

SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF BRITISH BUSINESSMEN, c1800-1960

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This paper is a first full-scale investigation of social characteristics of 381 leading British businessmen included in Dictionary of Scottish Business Biography through the creation of a systematic database. Two sets of characteristics are explored. One relates to personal circumstances of the businessman such as family tradition, place of birth and of business, social origins, formal education, apprenticeship, and occupational career; the other non-business aspects such as wealth and public activities. It appears that family tradition was the most basic and crucial in determining the other characteristics and that the continuing dominance of family members in management and their negative characteristics was evident.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Industrial Revolution, led by the cotton manufacturing industry since the mid-eighteenth century, changed Britain from an agrarian society into an industrial one, the first of its kind in the world; by the start of the Victorian era (1837-1901), the country had firmly established its world industrial leadership. As time went on, however, Britain gradually lagged behind the United States and Germany, and her earlier success and prosperity were replaced by relative failure and decline.

“For an economy to grow,” Checkland argues, “it must somehow be able to invoke an adequate supply of [three sources of initiative]”: the man of invention, the man of business who is prepared to organize and exploit inventions, and the

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supplier of capital. More importantly, he points out, the manner in which the major economic factors - invention, entrepreneurship, and capital - are mobilised by the men of initiative decides the character of an economy.¹ In Victorian times, Britain was not deficient in the sources of initiative: numerous inventors, industrialists, traders and bankers appeared to make the best use of business opportunities at home and abroad. The problem is, it has been suggested, that their manners of mobilising the major economic factors became less positive, less efficient, and less flexible as markets contracted and natural resources dwindled.²

Many specialist studies treated this issue by detailing economic circumstances and business performance in major industries and firms.³ On the other hand, efforts have been also, though to a much lesser degree, made to explore businessmen's social characteristics that may have contributed to the manners in which businessmen took economic initiative in their own particular ways at different times in different industries. The methodology preferred by most studies of businessmen's characteristics is the collective biographical approach or prosopography. Typically shown by Erickson (1959) on the steel and hosiery industries, it is to make quantitative analysis of a limited range of common characteristics among a large population of businessmen; in this approach, however, the question of how businessmen's characteristics relate to their business performance is not, and can not be, seriously considered.⁴

The collective biographical study of British businessmen had arisen great interest,⁵ but Erickson's study, published in 1959, long remained the classic account of British businessmen in terms of social origins, education, and occupational careers; British generalisations about these issues tended to be

¹ Checkland (1969), p.72.

² See Kim (1995).

³ See Goodall (1987) and Payne (1988).

⁴ The collective biographical method investigates the common background characteristics of a group of actors in history. First, it establishes a universe or a group of individuals; second, designs a set of characteristics which will be uniformly applied to individuals in a universe; and third, combines information on the characteristics in order to examine it for significant variables relating to behaviour or action and where possible to test the information for internal correlations between the characteristics.

The collective biographical method applies to both small and larger groups of individuals. In the former case, the technique usually employed is detailed case-studies which are mainly concerned with the conveying of historical reality. By contrast, in the latter case, focus is mainly on signalling overall trends by means of wider and more superficial questions, having recourse to statistical or theoretical underpinnings.

It has been observed that these two approaches tend to be at a distance from each other: one becomes more impressionistic by means of unsystematically sampled individual cases, while the other more scientific and quantitative. If the two approaches remain apart, this will spell the end of fruitful cross-fertilisation (Stone (1971), pp.46-8, 72).

⁵ Crouzet (1985), Fox (1970, 1974), Gourvish (1973), Honeyman (1977, 1982), Rubinstein (1986), and Stanworth and Giddens (1974). For details, see Kim (1997).

derived from that particular study. A major opportunity for a breakthrough in the subject came in the late 1980s when two dictionaries of business biographies - *Dictionary of Scottish Business Biography* (DSBB) for Scotland and *Dictionary of Business Biography* (DBB) for the rest of the UK - appeared.⁶ The dictionaries were the first comprehensive collections comprising major businessmen and their businesses in every part of the British economy, thereby offering 'a veritable feast of material on an individual, collective, and - above all - analytical and conceptual level'.⁷

While researchers had since utilized information contained in DSBB or DBB in their own ways,⁸ the editors and many reviewers of the dictionaries believed that the new, vast data should be able to contribute to a better understanding of British entrepreneurship, among others, by extending the knowledge revealed by Erickson and, therefore, that a comprehensive, collective biographical analysis of a larger group of businessmen was an immediate target.⁹

The present paper is the first full-scale investigation of social characteristics of the businessmen in DSBB through the creation of a systematic database; it could be regarded as an extension, in the Scottish context, of Erickson's work. Reasons for the choice of DSBB rather than DBB are several. Above all, while the businessmen in DBB have seriously been subject to research, those in DSBB have only in a preliminary fashion.¹⁰ The present study would, it is hoped, encourage an integrated analysis of businessmen in both dictionaries, which could lead to generalizations of social characteristics of 'British' businessmen. Equally important is that although entries in both dictionaries are successful entrepreneurs active in large or important businesses, those in DSBB (381 men) were, it has been admitted, selected relatively more systematically and representatively than those in DBB (some 1,000).¹¹ Also, the data in DSBB provide a comprehensive

⁶ Jeremy and Shaw (1986-8), and Slaven and Checkland (1986, 1990).

⁷ Mathias (1990), p.123.

⁸ For instance, Trainor (1989) used data on non-business activities in DBB in order to support his argument on the partial gentrification of Victorian businessmen; Payne (1992) made good use of DSBB to delineate a long-term trend of major labour-intensive staple industries.

⁹ Jeremy and Shaw (1986), 'Introduction'; Slaven and Checkland (1986), p.2. "[The two dictionaries] provide the basis for a new, much more systematic, widely-based comparative history of a prosopographical nature. With the 'population' of entries carefully structured, the opportunity of quantitative analysis of a new order is offered, and will undoubtedly be undertaken." (Hannah (1983), p.6).

¹⁰ Jeremy (1984), Shaw (1989) and Slaven (1990).

¹¹ Mathias (1990), p.123; Rubinstein (1988), pp.25-8. An arbitrary total of around 400 businessmen were initially set up. They were then roughly distributed among 19 industries, classified according to *Standard Industrial Classification* (London, 1958), in proportion to the average employment size of each industry on the basis of *Census of Scotland* in five benchmark years - 1861, 1881, 1901, 1921, and 1951. In each industry, leading companies were first identified, and leading businessmen were then selected; the final sample numbers 381 men (Slaven and Checkland (1986), pp.1-8). The Scottish businessman is defined as the person whose career and company was based in Scotland and who held a position of responsibility or influence, mainly at the board level. The British businessmen in

source for a better understanding of entrepreneurship in Scotland, a small economy with its own identity distinguishable from that of the rest of the UK (this is one of the reasons for the separate preparation of DSBB).

Two sets of social characteristics are explored in the light of Erickson's work and other similar studies using the prosopographical method. One set relates to what might be called personal circumstances of the businessman within which he is to implement his own particular entrepreneurship. It comprises 1) family connection in business, 2) place of birth and of business, 3) social status based on the father's occupation, and 4) formal education, apprenticeship, and occupational career (Section II). The other set of characteristics relates to non-business aspects of the businessman, which are frequently referred to in connection with the gentrification argument. It includes 1) wealth, which is said to be 'a trapping and a corollary of power and status'; and, 2) public activities in the field of politics and community, and title or honour, which is regarded as 'the final seal of approval in the transformation of wealth into status' (Section III).¹² These characteristics are, using a simple and basic statistical technique, analysed by sector (heavy, light, service), type of businessman (founder, inheritor, professional manager), and period (c1800-70, 1870-1900, c1900-60).¹³ The first period largely corresponds to the first stage of Scottish economic growth initiated by the cotton manufacturing industry; in the second, shipbuilding and other heavy industries gave the economy maturity and an international prominence; and, the third saw a decline of the heavy industry base of the economy.¹⁴ Also, the characteristics are assessed, though briefly and speculatively in the nature of the prosopographical approach, with reference to their contribution to business performance. Section IV concludes the preceding discussions.

II. SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS: (1) PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

1. Family Tradition

The dominance of family business has been frequently referred to as one of the most characteristic features of the British economy. The data assembled from DSBB allow us to make some assessment of the extent of family influence in the Scottish business community by means of two measures: the extent to which our businessmen depended on their families to go into business, namely the extent of appearance of founder, inheritor, or professional manager; and, the

Erickson (1959) were also board members or equivalents (Erickson (1959), p.5).

¹² Rubinstein (1981), pp.9, 169.

¹³ The simple statistical method like that employed here is flawed in that variables are, in principle, regarded as independent: relative importance of, and internal correlations between, them are not considered. Advanced techniques such as logit analysis are necessary for a collective biographical study to be more meaningful.

¹⁴ For details, see Campbell (1985) and Slaven (1975).

extent to which family members, of either of the three types of businessman, were involved in management.

As far as the first measure is concerned (Table 1), we find an overall feature that around four in ten Scottish businessmen (41%, 158 of 381 men) were founders, another four in ten (38%, 143) inheritors, and the remaining (21%, 80)

[Table 1] Type of businessman

	c1800-70				1870-1900				c1900-60				overall			
	L	H	S	A	L	H	S	A	L	H	S	A	L	H	S	A
(%)																
F	40	67	48	51	34	45	51	41	38	23	31	30	37	45	44	41
I	55	22	24	37	53	37	27	41	34	35	27	33	50	32	24	38
M	5	11	28	12	13	18	21	18	28	42	42	37	13	23	32	21
	T				T				T				T			
(Number of persons)																
F	21	30	12	63	25	23	17	65	12	10	8	30	58	63	37	158
I	29	10	6	45	39	19	7	65	11	15	7	33	79	44	20	143
M	3	5	7	15	9	9	9	27	9	18	11	38	21	32	27	80
OS	53	45	25	123	73	51	33	157	32	43	26	101	158	139	84	381

Notes: 1) L - light sector, H - heavy sector, S - service sector, A - average, T - total, OS - original sample size. The periods are those during which the businessmen began to join management.

2) In the period c1800-70, for instance, 21 of 53 businessmen active in the light sector (40%) were founders (F); 29 (55%) inheritors (I); and, three (5%) professional managers (M).

3) Original sample sizes in 19 industries and three sectors: Light sector (158 men) - textiles (44), clothing (11), leather and footwear (12), food, drink and tobacco (37), timber and furniture (8), construction (21), paper, printing and publishing (15), other manufactures (10); Heavy sector (139) - extractive industry (34), metals (26), engineering (27), shipbuilding (18), vehicles (10), chemicals (10), bricks, pottery, glass and cement (14); Service sector (84) - gas, electricity and water (4), transport and communication (33), distributive trades (33), banking, insurance and finance (14).

professional managers.¹⁵ More significant is the pattern of entry to business over time, which was broadly in line with the life cycle of the economy and its major industries. In the rapidly expanding phase of Scottish industrialization before 1870, our business leaders appear to have preferred founding new enterprises (51%, 63 of 123), particularly in the heavy industries that were growing most rapidly (67%, 30 of 45). As the economy became more mature between 1870 and 1900, however, the proportion of inheritors (41%, 65 of 157) rose to become equal to that of founders (41%, 65). This was largely because inheritors came to appear most frequently in the heavy industries (from 22% to

¹⁵ The proportion of inheritors in DBB is 33% (Shaw (1989), p.56) - 34% (Jeremy (1984), p.6).

37%), while the earlier high proportion of inheritors in the light trades remained nearly unchanged (from 55% to 53%). In the third period after 1900, when the Scottish economy remained stable and experienced relative decline, more of our business leaders were, for the first time, recruited from the ranks of professional managers (37%, 38 of 101) than either those of founders (30%, 30) or inheritors (33%, 33), who nevertheless together still represented nearly two-thirds of our sample. Professional managers penetrated the heavy (42%, 18 of 43) and service (42%, 11 of 26) sectors faster than the light sector (28%, 9 of 32).¹⁶

[Table 2] The extent of appearance of family members in management

	c1800-70				1870-1900				c1900-60				overall			
	L	H	S	A	L	H	S	A	L	H	S	A	L	H	S	A
(%)																
(a)	23	7	4	13	14	10	6	11	6	0	0	2	15	6	4	9
(b)	13	20	4	14	11	10	3	9	0	5	0	2	9	12	2	9
(c)	8	4	8	7	5	8	0	5	9	5	8	7	7	6	5	6
(d)	11	7	4	8	8	12	12	10	19	9	8	12	11	9	8	10
(e)	25	33	16	26	18	24	21	20	34	16	8	21	23	24	17	22
(f)	11	4	4	7	5	2	6	4	3	5	8	5	7	4	6	6
(g)	6	7	4	6	19	6	3	11	3	19	8	11	11	10	5	9
(a-g)	96	82	44	80	81	71	52	71	75	55	42	60	85	71	46	71
(h)	4	18	56	20	19	29	48	29	25	45	58	40	15	29	54	29
	T				T				T				T			
(No)																
(a)	12	3	1	16	10	5	2	17	2	0	0	2	24	8	3	35
(b)	7	9	1	17	8	5	1	14	0	2	0	2	15	16	2	33
(c)	4	2	2	8	4	4	0	8	3	2	2	7	11	8	4	23
(d)	6	3	1	10	6	6	4	16	6	4	2	12	18	13	7	38
(e)	13	15	4	32	13	12	7	32	11	7	3	21	37	34	14	85
(f)	6	2	1	9	4	1	2	7	1	2	2	5	11	5	5	21
(g)	3	3	1	7	14	3	1	18	1	8	2	11	18	14	4	36
(a-g)	51	37	11	99	59	36	17	112	24	25	11	70	134	98	39	271
(h)	2	8	14	24	14	15	16	45	8	18	15	41	24	41	45	110

Note: In the period c1800-70, for instance, 12 of 53 businessmen active in the light sector (23%; a) were involved in the management of their respective firms together with sons (or nephews), brothers (or cousins) and fathers (or uncles); seven (13%; b) together with sons and brothers; four (8%; c) together with sons and fathers; six (11%; d) together with brothers and fathers; 13 (25%; e) together with sons; six (11%; f) together with brothers; three (6%; g) together with fathers; and, two (4%; h) did not have any family members (including unknown cases) in the management of their respective firms.

¹⁶ The increasing dominance of professional managers also became apparent in the rest of the UK (Jeremy (1984), p.6; Shaw (1989), p.57).

By the second measure of family influence (Table 2), more than seven in ten Scottish business leaders (71%, 271 of 381) recruited their family members, later generations (sons or nephews) in particular, to the board. The inheritors (97%, 139 of 143) sought managerial abilities mainly from their family members, and the founders (69%, 109 of 158) and professional managers (30%, 24 of 80) also frequently preferred their family members. However, the extent of appearance of family members in management gradually decreased from 80% to 71% and then to 60% in the three periods concerned as the proportion of professional managers increased (12-18-37%; Table 1).¹⁷ In the light sector where inheritors were relatively abundant (55-53-34%; Table 1), family members were more frequently recruited to the board throughout the periods (96-81-75%). By contrast, the reverse was true of the service sector (44-52-42%) in which professional managers remained more dominant (28-21-42%; Table 1).

In all, the evidence from DSBB suggests that family tradition did persist in the Scottish economy throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It seems to confirm or support, at least partly, not only Payne's observation that the family firm was an integral part of British business for centuries after the Industrial Revolution, but also Chandler's categorisation of the British economy as a personal capitalism.¹⁸ The important thing is that family tradition was probably the most crucial variable in shaping the business environment in which the Scottish businessmen carried out their entrepreneurial activities: most of the other social characteristics to be examined below appear to have, to a great degree, depended on whether the businessmen was an inheritor or not.

2. Place of Birth and of Business

In her study of businessmen active in the British steel and hosiery industries, Erickson found the total in-breeding of Scottish steel men; likewise, Shaw identified the in-breeding phenomenon (90-95% born in Britain) with regard to a group of British businessmen.¹⁹ A similar picture was also true of our Scottish business leaders in DSBB: around nine in ten (85%, 322 of 381 men) were born in Scotland. Lanarkshire produced the largest number of businessmen (35%, 113); by city or town, Glasgow (17%, 65), the largest in Scotland, was the first.

More significantly, many of our business leaders carried out their businesses in the cities, or, more frequently, the counties, where they were born. As far as the 10 largest industrial cities are concerned, more than one-third of our business leaders were recruited from inside each of these birthplaces: the businessmen in Hawick, Paisley, Perth and Dundee were conspicuously natives of

¹⁷ 55-70% were observed with regard to British businessmen of the first half of the twentieth century (Hannah (1980), p.53).

¹⁸ Chandler (1990), p.12; Payne (1984), p.171. See also Hannah (1991), Kim (1998) and Supple (1991).

¹⁹ Erickson (1959), p.28; Shaw (1989), p.51.

their respective cities, while those in Leith, Edinburgh, Kilmarnock, Glasgow and Aberdeen were more frequently outsiders. When the 11 counties, in each of which more than 1% of the 381 businessmen were active, and their 350 businessmen are considered, the proportion of the businessmen whose birthplaces and places for business were the same becomes higher (49%, 171 of 350). It was well above the overall average in Roxburghshire, Aberdeenshire, Angus, or Fifeshire, while it was a little below in Lanarkshire (45%), the hub of the economy, where, however, it gradually increased from 34% to 49% and then to 52% over time.²⁰ On the whole, three patterns are observed concerning the relationship between birthplace and place for future business in the 11 counties. First, the businessmen tended increasingly to carry out their businesses where they were born as time went on. Second, the inheritors stayed more frequently in their home counties than the founders or professional managers did. And third, the businessmen in the service sector migrated more frequently than those in the other two sectors did.

In all, the Scottish business community appears to have displayed general reluctance to allowing not only an influx of managerial resources or talents from outside Scotland, but also flexible movement of such resources within Scotland. To that extent, the importance of migration as a source of capital and skill seems to have been less significant in Scotland than Erickson suggested for the British steel industry. An industrial center - city or county or even Scotland as a whole - achieved a degree of self-sufficiency of resources in a range of distinctive industries.

3. Social Origins

A consensus has been established that British industrialists came mainly from families of high or moderate social status throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.²¹ This established view is confirmed by the evidence from

²⁰ The proportion of the steel manufacturers born in the same county as their principal works gradually decreased from 67% in 1865 to 51% in 1905-25 and to 40% in 1953. By contrast, that of the Nottingham hosiery manufacturers born in Nottinghamshire remained more than 70% between the 1860s and 1950s (Erickson (1959), pp.25, 29-30, 109-10). On the other hand, around half (132) of 270 businessmen in DBB had their business headquarters in London (Jeremy (1984), pp.18-9).

²¹ More than 70% of the fathers of steel manufacturers had occupations in social class I at the time of their sons' birth between the 1860s and 1940s; the proportion fell substantially to 52% in the 1950s. However, when the manufacturers joined management, the proportion of the fathers in social class I increased to more than 80% again with the exception of the latest period (62%). A similar picture was also true of the hosiery manufacturers (Erickson (1959), pp.12, 93, 231). As far as the 270 businessmen in DBB are concerned, percentages of the fathers in social class I at their sons' birth were lower but still substantial: 56% before 1839, 51% in 1840-69, 53% in 1870-99, and 58% in 1900-20. Those in social class II were 33%, 39%, 28% and 35%, respectively (Jeremy (1984), p.9). Similar results were also suggested by Gourvish (1973, pp.293-7) and Shaw (1989, p.51); and, by Crouzet (1985, pp.50-1) and Honeyman (1982, pp.94-5, 97) with regard to the period of the Industrial Revolution. For more details, see Kim (1997), pp.223-6.

DSBB: nearly seven in ten Scottish businessmen had fathers whose social status was included in social class I or II either at their sons' birth (73%, 278 of 381 men) or at their sons' advancement to partnership or the board (67%, 257). The dominance of middle or upper class family backgrounds, or the low degree of upward mobility, was apparent throughout the periods or sectors (Table 3).

[Table 3] Social origins in terms of the father's occupation

	c1800-70				1870-1900				c1900-60				overall			
	L	H	S	A	L	H	S	A	L	H	S	A	L	H	S	A
(%)																
(a)	79	62	76	72	77	73	70	74	63	77	77	72	75	71	74	73
(b)	72	67	52	66	70	75	61	69	63	70	65	66	69	71	60	67
	T				T				T				T			
(No)																
(a)	42	28	19	89	56	37	23	116	20	33	20	73	118	98	62	278
(b)	38	30	13	81	51	38	20	109	20	30	17	67	109	98	50	257

Notes: 1) In the period c1800-70, for instance, 42 of 53 businessmen active in the light sector (79%; a) had fathers whose occupations were included in social class I or II at the businessmen's birth; and, 38 (72%; b) had fathers whose occupations were included in social class I or II when the businessmen began to join management.

- 2) Classification of social classes (occupations grouped roughly according to level of wealth). Class I: 1) gentlemen, landed proprietors; 2) fundholders, stockholders; 3) bankers, financiers; 4) merchants, goods factors; 5) manufacturers, coalmasters; 6) professions, military officers, top public officials. Class II: 7) agents, stewards, shipping masters, salesmen, brokers; 8) clerks, teachers, minor public officials, bookkeepers; 9) contractors, builders; 10) retailers, service trade operators. Class III: 11) foremen, supervisors; 12) shop assistants, warehousemen, postmen; 13) craftsmen, journeymen; 14) skilled manual workers. Class IV: 15) semiskilled manual workers; 16) unskilled manual workers; 17) apprentices (For more details, see Kim (1997), pp.227-9).

So, by the measure of social origin in terms of the father's social status, the Scottish business community, as with Britain as a whole, appears to have failed to make the best use of the society's reservoir of latent talents and, thus, to achieve a broader social base of recruitment of entrepreneurial ability. However, the upper social stratum, itself comprising a wide range of occupational groups, may not presumably have been deficient in a range of relevant managerial resources. Furthermore, it appears that the fathers of our business leaders might have provided fairly sufficiently their sons with business experience relevant to their sons' future undertakings: half (50%, 191 of 381) had worked in industries where their sons were to conduct businesses, although only two in ten (20%, 48

of 238) had as far as fathers of the founders and professional managers are concerned.²²

4. Education, Apprenticeship, and Occupational Career

In order to assess more accurately the extent of familiarity of the businessman with his future business, or what Erickson called 'the use made of the natural ability of able individuals',²³ three more measures are examined: formal education in academic institutions, which is a means of 'inducing a sense of discipline and peaceful order within which industrialization can thrive'²⁴; apprenticeship as the first practical training outside the educational system; and, the whole occupational career, as extended apprenticeship, experienced by the businessman before he joined partnership or the board.

The evidence from DSBB shows that more than seven in ten Scottish businessmen received primary schooling, and many of them were also educated in secondary schools and/or in higher educational institutions (colleges, universities, or equivalents); opportunities for education became increasingly available to our businessmen, inheritors in particular, as time went on. As far as higher education is concerned, we find that more than three in ten businessmen (31%, 117 of 381 men) received it, and more did so increasingly over time (27-25-44%).²⁵ Significantly, higher education was more frequently received by the businessmen in the heavy sector than by those in the light or service sector throughout the periods (Table 4). Not much information is available concerning what subjects our businessmen studied, so it is not possible to assess whether higher education was well-suited to business. It appears from the 30 known cases, which include engineering (16 men), arts (7), law (3), sciences (2), and medicine (2), that the businessmen in the heavy sector, shipbuilding and engineering in particular, largely took courses relevant to their future businesses, whereas those in the light and service sectors did not.

Apprenticeship (47%, 178 of 381) was a more important training course to our Scottish business leaders than higher education (31%, 117); this was the more so for the periods before 1900 (Tables 4 and 5). As with higher education, the businessmen in the heavy sector (53%) more frequently received apprenticeship

²² Around half (49%) of the fathers in the British distributive trades and 22% of those in the British steel industry had worked in the respective industries where their sons carried out businesses (Shaw (1989), p.49). By comparison, fewer fathers of our Scottish businessmen in distributive trades (30%) and more fathers in metals (35%) were involved in the respective trades where their sons had businesses.

²³ Erickson (1959), p.xvi.

²⁴ Sanderson (1983), p.9.

²⁵ The proportion of the British businessmen in DBB with secondary schooling increased from 50% before 1839 to 89% in 1900-20; that with higher education from 22% to 58% (Jeremy (1984), p.12). See also Shaw (1989), pp.52-3, 57-8.

than those in the light (44%) or service (40%) sector did. However, only around three in ten (27%, 104 of 381) received their apprenticeship in the industries where they were to carry out their businesses, although higher proportions are observed with regard to some industries - engineering and shipbuilding in the heavy sector, and textiles, food, drink and tobacco, and construction in the light sector. Moreover, it is difficult to assess the role of apprenticeship and its value for the businessman's future enterprise because not much information is available on what sort of training - commercial or technical - apprenticeship was, how long it was served, and how - formally or informally - it was served. What can be pointed out is that in the earlier years when formal education, higher education in particular, was less popular among our business leaders, apprenticeship was frequently served informally and for a rather long period, and it was all-round training with a mixture of several subjects, and that as our business leaders became increasingly educated in secondary and/or higher educational institutions over time, apprenticeship became more formal and more specialized.

[Table 4] Higher education

	c1800-70				1870-1900				c1900-60				overall			
	L	H	S	A	L	H	S	A	L	H	S	A	L	H	S	A
(%)																
	19	40	20	27	21	37	18	25	41	51	35	44	24	42	24	31
	T				T				T				T			
(No)																
	10	18	5	33	15	19	6	40	12	22	9	44	38	59	20	117

Note: In the period c1800-70, for instance, 10 of 53 businessmen active in the light sector (19%) undertook higher education.

More important than apprenticeship itself was probably the businessman's whole occupational career before his advancement to management. More than seven in ten (75%, 286 of 381) were involved, some time during their careers, in the industries where they were to join management. This was the case throughout the periods (68-81%) and the sectors (70-83%) (Table 5). By this standard, our Scottish businessmen appear to have made a sufficient use of their abilities to become familiar with their future businesses. A characteristic feature is, however, that our inheritors tended more frequently to receive lengthier formal education, which was usually followed by more irrelevant, simpler or shorter apprenticeship and/or occupational careers.

[Table 5] The extent to which the businessman's occupational career was achieved in the industry where he was to join management

	c1800-70				1870-1900				c1900-60				overall			
	L	H	S	A	L	H	S	A	L	H	S	A	L	H	S	A
(%)																
(a)	30	31	16	28	22	33	15	24	53	28	12	32	31	31	14	27
(a')	45	51	32	45	36	57	36	43	63	51	54	55	44	53	40	47
(b)	74	78	80	68	77	82	67	77	81	91	65	81	77	83	70	75
(c)	68	67	68	67	84	71	61	75	75	70	65	70	77	69	64	71
	T				T				T				T			
(No)																
(a)	16	14	4	34	16	17	5	38	17	12	3	32	49	43	12	104
(a')	24	23	8	55	26	29	12	67	20	22	14	56	70	74	34	178
(b)	39	35	20	84	56	42	22	120	26	39	17	82	121	116	59	286
(c)	36	30	17	83	61	36	20	117	24	30	17	71	121	96	54	271

Note: In the period c1800-70, for instance, 16 of 53 businessmen active in the light sector (30%; a) received apprenticeship in their respective industries where they were to join management; 24 (45%; a') apprenticeship in any industries; 39 (74%; b) achieved occupational careers, including apprenticeship, in their respective industries where they were to join management; and, 36 (68%; c) had occupations, just before they joined management, in their respective industries where they were to join management.

III. SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS: (2) NON-BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

1. Wealth at Death

It has been suggested that while making money is a very important target pursued by the businessman, money itself is not the ultimate goal but what Rubinstein called an invariable trapping, a corollary, of power or status.²⁶ The implication of this is that personal wealth and accompanying social prestige are a result of business success,²⁷ but they could also be a source of genteel life styles or gentrification that might cause a degree of severance from business. Which size of wealth possibly reflects success of the businessman and enables him to pursue social ends? Using Thompson's criterion of minimum wealth-100,000 pound sterling - for a businessman to be able to become gentrified,²⁸ around half of our Scottish businessmen (49%, 188 of 381 men) meet the criterion (Table 6). This was particularly true of the inheritors (78%), who more frequently left with more than the minimum wealth each at death than the

²⁶ Coleman (1973), p.96; Reader (1984), p.44; Rubinstein (1981), p.9.

²⁷ See Rubinstein (1983).

²⁸ Thompson (1990), p.50. See also Rubinstein (1992) and Thompson (1992).

founders (48%) or professional managers (40%) did.

[Table 6] Wealth at death

	c1800-70				1870-1900				c1900-60				overall			
	L	H	S	A	L	H	S	A	L	H	S	A	L	H	S	A
(%)																
(a)	26	40	56	37	48	37	45	44	38	35	35	36	39	37	45	40
(b)	42	40	28	38	40	33	39	38	16	40	27	29	35	37	32	35
(c)	13	7	16	11	3	16	9	8	9	5	8	7	8	9	11	9
(d)	11	7	0	7	4	8	6	6	3	0	0	1	6	5	2	5
	T				T				T				T			
(No)																
(a)	14	18	14	46	35	19	15	69	12	15	9	36	61	52	38	151
(b)	22	18	7	47	29	17	13	59	5	17	7	29	56	52	27	135
(c)	7	3	4	14	2	8	3	13	3	2	2	7	12	13	9	34
(d)	6	3	0	9	3	4	2	9	1	0	0	1	10	7	2	19

Note: In the period c1800-70, for instance, 14 of 53 businessmen active in the light sector (26%; a) left less than 100,000 pound sterling each at their death; 22 (42%; b) between 100,000 and 499,999 each; seven (13%; c) between 500,000 and 999,999 each; and, six (11%; d) one million or more each.

It must be, however, emphasized that the data on wealth provided by DSBB is simply total personal moveable estate at death. A greater value could be calculated from, for instance, land; and, as death duties were heavily levied after the turn of the twentieth century, a great part of wealth tended to be transferred to heirs in advance. It should be also pointed out that the personal property itself was not amassed exclusively by means of a particular business to which the businessman belonged, but through his portfolio behaviour, whatever business he belonged to.²⁹ In textiles, for instance, around half of the wealth (740,635 of 1,365,131 pound sterling) left by Archibald Coats of J.& P. Coats, cotton thread manufacturers in Paisley, came from the investment in his family firm, while the remaining half from investments in some 80 other businesses. By comparison, Adam L. Cochrane of A.L. Cochrane & Brothers, woolen manufacturers in Galashiels, invested only a small part of his wealth in his own business (14%, 16,932 of 117,026 pound sterling); instead, he amassed the majority of his wealth through investments in more than 100 other businesses.³⁰

²⁹ For discussions of problems arising from wealth, see Britton (1985), Collinge (1987), English (1984), Morgan and Moss (1986, 1989), and Rubinstein (1977).

³⁰ Inventory, Coats, SC 58/42/76,78; Cochrane, SC 63/34/34.

2. Public Activities

With reference to non-business activities of British businessmen, Payne points out that they are a significant indicator of gentrification: "... the very founders of highly successful firms displayed waning entrepreneurial energies as soon as sufficient wealth has been amassed to permit them to participate in local or national politics, to assume largely ceremonial public duties, to purchase and enjoy a country estate, and to indulge in manifold sporting activities".³¹

The data in DSBB provide some details on how frequently and diversely our Scottish business leaders were involved in non-business activities (Table 7). First,

[Table 7] Non-business activities

	c1800-70				1870-1900				c1900-60				overall			
	L	H	S	A	L	H	S	A	L	H	S	A	L	H	S	A
(%)																
(a)	21	27	8	20	14	14	21	15	31	33	31	32	20	24	20	21
(b)	53	56	44	52	42	47	55	46	44	42	35	41	46	48	45	47
(c)	23	44	16	29	34	16	39	29	28	33	35	32	29	30	43	30
(d)	26	27	28	27	23	18	45	26	25	51	46	42	25	31	40	30
	T				T				T				T			
(No)																
(a)	11	12	2	25	10	7	7	24	10	14	8	32	31	33	17	81
(b)	28	25	11	64	31	24	18	73	14	18	9	41	73	67	38	178
(c)	12	20	4	36	25	8	13	46	9	14	9	32	46	42	26	114
(d)	14	12	7	33	17	9	15	41	8	22	12	42	39	43	34	116

Note: In the period c1800-70, for instance, 11 of 53 businessmen active in the light sector (21%; a) were engaged in national politics; 28 (53%; b) in local governments; 12 (23%; c) in community activities; and, 14 (26%; d) received honours.

more than two in ten (21%, 81 of 381 men) appear to have joined national politics. Twenty-one businessmen were Members of Parliament (MP): the largest number of them came from textiles (6 men), followed by food, drink and tobacco (4), and extractive industries (3). Our business leaders were more frequently office-bearers in national political associations (37 men) and/or in governmental bodies (38). Regarding political affiliation, of the 128 known cases, Conservatives (39%) or Unionists (19%), and Liberals (33%) were dominant; nine (7%) were Liberal Unionists. Second, posts in local governments (47%, 178 of 381) were much more popular, particularly Justice of Peace (102), Deputy Lieutenant (59), and councilor (51). There were 26 provosts: the largest number of them came, as with the MPs, from textiles (5 men), followed by construction (4), and extractive industries (3). Third, educational institutions (61), hospitals

³¹ Payne (1984), pp.189-90.

(41), welfare institutions (28) or army (15) in local communities were also frequently served by our business leaders (30%, 114 of 381). And fourth, around one-third (30%, 116 of 381) were awarded one or more honours for their business and non-business activities. Seventy-one men became baronets, knights, or members of other degrees of nobility: the largest number of them were active in food, drink and tobacco (10 men), followed by transport and communication (7), and shipbuilding (6). Some received CBEs, and some were given the Freedom of city or town, or honours from foreign governments. On the other hand, 45 businessmen received honorary degrees, notably Doctor of Laws, mainly from Glasgow, Edinburgh, or St. Andrew's University: the largest number of them worked in textiles (6 men), followed by metals (5), and shipbuilding (5).

These non-business activities were not necessarily supported by wealth. While many of our business leaders with more than 100,000 pound sterling each (take Thompson's criterion) participated in public activities, those with less than the amount each were also frequently interested in the activities. In textiles, for instance, Henry Birkmyre, who left 435,883 pound sterling at his death, was deeply involved in the local government of Port Glasgow as his capacities as provost, councilor, and chairman of the School Board. On the other hand, James Finlayson with 92,577 pound sterling was a Liberal MP, and Deputy Lieutenant and Magistrate for Renfrew. Similarly, in shipbuilding, Peter Denny (190,979 pound sterling) sat on the Parliamentary Committee on the Design of Ships of War, and the Royal Commission on the Causes of Loss of Life and Property at Sea; he also founded a school for his community. By comparison, Thomas Bell (28,632) was the Deputy Controller of Dockyards and War Shipbuilding at the Admiralty, and the founder of the Clydebank Nursing Association. It seems likely that the businessman's own capacities were often more crucial in accepting public responsibilities than wealth itself.

It is not easy to assess whether, as Payne points out, non-business activities entailed any slackening of business energies, and if so, to what extent they did so. What is clear is that our business leaders were, in the nature of DSBB, successful businessmen and also were very active in non-business activities. Charles B. Renshaw in textiles, James Lithgow in shipbuilding, and Francis Nori-Miller in the finance industry, who amassed wealth ranging from 180,000 to 500,000 pound sterling each at their death, were active in national/local politics or community activities, and became baronets; despite these activities, they were key figures in their own respective industries. It appears that many of our Scottish businessmen maintained active involvement in business while diverting part of their energies from it; many of them lived their business lives in style, combining business with genteel life styles.

IV. CONCLUSION

The present paper attempted to construct a collective portrait of social characteristics of 381 Scottish businessmen included in DSBB. Two sets of characteristics were examined: one relates to personal circumstances of the businessman such as family tradition, place of birth and of business, social origins, formal education, apprenticeship, and occupational career; and, the other comprises characteristics relating to non-business aspects of the businessman such as wealth and public activities.

First of all, as the economy became more mature, the established family firms, managed largely by family members, increased their role in the economy. In the light sector, the appearance of inheritors in management was already evident in the first half of the nineteenth century. Even in the heavy industries where opportunities for new enterprises of significance were relatively more frequently generated until well into the second half of the nineteenth century, the new enterprises soon established themselves as influential family firms. In the service sector, on the other hand, the established joint-stock companies largely preferred professional managers from the early years of the nineteenth century onwards.

Second, the Scottish business community displayed the general reluctance to allowing flexible movement of resources and talents not only from outside Scotland but also within Scotland. Most of our business leaders were born in Scotland; the majority of them were born and carried out their businesses in the same counties, or even in the same cities or towns.

Third, the social base for recruitment of managerial talents remained rather limited in the Scottish business community throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Our founders rarely displayed tales of rags-to-riches. Furthermore, the increasing appearance of the inheritors and professional managers made the base for recruitment of managerial talents even narrower: the inheritors, by nature, came from families of high social status; and, the professional managers also appear to have come mainly from families of moderate or high social status.

Fourth, our Scottish businessmen were increasingly educated in higher educational institutions, in Scotland or elsewhere, as time went on. Significantly, the businessmen in the heavy industries frequently studied technology or science related subjects. However, our business leaders became familiar with their future businesses largely through on-the-job training, namely occupational experience in trades where they were to join management. In some of the heavy industries, apprenticeship was largely served in relevant trades and usually followed by extended business careers in these trades.

And fifth, many of our Scottish businessmen, particularly inheritors, appear to have amassed wealth sufficient to allow them to pursue genteel life styles. Not a few of them were active, in one way or another, in politics and/or community

activities, and were awarded one or more honours for their business and non-business activities.

In all, it appears that family tradition was the most basic and crucial in determining the characteristics of our Scottish businessmen. The other characteristics seem to have largely depended on the degree of family tradition, namely whether the businessman was the inheritor or not, or to what extent the businessman's family members were involved in management.

The fathers of our inheritors had high social status and enabled their sons to receive extensive formal education. As the inheritors were supposed to take over their family businesses, which had usually been carried out in particular towns or cities for generations, they did not necessarily feel the need for relevant apprenticeship or varied occupational careers. Also, the inheritors tended to succeed to their family businesses at an earlier age and left them at a later age with the result that they were involved in management for a long period.

By contrast, our founders' fathers did not have high social status to satisfactorily support their sons' formal education. Consequently, our founders generally had to leave school in order to find jobs at an earlier age, and this led to longer and varied occupational careers that were usually achieved in various trades in every part of the country. In this process, our founders not only cultivated business capacities but also amassed money for their future enterprises, which they usually embarked on in areas outside their birthplaces at a later age. Significantly however, once they had set themselves up as successful businessmen, our founders tended to display a strong interest in passing on their enterprises to later generations as the inheritors did.

By comparison, our professional managers came mainly from families with moderate or high social status and received extensive formal education. They joined management either through promotion within firms for which they had worked many years, or through recruitment to other firms. In either case, the professional managers became members of management at a later age and tended not to stay long in management. Significantly, as with the inheritors and founders, our professional managers also displayed an interest in the recruitment of their family members to management.

How and to what extent did these social characteristics affect entrepreneurship? Were they beneficial or detrimental to business performance of our Scottish business leaders? These questions are beyond the scope of the present paper and have yet to be fully answered. Only some thoughts are given here.

Above all, the continuing dominance of orthodox inheritors (the inheritors, and generations succeeding the founders) and quasi-inheritors (family members of the professional managers) in the Scottish business community may have possibly affected unfavourably the shaping of the business environment within which our business leaders took economic initiative. Certainly, family members played a crucial role in managing and financing their family businesses, particularly in the

early years of the businesses.³² It may well be the case that family members were often more concerned with and more responsible for their family businesses than non-family partners or directors were, and, therefore, that continuing dominance of family control might have produced more mature and more stable attitudes to the adoption of changing technology. However, it seems likely that the pervasiveness and persistence of family members and their negative characteristics may have gradually hindered the appearance of new business initiative.³³

The inheritors tended to have extensive education that was usually followed by less relevant, shorter or simpler apprenticeship and/or occupational careers before they joined management. Therefore, the inheritors may have cultivated their business capacities less effectively and insufficiently for future managerial tasks. Furthermore, our inheritors tended to become involved in management of their family businesses at an early age and retire at a later age with the result of a long involvement. This may have presumably checked the creation of new and flexible business initiative not only from the inheritors themselves but also from professional managerial talents, such initiative being increasingly required to deal with the rapidly changing economic environment. It is also possible that if, as Payne puts it, the very successful founders tended to pursue genteel life styles with a degree of ensuing waning business energies in their later years, this would be truer of their inheritors who amassed relatively more wealth.

These problems may have been cured at least in the short run by the increasing recruitment of professional managers who had more diverse business experience. Significantly, however, our professional managers frequently recruited their family members to management. In this respect Chandler's distinction between family tradition and professional managers may in practice have been blurred. If so, family tradition, by absorbing professional managers, was in a sense even more pervasive than Chandler assumed. The absence of inheritors might then not indicate the removal of family influence. In this way, family members and the negative social characteristics associated with them seem to have pervaded and persisted in the Scottish business community. Within this environment may have been gradually established 'industrial tradition in which the basis ingredients of economic progress, science and research were notably absent'.³⁴

Certainly, the social characteristics of the kind examined in the present paper are only some of a variety of factors that contribute to business performance. In

³² "Family firms have been imaginative in securing management succession by widening sources of recruitment, or by training family heirs. Where they have not kept up their entrepreneurial standards, moreover, the economic consequences have been less serious than the pessimists implied, because of the force of competition transferring capital resources to those better fitted to handle them." (Hannah (1982), p.4).

³³ "Upward-moving families became absorbed into a culture that regarded technology with condescension rather than admiration." (Coleman and MacLeod (1986), p.610). See also Aldcroft (1969), pp.165-6; Chandler (1980), pp.402-6.

³⁴ Aldcroft (1969), p.166.

particular, the characteristics relating to entry to business - social origins, education, apprenticeship, and occupational career - are shaped before the businessman steps into a managerial capacity, and, therefore, such characteristics can suggest only how well the businessman are prepared in advance for his later managerial tasks. In order for business performance to be assessed correctly, the social characteristics that are prepared in advance should be considered not only in conjunction with characteristics of any kind to be developed later, but also in conjunction with other factors like business circumstances both inside and outside individual firms. As far as family tradition is concerned, it may turn out that the negative characteristics relating to family tradition could possibly be offset if financial and managerial resources are flexibly and efficiently mobilized in response to the changing trade conditions. It seems that the specific nature of ownership and control structure could be more crucial for business success than the presence or absence of family influence itself. Then, if two aspects - how persistent and pervasive family tradition and related characteristics were, and how flexibly and efficiently ownership and control structure were established - are revealed and balanced with regard to as many individual firms as possible in the economy, the quality of Scottish/British entrepreneurship will be probably more properly assessed, and Chandler's verdict of personal capitalism will turn out to be more appealing or not.

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