

Cook, Edward M., Jr. *The Fathers of the Towns: Leadership and Community Structure in Eighteenth-Century New England*. The Johns Hopkins Studies in Historical and Political Science, Ninety-fourth Series, no. 2. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976. Pp. xviii, 273. Map, tables, appendixes, notes, bibliography, and index. \$12.95

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with European as well as North-American history. Such a seminar might review the field issue by issue, concluding that "X" is understood now but "Y" is not. Then the group might prepare an agenda for research, proposing projects that would fill the gaps in our knowledge. Not only would this approach help us to learn more quickly and avoid redundancy; it would help social science in a far more valuable way. Instead of insulating them from their fellow social scientists, such a symposium would display quantitative historians to their best advantage, as having some particular and very useful skills to offer. The rest of us, who are not quantitative historians, need to know about this. But the present book preaches to the already converted.

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Cook, Edward M., Jr. The Fathers of the Towns: Leadership and Community Structure in Eighteenth-Century New England. The Johns Hopkins Studies in Historical and Political Science, Ninety-fourth Series, no. 2. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976. Pp. xviii, 273. Map, tables, appendixes, notes, bibliography, and index. \$12.95.

Given the fine studies of individual New England towns which are already available, Professor Cook's Fathers of the Towns is both a logical development and a significant contribution. It is a logical scholarly step because Cook has gone beyond the anatomy of a single town to compare the patterns of leadership in seventy-four communities. It is significant because his research design, incorporating prosopographical methods and informed by central place theory, has enabled him to develop a convincing five-fold typology of towns.

This typology is defined by melding the results of a series of indices. As Cook points out, in the four colonies of New England, "the town was a territorial unit rather than a distinctly urban area." Reasoning that "property values would be highest in an urban area, and roughly proportional to the marketing of goods in rural areas" (pp. 78-79), Cook constructs a "commercialization index": a town's share of the colony's taxes divided by the area of the town. Two other indices measure the proportion of taxes paid by the wealthiest ten per cent and the proportion of prominent individuals in the town's population. Those individuals--members of famous families, college graduates, men who entered offices above the town level--reflected the "great tradition" as distinct from the "little tradition" internal to the towns. The latter was a milieu in which men progressed slowly to the office of selectmen, arriving there usually in their forties, after their "ability" had been thoroughly scrutinized by their fellow townsmen. The three

remaining indices focus upon the characteristics of such town leaders, measuring the size of the leadership pool and the leaders' tenure of office.

The typology of towns which Cook distills from these measurements is congruent with the basic tenets of central place theory. There was a hierarchy of towns. In major urban centers, such as Boston and Providence, specialization in office-holding characterized developed political structures manned largely by "new" men. Next, there were major county towns. One or two families dominated the narrow elites of these local marketing and service centers. Power was less concentrated in the third type of community, the secondary rural centers, and it was quite diffuse in the "small, self-contained farming villages." Cook finds this type "characterized by a consistently egalitarian social order" (p. 179). Finally, there were frontier towns. Unformed and changing rapidly, these communities represented an early stage of the first four types rather than a truly distinct category.

The typology of towns is central to Cook's study, but to that core he ties an exploration of the role of religion and of the influence of family. Membership in the Congregational Church was not a prerequisite for leadership. Equally significant, Cook observes that, as there were types of towns, there were degrees of deference. This observation, and Cook's reference to the anthropological concepts of the great and little traditions, leads the reader to anticipate that the full range of New England's political culture will unfold in The Fathers of the Towns, revealing, perhaps, varieties of paternalism. It does not. Although Cook might have digested his massive data by means of multiple regressions and eta correlations, the weakness of his fine study is not statistical. Rather it lies in the book's failure to tell us if and how the colonists perceived their position in the hierarchy of town types, thereby refining the egalitarian and consensual model developed in Michael Zuckerman's Peaceable Kingdoms: New England Towns in the Eighteenth Century (New York, 1970). We have instead a convincing but pale and external chart of power linkages on the town, county and provincial levels. The chart is nevertheless well wrought and demands that historians add the color of human thought and feeling.

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Button, James W. Black Violence: Political Impact of the 1960s Riots.  
Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978. Pp. xii, 179.  
Methodological appendices, index. \$16.00