesis, it is impossible to measure empirically the notions of trust, reliability, honesty and reciprocity that bound together networks. The archival material which has shown overlaps of group, family and friendship networks, but the strength of those network ties are difficult to gauge with real precision. Importantly too, the case studies are limited to single decades. The strengths and weakness of individual and group ties both before and after the decades in this study may have varied. Nevertheless, the research remains important as a ‘snap shot’ – or rather a series of snap shots - of elite networks in Northampton and contributes towards a better historical understanding of how elites gained maintained and propagated status.

The Northampton evidence demonstrates that Bourdieu’s definition of social capital as ‘resources linked to networks’ remained constant throughout the study; the Aldermen and councillors had used a wide combination of different networks to gain and maintain their status as political elites in the town.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, they produced social capital by using both ‘strong and weak’ network ties and by the use of network ties that bridged ‘structural holes’ between networks and was relevant to the four periods investigated.<sup>16</sup> For example the networks of William Thompson and William Gibson in the 1770s, George Osborn and the Markham’s in the 1840s, Arthur Lyne and A. E. Marlow in the 1920s, and Sally Beardsworth in the 2000s all show both weak and strong network connections. However, the frequency of network interaction which Granovetter has suggested may determine the strength and density of a network could not be determined from the archival material available.<sup>17</sup> Although Burt has suggested that bridging links between networks have a knowledge-use time limit, he has not attempted to determine a

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<sup>15</sup> Bourdieu, ‘Forms of Capital’, p. 251.

<sup>16</sup> Granovetter, ‘The Strength of Weak Ties’, pp.1360-1380; Burt, ‘The Social Structure of Competition’, pp. 65-67.

<sup>17</sup> Granovetter, ‘The Strength of Weak Ties’.

time frame of when weak bridging links become bonding links.<sup>18</sup> Presumably this is because some knowledge exchange must be immediate, whilst other knowledge can be 'sat on' for many years, particularly if it is sensitive. Nevertheless, using Granovetter's strong and weak ties and Burt's bridging links as a basis through which social capital is exchanged, and accepting that knowledge has a life span limit to its use, it is reasonable to suggest that different networks also have different life-spans or time limits. This then suggests that the elite are those most capable of recognising the time frame relative to each capital and successfully translating that capital to achieve specific aims or targets. For example it is conceivable that in the political arena, as in business, individuals cash in their social capital prior to an election or business move or collapse, for personal or business advantage.

Evidence from the four case studies also shows that individuals and groups each constructed two separate, but interdependent symbiotic networks, these were the guardianship and established networks, each may have produced different strengths of capital, which enabled production of strong ties of support and the opportunity for economic gain and or knowledge gathering. Each used informal norms - trust, honour and reliability.<sup>19</sup> From the early nineteenth century, these informal norms were increasingly supported by the formal institutions of rules, regulations and the law.

Analysis of guardianship networks over the *longue durée* suggests that they continue to exist, but in a slightly different form. Importantly, they remain the means through which individuals can produce social capital, providing a mechanism for the potential elite to establish trust, prove honesty and gain a good reputation. Guardianship networks remained as training grounds for establishing new networks and the means through which individuals maintained existing networks. In the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth century, these guardianship networks were predominantly connected to family and trade apprenticeships. However, the analysis suggests that the reconstructed twentieth-century networks hint at a weakening in the convertibility of kinship ties and networks for the production of social capital and elite status in the political arena. The family aspect of the guardianship networks, which opened many doors in the 1770s, both in business and local politics, were less evident in the 1840s

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<sup>18</sup> Granovetter, 'The Strength of Weak Ties'.

<sup>19</sup> Casson, 'Leadership and Cultural Change' p. 409.

and 1920s. By the twenty-first century, the family network of contacts does not extend beyond the local political arena. The dense overlapping of business, family and political networks in operation through earlier periods had become weaker by the twenty-first century and people rarely used them.

This raises an important question: to what extent and over what period of time can social capital transfer between individuals within a kinship network? Clearly, family name and position in society can and do pass down through the generations. We can point to the longevity of British aristocratic families to confirm that fact. Equally apparent is the way that businesses passed through generations within some families, as was the case with Church's in Northampton where the company's ownership and directorship stayed within the family for 152 years. The analysis suggests that social capital was passed on within family groups during and after the guardianship network period. For example, William Thompson's reconstructed networks suggest both he and his brother Henry had access to their fathers' established networks and may therefore have inherited some degree of social capital from those network connections. It is also likely that the brothers exchanged social capital, which suggests that in the 1770s, Northampton's exchange and inheritance of social capital moved both horizontally and vertically. The same was true for the 1840s, where John Markham, his son Christopher and grandson Henry all served as Borough Corporation mayor and Aldermen. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the transfer of social capital between family members certainly extended over a two generation period and could extend over three generations, although evidence of social capital passing to a fourth generation is less certain for either the 1770s or 1840s. The period between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century also showed that sons followed fathers into the local political arena. However, for reasons that remain unclear, during the 1920s there were no father-son ties in the Borough Corporation, although there was evidence that family members continued to exchange social capital during the 1930s and into the 1950s.

Building and property constructors from the Chown family followed this pattern, with father and sons entering the Borough Corporation as councillors and Cyril Chown serving as mayor and Alderman, although the period of time had reduced to two



generations.<sup>20</sup> We cannot ascertain the degree to which family status within the community contributed to gaining seats on the Borough Corporation; however, the family's good reputation did produce social capital which they converted both vertically and horizontally into status as local politicians. In the twenty-first century social capital has not been passed generationally, and therefore vertically through family networks. Social capital was transferred horizontally between spouses, as with Councillors Roger and Jenny Conroy.<sup>21</sup> Having gained social capital through the guardianship period of local political association activity, Councillor Roger Conroy was able to transfer this to his wife having served his first term in office. This contributed to his wife's selection as a candidate and subsequent election at the following Borough Council elections. The couple went on to serve in adjoining wards, which suggests that Roger Conroy's reputation and social capital as a councillor may have extended beyond his own ward and contributed to the electorates that voted for his wife as their representative on the Borough Council.

Guardianship network strength and density contributed to producing a similarity of network behaviour within the groups which Granovetter notes, and through which Annan suggests that individuals establish and maintain behavioural conformity.<sup>22</sup> The dense overlapping memberships gave access to the cultural, economic and social networks which Bourdieu associates with social capital.<sup>23</sup> However, there had been a shift in the importance of dense networks and the access which they provided to status in the local community. Over the *longue durée* there was a movement away from the importance of overlapping family, business and political contacts; local political party associations took on the role of guardianship network, replacing kinship based networks.

The importance of Burt's bridging linkages between different networks was less evident in the guardianship networks that have been reconstructed during the case studies.<sup>24</sup> Although William Thompson had connections to the aristocracy, assessing the extent or importance of the information which he was able to gather and utilise during that period

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<sup>20</sup> 'Obituary, A. L. Chown', (1978); 'Obituary, Cyril Chown', (1988).

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/Council/councillors>.

<sup>22</sup> Annen, 'Social Capital, Inclusive Networks and Economic Performance'; Granovetter, 'The Strength of Weak Ties'.

<sup>23</sup> Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital'.

<sup>24</sup> Burt, 'The Social Structure of Competition'.

is unknown. Nevertheless, as a means of status enhancement, this connection probably brought Thompson some degree of social elevation through association. Bridging links between networks had greater significance in the business arena and provided economic benefits and social capital after individuals had ‘graduated’ from their guardianship networks, particularly in the 1770s and 1840s, but also to an extent into the 1920s. The opposite is true of the political elite in the twenty-first century. The majority of bridging links between business and social networks had been established prior to the network guardianship of the political associations. It seems reasonable to suggest, therefore, that the bridging linkages were of greater importance to individuals in the earlier periods, after the period of family and apprenticeship guardianship networks had been completed. Nevertheless, loose connecting network ties made during the ‘guardianship’ period were important and could give access to potential social capital.

Loose or weak bridging network ties were also evident in the established networks of Aldermen and councillors and had the potential to provide and give access to social capital. In the 1770s, William Thompson’s London business activity with Messrs Hogg, Eccles and Scrivener, served as an opportunity to disseminate information on the London markets and may have provided avenues of contacts for other Northampton manufacturers, thus increasing Thompson’s social capital among Northampton’s Aldermen.<sup>25</sup> In the 1840s, George Osborn’s connections to the Union Coal and Mining Company, White Lead Company and the Phoenix Insurance Company were also a possible source of social capital.<sup>26</sup> In particular, the Phoenix Fire Insurance Company had branches which extended the length and breadth of England. Although Osborn’s main area of insurance cover probably remained in Northampton, for individuals who migrated in or out of the town, Osborn could provide a source of information both locally and in distant towns. In the 1920s, there was a connection between Marlow and the Rushden Light Company. The benefits were a possible two way flow of information between the Rushden Light Company and the Northampton Light Company - on which several Northampton Aldermen and Borough councillors served as board members. Thus, the connection had the potential to provide an increase in Marlow’s social capital.<sup>27</sup> In a rather different manner Lyne’s connection to the Union

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<sup>25</sup> See William Thompson’s Established Network Map, Chapter 4.

<sup>26</sup> See George Osborn’s Network Map, Chapter 5.

<sup>27</sup> See A. E. Marlow’s Network Map, Chapter 6.

provided the connection between the Borough Corporation, employers and employees in the local shoe industry; it supplied a degree of status both to Northampton's wider community and the Borough Corporation's smaller community.<sup>28</sup> Although Lyne's union connection is based on information that could translate into social capital, both Osborn and Marlow's network connections also provided an economic and social capital. In contrast, for Councillor Beardsworth, in the twenty-first century, the important connections outside the political association are to the County Council and various charities and provide her with access to social capital.<sup>29</sup> Analysis of the four case studies suggest that bridging links did provide social capital, but that their importance in gaining and maintaining elite status as a local politician in Northampton gradually reduced over the *longue durée*.

There has also been a shift over time in the types of strong and weak networks used by Aldermen and councillors. As we have already discussed on the changes on guardianship networks, there was a shift in the network types which provided social capital in established networks. Figure 8.1 shows the movement of strong and weak ties which individuals used in maintaining elite status as a local politician in Northampton.

Figure 8.1 Movement of network strengths.

1770s		1840s		1920s		2000s	
Strong Ties	Weak Ties	Strong Ties	Weak Ties	Strong Ties	Weak Ties	Strong Ties	Weak Ties
Family		Family		Family			Family
No Political Party Association		Local Political Party Association		Local Political Party Association		Local Political Party Association	
Private Business		Private Business		Private Business			Private Business
	Community Based Business Project	Community Based Business Projects		Community Based Business Projects			Community Based Business Projects

<sup>28</sup> See Lyne's Network Map, Chapter 6.

<sup>29</sup> See S. Beardsworth's Network Map, Chapter 7.

Dense family networks remained important and continued to provide a means of extending personal network connections after ‘guardianship’, but gradually reduced in importance over time. In the 1770s, the ties which emanated from family produced both strong and weak ties. The same was true of the 1840s; however, the importance of the strong dense ties had reduced in influence in the political and business arena. Although the Osborn and the Markham families had the opportunity to transfer social capital between family members, both politically and in the business arena, the majority of the Aldermen did not access social capital via family networks once they established independent networks. In the 1920s the specific use of strong family networks for political status became less important and individuals rarely utilised them, a decline which continued into the twenty-first century. Although the interpersonal network between spouses might be strong on an individual basis, there is little evidence that councillors utilised any other family group member networks, e.g. daughter, son or grandson in gaining and maintaining status in the political arena.

The use of local political party association in gaining and maintaining elite status has become increasingly important over the *longue durée*. This finding concurs with Dexter’s research on Chartism in Northampton which suggests that it was during the 1840s that local political associations became increasingly important as a means of gaining political office.<sup>30</sup> It was not possible to measure the actual strength of those group ties; however, an examination of newspaper reports suggested that links between group members were solidifying for one political group, the Tory Oak Club. Members regularly met outside of Corporation meetings and contained individuals who were not serving Aldermen or councillors. The internal networking gave the opportunity for local elites to strengthen existing networks and instigate new and initially weaker network ties within the group.<sup>31</sup> By contrast, Northampton Whigs had no political organisation through which they could build strong identity ties, but relied instead upon business and family ties to provide strong and weak network connections to gain elite status.

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<sup>30</sup> K. Dexter, ‘Later Chartism in Northampton: with special mention to relations with middle-class radicals 1847-1852 (unpublished dissertation, University of Southampton, 1995), p. 2.

<sup>31</sup> *Oak Club Letters and List of Subscribers* (1841, 1843).

Between the 1840s and the present day the importance of local political party association has increased. Local political party association membership was a means through which local elites developed strong group ties and through which they gained support. It is evident that independent candidates standing for election to the Borough Council were at a disadvantage. By the 1920s, all the local political party associations had developed a hierarchy of membership, but it was through political group identity that individuals could share strong bonds through which social capital could grow as the profile of the local party associations increased within the wider community. There was reciprocity of trust between local councillors, Aldermen and the political group association whose shared aims produced benefits for both. For the local politician, the prize was political power and status within the community; for the political association, it was a voice in local politics which represented their shared views. The local party membership provided the direct strength of support for the local elite and helped to maintain loose links with less active members of the political group. Thus, local political party association membership provided both strong and loose network ties which the Aldermen could utilise in maintaining status.

By the twenty-first century, local political party association provided the strongest network interaction, so that the local party effectively selects the local political elite. Therefore, it is an absolute necessity for the budding elite to develop strong ties of support within the group. Activities such as canvassing on behalf of others, attending group functions and occasions helped develop and demonstrate trust which then results in the party selecting and supporting the election of individuals who represent the political views of the group on the local council. There is no evidence that individuals use weak ties or connections outside of group either to gain or maintain status. The network resources which Bourdieu suggests are necessary to maintain identity, social capital and status, thus remain firmly connected to the political arena.<sup>32</sup>

Whilst personal business success was a route through which individuals could gain political position in the early periods of the study, by the 1920s and 2000s it was no longer a prerequisite. Importantly, politics and business were closely interwoven in the individual during the 1770s, and produced strong overlapping networks. In the 1840s,

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<sup>32</sup> Bourdieu, 'Forms of Capital'.

business had begun to separate into spheres – there were two distinct areas of business in which the Aldermen engaged. Their primary business which was for personal economic gain and secondary businesses, the joint stock companies which provided both a community benefit and personal economic gain for the Alderman. The first remained necessary for access into the political arena and the second was beginning to become important for the maintenance of status.

The 1920s again saw a shift. We saw earlier that business success was no longer a prerequisite for political status, but business which benefited the majority of the community had become more important to maintaining status. Network ties within the business arena were also separating into spheres of activity as was evident in such organisations as the Boot and Shoe Manufacturers Association and the Master Builders Association. There were strong ties based upon economic interests within the separate organisations, but the Borough Corporation was primarily the organisation which facilitated network overlaps between different business organisations. In the twenty-first century, business and political interaction had firmly moved into the public, community interest sphere. Personal business interests (occupational) and economic status through councillors' and Cabinet members' private business networks did not produce strong ties which they could utilise to gain political power or status. Indeed as the councillors are bound by law to declare any pecuniary interests and conflicts of interest between the aims and economic intent of the Borough Corporation and their own financial interests, they are unable to gain private economic capital or social capital through their primary occupations. By the 2000s, community based projects, such as town economic regeneration, were common place. The limited numbers of council members on the regeneration boards, however, produced weak tie network associations that individuals could use to maintain status within the Borough Council and Cabinet.

As previously mentioned two forms of network construct were identified during this thesis guardianship networks and established networks. The reconstruction of those networks showed that the guardianship generally appeared as web like constructs, and established networks appeared to have had both web and rhizomic network construct and connection. What is important to this study is that from the guardianship web construct that individuals are able to construct rhizomic networks. The rhizomic network enabled economic and or knowledge gain and transfer, this translated into

social capital and used towards elite status. The interaction between the web and rhyzomic networks gives strength, continuity and value to interpersonal exchanges of social capital. The most important incentive for individuals to produce two differently constructed networks is flexibility and security. Enabling individuals to expend and replace social capital as individuals or groups constantly assess, revise and update their aims and ambitions. However analysis of the evidence found that for the urban political elite the construct of rhyzomic networks had become reduced in importance and use towards gaining status. Nevertheless the evidence does suggest that rhyzomic networks continue to retain valuable social capital for use in maintaining status.

### *Conclusions*

Returning to the issue of elite, it is evident that over the *longue durée* they have remained a numerically small group, defined by their ability to exercise power, but by no means homogeneous in social or economic terms. Indeed, they adjusted the use of different network constructs in response to changing socio-economic, political and cultural circumstances in order to gain maintain and propagate status.

There are problems with using Pareto's attributes in defining elites, specifically because the attributes are left open to interpretation.<sup>33</sup> For example he does not explain the type of strength to which he refers, whether it is strength of numbers, strength of belief, strength of character or strength of determination. From the evidence examined here, we might argue that the strength to which Pareto refers is social capital, particularly in terms of the development and use of networks. The period of guardianship supplied strength of support in advice, contacts or more simply, a number of contacts in order for individuals to further develop networks. The strength of determination to succeed in a given position played an important role, particularly after 1835, when potential elites may have stood for election on several occasions before constituents finally selected them. Strength was also provided through constant and regular interaction between individuals and group members in established networks that were used to maintain elite status.

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<sup>33</sup> Pareto, *The Rise and Fall of Elites*, p. 36.

The idea of being ‘most active’, which Pareto also associates with the elite, is evident in their business and political network ties as the ‘network maps’ of several individuals indicate. It was not possible to discern the time which these individuals expended in maintaining and developing networks; nevertheless by making strategic organisation and group network choices, it is likely that the elite may have actually reduced the overall time spent on some established and dense networks to the minimum of networking activity required for maintenance rather than extending a dense network. Time then can be invested in developing new strategic network ties in response to socio-economic and political change. However, this assumes that all organisation or group members pursued similar aims and made similar strategic choices.

Pareto’s assertion that the elite are also the most capable, whilst probably true, ignores the fact that there are times when individuals have reached elite positions through their inability to achieve specific goals – people are moved up, but sideways, away from power or influence and where there are little or no demands on their time and their activity levels are low. We can relate Pareto’s definition to all strata of society from the top to the bottom and with many different individuals, groups, organisations occupations and individuals that demonstrate the same attributes. However, the evidence suggests that the elite are those whom are the most successful in achieving their aims and that they have become so through the use of greater strength, capability and more activity within social capital networks.

There were, however, some limitations within the research. As the study stretched over historical distance from the 1770s to the 2000s, trust and reciprocity had to be inferred rather than demonstrated. Second, the reconstructed networks were limited to the archival material and there were undoubtedly a greater number of network contacts in operation than is evident from the records. Nevertheless, the research has produced an informed history of Northampton’s elite at different points in history and contributed towards our knowledge of how elites gained, maintained and propagated status through the use of social capital networks.

This thesis concentrated on one group of local elite - those with recognised legitimate power within the community - but only touched the surface of business and social elite within the community. The evidence showed that the political elite responded to



economic and political change and that they had altered the use and value of their networks over time. However, scholars have yet to explore to what extent different towns throughout Britain replicate this behaviour at similar periods of history and over time. In addition to comparative studies of other towns, there are two areas for further research. One is to conduct a study over a longer period of time rather than through a series of snap shots. Studying developments over a period of fifty years, for example, would provide a more nuanced picture of the continuum of networking and social capital formation. A second possibility would be to expand the definition of elite to include the local civil servants, potentially the hidden elite, and their use of social capital networks. This could contribute to a more informed historical understanding of political and social interactions that has the potential to inform wider interpretations of the ways in which political and economic change has influenced both the construction and use of networks. Just as importantly, such research may reveal what factors precipitate a given network lifespan and or which types of groups and organisational networks were more prone to short durational social capital gain and use.

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