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ABSTRACT


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Between 1563 and 1736 there were 3,212 accusations of witchcraft in Scotland. Existing accounts have identified ideology, conflict or anomie as causes of witch trials. However, for the Scottish case, the combination of the extreme temporal and geographical variation of witch trials on the one hand and the conspicuous over-representation of gentry on the other hand has hitherto remained a puzzle. My dissertation solves this puzzle by showing that witch trials emerge out of identity activated through the opening of opportunities for upward mobility among the gentry.

Using a remarkable dataset on all known witch trials in early modern Scotland, including prosecutor information, trial details and individual properties of accused witches, I show that the persecution of witches was an unintended consequence of state making. Identity and interest rather than ideology explain prosecutors’ actions.

Contrary to popular explanations and scholarly assumptions, my findings contradict the hypothesis that ecclesiastical actors drive witch-hunting. Minister biographies in selected parishes yield no evidence of zealously – on the part of ministers – in witch-hunting. The data support the alternative theory that secular actors propelled ministers into witch trials at times when their position in a parish was weak.
On the level of administrative units, witch-hunting is at the same time widely distributed over regions and extremely rare on the level of parishes. There are no theoretically meaningful patterns emerging on the parish, county, and region level. I overcome limitations resulting from the use of administrative units to analyze geographical patterns by using social network analysis tools that allow actors’ actions to draw boundaries around locations. Employment of this strategy makes it evident that the core areas of witch-hunting are near the center of political power in Edinburgh. Witch trials were most numerous where they are visible to the gatekeepers of office careers.

A small detail in the formal procedure of initiating witch trials made it possible for witch-hunting to serve as a strategy for gentry without prior access to jurisdiction to gather reputation at the political center. Therefore, persecution was not – as scholars of both witchcraft and statemaking have suggested – an attempt to control the population but a signal to people in power: Prosecutors used witch trials to communicate upstream rather than downstream.

Witch-hunting is thus an unintended outcome of statemaking, Upward mobility created identities who fed on witch trials in their strive for influence within new opportunity structures.
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For my parents
Introduction

Witch-hunting is a dark chapter in history. Little reliable data exists, but a total of 110,000 witch trials is probably a conservative estimate for Europe (Levack 1987:35). It may be the weirdness of witchcraft that fuels lay and scholarly interest up to the present day. For some part of the lay audience, witchcraft is a peculiar product of the Middle Ages. For contemporaries of early modern witch trials, witchcraft was not weird. It was a problem of social order. And they were not inhabitants of medieval Europe. They were contemporaries of Thomas Hobbes, Isaac Newton and John Locke. In the days of the last witch trials, Scotland was at the doorstep of the Enlightenment.

Witchcraft is also a curious research subject. For historians and sociologists alike, the study of witchcraft relates to broader questions. Witchcraft persecutions tell us something about early modern societies in Europe. They reflect the belief system of a time of great ideological and religious transformations. Witch trials are a vehicle to understanding social relationships in early modern communities. They make visible the anxieties in those communities, with all the individual and collective misfortunes life contained. Yet witchcraft cases also tell us about timeless mechanisms of accusation and explanation of unforeseen and inexplicable events. They owe this explanatory power to the fact that witchcraft is the representation of a much broader phenomenon: the secret.

These are intrinsically interesting questions to which I will return briefly at the end of my introduction. The puzzle that this dissertation seeks to resolve and offer an answer to is why witchcraft accusations in Scotland happened in great waves. My journey in answering this
question shifts the focus away from secrets and towards the emergence of a Scottish state administration. Still, my study contributes to the satellite field of secrecy by showing how these meanings of witchcraft linger latently in communities and only become salient through the actions of social order makers. Even such powerful ideas as the existence of witches can simmer in the background of social life for a long time until they are triggered and brought into the foreground.

My main contribution to the plethora of things we can learn by studying witchcraft relates to the creation of a functioning state administration and its impact on society. I explain on the one hand how a set of people developed the idea to hunt witches and why they realized it. On the other hand, I show how state making efforts – even during revolutionary regimes – trigger actions by a set of people in a structural position that makes them receptive to events that change positions within administrative structures. Within the array of societal reactions to state building, witch-hunting might be a small fish in big pond, but it nevertheless reveals something more general about the ways in which elites react to political change and the centralization of power.

Analytically, my explanation of witchcraft persecution consists of long-term changes in early modern society as the fundamental condition, state making as context and short-term opportunities as triggers. For the victims of persecution and their local communities, witch-hunts were a feedback loop of state making that was not - in the first place - directed towards them. Witch hunters were not religious zealots obsessed with cleansing society of outsiders at all costs. Witch-hunting identities were based on something different all together. They emerged in the course of state making among a set of people who had at its fingertips - for the first time in
history - the opportunity to drastically change its position in the social hierarchy of a society not quite ready yet to be modern but already grown out of feudalism.

*Witch-hunting* is situated in a remarkable time in European history. Reformation and religious conflicts, economic transitions that changed agricultural production, famine and inflation but also plague epidemics in unprecedented scope were rushing over Europe (Levack 1987; Rabb 1975). *Witchcraft beliefs* on the other hand are very old and have a fascinating history of their own. They consist of various intertwined folk beliefs that merged to generate what later became predominant themes of witchcraft such as night-flying, covens and transformation of bodies into animals (Ginzburg 1991). Witch-hunting - the more or less systematic persecution and search for a class of people who practice witchcraft often in league with an explicit satanic pact - emerged much later in two critical episodes. The late 15th century saw the first accumulation of trials that was both geographically wide enough and high enough in numbers to qualify as witch-hunting. After a period of comparative tranquility, witch-hunting resurfaced again throughout Europe in the late 16th and throughout the 17th centuries and this time the case numbers were drastically higher (Levack 1987).

By far the worst outbreaks of witch-hunting are to be found in the German-speaking areas of Europe with an estimated number of 30,000 witch trials in the period. On the other extreme lies the northern Netherlands with as little as about 150 witch trials (Levack 1987:182 f.). Scotland is an intermediate case when the size of the country is factored in. In general, witch-hunting on the British Isles is different than on the Continent. The idea of witchcraft as a threat to society and the idea that witches conspired with the devil arrived on the Island with a delay of about half a century (Levack 1987:190). Scotland was a latecomer in comparison to England and also
other parts of Europe. In continental Europe witch-hunting was over by 1650 (Ben-Yehuda 1980), about a decade before Scotland experienced its severest peak in 1661.

In Scotland, witch-hunting was introduced with the Witchcraft Act in 1563. The Act was in effect until it was repealed in 1736 (Goodare 2005b). According to the Survey of Scottish Witchcraft (Goodare et al. 2003), one of two core datasets used in my dissertation, there were 3,212 named individuals accused of witchcraft in Scotland, most of which were women.

**Witchcraft as the Persecution of Secrets**

Witchcraft is a form of persecution; it is the persecution of an organized secret. Persecution may not be a timeless phenomenon but it is both old and young enough to come close to timeless. Europe became host to a “persecuting society” sometime between the 10th and 13th centuries (Moore 2001). Witchcraft persecution differs from other types of persecution, but this difference is one of degree not kind. Persecution is always categorical in the sense that it creates a social category into which the victims of the persecution are sorted. For most types of persecution this supplies the phenomenon with some predictability. That is, the stereotypes that are attached to the social category delineate a group or segment of the population that is identifiable. When persecutors search for victims they follow the lead of those stereotypes (Goode 1994).

A category is a “set of actors who share a boundary distinguishing all of them from and relating all of them to at least one set of actors visibly excluded by that boundary” (Tilly 1998: 62). The reason we need the word “visibly” in this context is that social categories organize interaction because they allow individuals to impute identities and interests on an ad-hoc basis. In other

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1 For a detailed description of numbers, regions and socio-demographics see Martin and Martin and Miller (Martin and Miller 2008; Martin 2008)
words: individuals use social categories as classificatory systems for other individuals, most significantly for persons with whom they do not have relationships. As Tilly also argues, these boundaries can be more or less clear-cut, they can change and they can be more or less immediately visible.

Some witches had longstanding reputations as witches in their local communities (Larner 1981). Those individuals represented a category in the usual meaning of the term. But for the hundreds of people who were identified as witches in the wake of a witch-hunting wave, this traditional understanding of social categories does not fit conceptually. In this sense, witches belonged to a social category only after somebody explicitly assigned them to it. There are no overt physical signs, no pre-existing overlapping social categories or membership symbols on which one could base the judgment that someone was a witch. You couldn’t tell a witch if you saw one but once you knew somebody was a witch, this classification would make sense to you and would entail a clear boundary distinguishing witches from non-witches.

There is some probabilistic overlap with other categories. Women, for example, had far greater chances of being accused of witchcraft than men (Goodare 2002c). Such attributes may have made it easier for persecutors to credibly construct a case of witchcraft, but sociologically this is very different from persecutions that center on a pre-existing social category such as a religious or ethnic minority group. In the latter case, targets are first members of those categories and are persecuted as a consequence of that membership. In witch-hunts, individuals become part of a social category through the persecution itself\(^2\). ‘Witch’ is an empty category that can be filled with people.

\(^2\) Heretics probably come closest to witches in this sense (Moore 2001).
Not in terms of its content, but in terms of its membership, “witch” is a category with fluid boundaries. For other cases of persecution the boundaries drawn between victim and society may be fluid as well–at times very fluid. Moore (2001) for example argues that even among the victims of the persecution of lepers there were people who were not actually infected with the disease, despite the fact that leprosy is a highly definite category due to its physical symptoms.

Witches are on the extreme end of a category of persecution whose boundaries are fluid.

In the very early stages of the dissertation my project was about secrets. While secrets didn’t turn out to explain the core puzzle of my study–the occurrence and timing of waves of witchcraft persecution—they are still an essential part of early modern witch-hunting. It is the secret as a sociological mechanism that explains the content of witchcraft and it is the ‘organizedness’ of secrecy in a group (both with the devil and other witches) that explains historically the turn from witchcraft as an accepted part of community life to witchcraft as a target of persecution. I propose that the mechanism operating in witchcraft cases is one of exclusivity. Importantly, this mechanism has a social prerequisite without which it cannot take effect: The existence of a secret has to be visible and salient in order for it to create the kind of exclusivity that mobilizes emotions and legitimizes persecution.

A sociology of secrets seems a natural thing, yet secrets have received very little attention in the field. As early as 1969 Hazelrigg remarked on the scarcity of studies on secrets, but the sociology of secrets has not since evolved into anything remotely resembling a sociological subfield. It has been claimed that the reason is the declining quantitative and qualitative importance of secret societies since the 1900’s (Hazelrigg 1969:323). But one could also argue
in the opposite direction. With the world becoming more transparent, secrets might gain rather than lose importance.

There is work on secret societies. Vilhelm Aubert focused, in his pioneering essay, on the organizational aspects of secret societies (Aubert 1965). Erickson showed that secret societies, especially when they are at risk, have socially limited possibilities for expansion as recruitment is conditional on trust, which in turn presupposes prior relationships to potential new members (Erickson 1981). Using simulations with random graph models based on the idea that communication between members of a hidden group differs from non-secretive communication patterns, it has been found that the probability of detecting secret groups through their communication (for example, in internet forums and chat rooms) is dependent on background communications – that is, how non-members communicate in the same space (Baumes et al. 2004). There is also very interesting work being done on how people tell secrets selectively to other people depending on their attitudes and how this shapes divergent perceptions of individuals about their own networks (Cowan 2012)\(^3\). Richardson has found that mutual secret holding perpetuates social relationships among couples where the man is married to another woman (Richardson 1988). In this sense, secrets create spaces for “forbidden triads” (Granovetter 1973:1363) to survive.

Witchcraft, as it came to be defined in the early modern period, is above all else a matter of secrets. Witches became a problem of society-wide scope at the moment when witchcraft beliefs were matched with the social mechanism of the secret. The first time we can observe in Europe the transcendence from witchcraft as a belief in magic into a phenomenon with an imagined

\(^3\) I’m grateful to Sarah Cowan for sharing her work.
social structure is through the work of Jacquier who introduced the idea that witches are organized (Ben-Yehuda 1980:10). “It was to deal with the frightening threat of secret, conspiratorial witchcraft that the authorities took the initiatives that we recognize as due to panic” (Goodare 2002c:137).

Witchcraft in any period and place is connected to the concept of the secret. Nadel for example found that witchcraft beliefs among the Nupe in Africa owe their persistence to the unknown and mysterious elements they contain (Nadel 1954). But there needs to be more than this to multiply occasional micro-level sparks of witchcraft accusations connected to more or less randomly occurring, often exogenously generated instances of misfortune, envy, quarrel and blame and, once multiplied, to turn witchcraft into a phenomenon that is socially patterned.

It is their ‘organizedness’ that makes secrets such powerful elements in the social world. Examples of this can found both in real secret societies and in imagined conspiracies. Famously, secret societies were treated by Simmel (1906) and his work sparked short-lived scholarly interest in the subject in the 1960s and 1980s (Erickson 1981; Hawthorn 1956; Hazelrigg 1969). But there are less mythical examples as well. Heretics, for example, were tokens and reference points for the church to draw the line between inside and outside, thus playing an important role in the subsistence of the church as an institutional system (Kurtz 1983). But persecution becomes especially powerful when it creates a narrative of an organized secret. Moore, for example, reports the social construction of the threat of a secretly organized church of Manichees that became a powerful myth in the 12th century when the belief among Catholics was widespread that a secret organization had operated in the background for ages with a view to destroy the Christian church. Cohn shows that only the idea of the witches’ sabbats, those
secret meetings where witches met with each other and the devil, really set off witch persecutions. He shows that, before the 16th century, elites tended to believe that popular accounts of nocturnal flying were mere imagination. When the dogmatic turn came and the existence of such nightly journeys became consensus among the educated, witchcraft entered the center stage of elites’ efforts to impose control: “for without such journeyings, no witches sabbats” (Cohn 1975:180).

Secrets first and foremost produce exclusivity. Holding a secret means to possess something that others do not. This is a timeless mechanism even in its concrete manifestation in the case of magic. Witches possessed something exclusive back then and even today in modern pagan practices (Luhrmann 1989). Simmel identified this property of the secret as a tool that groups aiming for exclusivity use to draw boundaries. In this reasoning, Simmel was aware that he had crystallized - from the complexity of individual and group relationships - a general mechanism that operates in social contexts as diverse as schools, ancient Sparta and in aristocracies of all kinds: “exclusion of everything outside the group is a general formal sociological fact, which merely uses secrecy as a more pointed technique” (Wolff 1950:432).

The meaning of exclusivity cannot be better described than by quoting Simmel on school children “it can be observed how small, closely integrated cliques of classmates think of themselves as the elite over the other who are not organized – merely because of the formal fact of constituting a special group; and the others, through their hostility and envy, involuntarily acknowledge this higher value” (Wolff 1950:365).
From this one can conclude two things. Secrets are powerful because they create exclusivity and exclusivity leads to reactions of envy, respect and hostility on the outside. It’s only logical then that secrets are entirely powerless without a public because the public constitutes exclusivity in the first place. What may sound like a paradoxical statement at first is the most important aspect of the social function of secrecy. The secret has to have two seemingly antagonistic properties at once: It needs to be hidden and visible at the same time.

Here is the key to witch-hunting in early modern Scotland: witches were persecuted when someone made their secrets visible. Visibility of both their secret groupness and the secret means they used to inflict harm on others needed to be made salient. Once they were salient, the emotions that exclusivity, according to Simmel, creates operated towards the legitimacy of witch-trials. My dissertation will answer the question of who made these secrets visible and why.

I show that the salience of the threat of secrets is dependent on a social structure that motivates a class of people to see the secret. Insofar historical correlation is concerned my study confirms what Hazelrigg stated as one of his nine propositions for a new sociology of the secret society based on Simmel’s work: “The stronger the tendency in the larger society toward political centralization, the more violent the reaction of the larger society to any secret societies that exist within it” (Hazelrigg 1969:329). Crucially, however, in the case of witches as members of imagined secret societies, witch-hunting did not become more zealous because satanic conspiracy was interpreted as oppositional to the state. Rather, witch-hunting became more
zealous because it was a constructed breach against social order that offered a space for social order makers to get involved.

**Structure of the Dissertation**

This dissertation solves a historical puzzle: What are the mechanisms that led to the trials and executions of witches in Early Modern Scotland? Witch-hunting in Scotland has two conspicuous macro properties: One is the disproportionate engagement of gentry. The second is great temporal variation. Witch-hunting peaks dramatically in some years, yet in between those peaks are long spells with next to no cases. In light of these first observations, I’m looking for a social mechanism that triggers members of the gentry simultaneously into action against witches. The likely candidates for such an impulse are events that happen on a national level. I show that, in the case at hand, change in the political system caused waves of witch-hunting. At the same time, this mechanism has to explain not only the waves but also the salience of gentry in witch-hunting. I argue that witch-hunters are those among the gentry who – being excluded from landed privilege – saw a window of opportunity opening through the emergence of office vacancies. Due to an administrative detail in the formal means of prosecuting witches, witch-trials are a rare opportunity for a person with no prior office to gain a reputation as a social order maker. Unlike other criminals, witches are tried in commissions that circumvent traditional court hierarchies. As a result, these commissions bring witch-hunters in direct contact with the political elite in Edinburgh.

The actors at the center of the phenomenon to be studied are therefore witch-hunters – prosecutors of the crime of witchcraft. Their actions are oriented towards proving to the political
leadership of the country (and possibly to themselves as well) that they are able to enforce order and discipline. The social structure that enables and constricts these actions emerges on two levels: locally, traditional feudal patron-client relations lose importance (Mitchison 1983; Wormald 1985, 1988). This takes place in concert with the salience of a class of gentry who search for new means to realize their life chances (Wormald 1988). Nationally, success at state centralization – which is itself closely related to the dismantling of feudal ties – provides an opportunity structure of office posts through which gentry experience upward social mobility (Goodare 2004). Actors’ identities and pursuits of life chances are in principle constant; as are occasional opportunities for upward mobility. Crucially, however, windows of opportunity, defined as moments in which opportunities are so manifold that they signal the dawn of a new era in government, are not constant but rather arise sporadically when political leadership changes, new offices are instituted or revolutions and upheavals disqualify large numbers of office holders in their aftermath.

These macro level changes can hit localities immediately as shock effects when, due to ideological change, a multitude of offices are vacated at once. Alternatively, when transitions in government are smooth, localities react with some delay, which I argue is due to percolation effects.

The chapters proceed as follows: In Chapter 1 I review explanations for witchcraft in the existing historical and sociological literatures on the subject. While there is a lot to be learned from these studies, they cannot satisfyingly explain the above described macro properties of the Scottish case.
In Chapter 2, I first follow the lead in common sense and scholarly theory that witch-hunts were subject to church zeallessness in establishing a godly Calvinist society. For this chapter, I present data on minister biographies in selected areas, which were collected with a view to explain why ministers pursue cases of witchcraft. To my surprise, my investigations did not yield any correlations that would explain why the parishioner of one minister is more likely to be accused of witchcraft than the parishioner of another. I will present this negative evidence first and then conclude by offering a theory and some strong supporting empirical evidence that explain why ministers had no reason to engage in witch-hunting.

Chapter 3 decomposes global waves of witch-hunting into their constitutive parts. I encounter an obstacle identified by previous scholars of the Scottish case (Martin 2008), namely that geographical categories - regardless of their level - are not helpful in making sense of witch-hunting waves. By tracking prosecutor movements through parishes, I allow for action to draw the boundaries around witch-hunting localities. With this approach, we can isolate a core cluster of local parishes that is in the direct vicinity of the Scottish capital. From this I conclude that witch-hunting might relate to events happening at the center of power. I identify these events in the subsequent chapter.

In Chapter 4, I show that waves of witch-hunting happened when, due to changes in the country’s leadership, people expected vacancies in the Scottish state administration. I will then show that at the core of the largest witch-hunting wave in Scottish history (1661-62) one finds people who were appointed as Justices of the Peace shortly after their witch-hunting activities. In a cooperation network of prosecutors, these future Justices of the Peace can be found in most components and thus in most local contexts of witch-hunting. I consider and rule out a couple of
alternative explanations. First, while ideology might very well be the baseline for every form of persecution, ideology did not cause witch-hunting in Scotland. Second, as much as witches are not a product of ideology, they are also not a consequence of scapegoating effects following plague and famine. Third, my data casts considerable doubt on the hypothesis that witches were isolated outsiders of their communities.

**The Historical Context in a nutshell**

The 16th and 17th centuries were times of great transformations. Europe was in a state of crisis (Rabb 1975; Trevor-Roper 1959). Revolutions occurred that had deeper impacts on social structure than ever before (Trevor-Roper 1959). The universal growth of urban areas in the 16th century had changed the social landscape of Europe (Vries 1984). Global trade brought new possibilities. As people tried to take advantage of these possibilities, new markets were emerging through patterns of exchange (Bearman and Erikson 2006). Large urban cores evolved as trading hubs with immense opportunities, while other areas began to stagnate in the 17th century (Vries 1984). Most importantly, it was a time of religiously coded struggles throughout Europe. For reasons connected to these transformations, it is also the age of miracles (Parigi 2012) and witches.

**Reformation**

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4 This will necessarily be a brief sketch of Scottish history in which I retell the consensual narrative about the chronology of historical events. Excellent introductions to Scottish history, on which my narrative is largely based (unless otherwise indicated), can be found in Wormald (1991, 2005), Mitchison (1990, 2002) and Smout (1969).

5 For a critical assessment of the crisis hypothesis see (Lee 1984)
Even though, empirically, witch-hunting took off later, the starting point for any historical contextualization of witchcraft in Scotland should be the Reformation. It sets the stage for the factional conflicts between supporters of Episcopacy and Presbyterianism that will be elaborated in more detail in Chapter 2. The Scottish Reformation is a fascinating subject that cannot receive its due treatment within the scope of this dissertation. It was comparatively bloodless and rather smooth with gradual changes in the shift of factions that would ultimately lead to the Reformation Parliament in 1560 (Kirk 1989). Mary Stuart was still in France when the Parliament met. When she returned to Scotland one year later she proclaimed that the official religion in Scotland would be Protestantism until otherwise decided (Goodare 2005a). Yet, Mary remained a Catholic and it has been argued that the Protestants of Scotland reached a truly secure position only after her abdication in 1567 and the consequent succession of the infant king James VI to the throne (Smout 1969:57). The first witch trial in Scottish history occurs a year after his succession.

The struggles that would occupy most of the political scene in the 17th century are born in this time as well. At first, the Scottish Reformation was moderate in that its first and foremost concern was the establishment of a functioning church, especially on the parish level. With the return of the Calvinist theologian Andrew Melville and the theological ideas he brought from Geneva, a more radical side to Scottish Calvinism was introduced that laid the corner stone of

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7 Scotland had an array of kings who succeeded to the throne at too young an age to rule. Scholars have claimed this is the reason the nobility was stronger and the state less centralized compared to other countries (Wormald 1988).
the struggle between Episcopal\(^8\) and Presbyterian ideas of church government (Smout 1969:59). Of course, the Reformation and its effect on society cannot be reduced to the relationship between church and state, although this was - for a long time - a preferred analytical strategy of Scottish historians (for a historiography see MacInnes 1994). Chapter 2 will open up this topic in broader terms.

The act against witchcraft was passed by parliament in 1563 only two years after the Reformation. As Goodare shows, its authors were to a large extent clergy, who were, however, inexperienced in the practice of leading congregations. Hence, the act clearly exhibited signs of ignorance about the ways local communities conceptualized witchcraft. For one, the act explicitly stipulated punishment for people who had consulted with witches alongside those who actually used witchcraft. Yet, consultation with witches was rarely a part of the repertoire of Scottish parish communities, which can be seen in the almost complete absence of such charges throughout the century and a half of the act’s enforcement (Goodare 2005b). Second, the act did not mention *maleficium* – that is, the use of witchcraft to inflict harm. It also made no mention of a pact with the devil. Yet these elements became the core of later witchcraft accusations (Goodare 2005b).

In this act, the trial and punishment of witches was explicitly reserved for secular authorities. The project of establishing a godly society was designed to be a collaborative project between church and state (ibd). But at the same time, the Reformers had a clear idea about the separation of church and state. The Second Book of Discipline – the theoretical groundwork of the

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\(^8\) In simple terms, an Episcopal church is governed by bishops (In Scotland those bishops were appointed by the Crown) whereas Presbyterian Church government is organized by a hierarchy of courts as determined by the church.
Reformation – ascribed the right to enforce discipline in all ecclesiastical matters to the church: “Notwithstanding, as the ministeris and uthers of the ecclesiasticall estait ar subject to the magistrate civill, so aught the person of the magistrat be subject to the kirk spiritually, and in ecclesiasticall government”\(^9\)

Local church courts, the kirk sessions, turned out to be very active in enforcing discipline within their areas of jurisdiction, which included moral offenses such as adultery, fornication, breaching of the sabbath and verbal offenses (Graham 1996; Mitchison and Leneman 1990; Todd 2002). But at the same time, the sessions appear to have been hesitant to follow cases outside their jurisdictions. Witchcraft was one these crimes (Todd 2002; McCallum 2008). As I will show in Chapter 2, the ideal of collaboration between church and state in creating a godly society was limited to rhetoric when it came to witchcraft cases.

It might seem that witchcraft clearly does not fall into the category of crimes within the scope of the secular powers despite the fact that the witchcraft act defines it as such. While pioneers of the Reformation insisted on their right and duty to impose godly discipline, they did not or were not able to encroach upon the state’s rights over capital punishment. In the First Book of Discipline, which was a proposal made by the ministry about the design of the reformed church (Donaldson 1970:126), the Reformers made clear which jurisdictions were to lay within the scope of the church. The death penalty was to remain a part of the jurisdiction of secular authorities. The types of offence that were to be tried by the kirk sessions were clearly restricted and defined:

“As that no commonwealth can flourish or long endure without good laws, and sharp execution of the same, so neither can the church of God be brought to purity,

neither yet be retained in the same without the order of ecclesiastical discipline, which stands in reproving and correcting of the faults which the civil sword either doth neglect, or [may] not punish. blasphemy, adultery, murder, perjury, and other crimes capital, worthy of death, ought not properly to fall under [the] censure of the church; because all such open transgressors of God's laws ought to be taken away by the civil sword. But drunkenness, excess be it in apparel, or be it in eating and drinking, fornication, oppression of the poor by exactions, deceiving of them in buying or selling by wrong mete or measure, wanton words and licentious living tending to slander, do properly appertain to the church of God, to punish the same as God's word commands."\(^{10}\)

Ministers were not allowed to judge in matters of witchcraft.

**The Rule of James VI**

The first visible growth of witch trials happened in the reign of James VI (1566-1625). I argue in this dissertation that witch-hunts in Scotland were not the result of royal initiative. Alas, the first instance of witch-hunting, albeit not a great wave of persecution, *appears* to be an exception to this rule\(^{11}\). In 1591, Jonet Straton found herself faced by no lesser person than the Scottish king in an interrogation about her alleged witchcraft. She was accused of having conspired with other witches in endangering the king’s and his new wife’s return from Denmark through storm and nasty weather on sea. Jonet Straton was not the only one who got caught up in this initial and exceptional outbreak of witch-hunting that came to be known as the North Berwick witch trials (Normand and Roberts 2000). Those trials are a thrilling tale about a witch conspiracy. Allegedly, the North Berwick witches made it impossible for Anne of Denmark, whom James had married by proxy, to sail from Denmark to Scotland. James, faced with the prospect of delaying the marriage for an entire season, decided to take the initiative and to make

\(^{10}\) Knox’s history reprinted in 1831 – wording in brackets by author (Knox 1831:505 f.)

\(^{11}\) I will show in Chapter 4 why my investigation of the trials starts after 1600.
the voyage to Denmark himself. But the witches delayed this voyage as well through storm and severe weather\textsuperscript{12}. While this trial episode is in some ways obviously linked to the monarch – not least because he occurs as prosecutor himself - there are also indications that James was overwhelmed by the way the witch-hunt developed and became increasingly skeptical (Wormald 2003). However, even if James did not anticipate or wish for the hunt to become that large, it is clear that this particular instance attracted royal attention more than any other case.

I also argue in this dissertation that ministers did not actively or willingly engage in witch-hunting and, again, I start this history with an exception. A great part in letting the North Berwick witch trials escalate is ascribed to the minister James Carmichael, who is also believed to have crafted a document called Newes from Scotland (Normand and Roberts 2000:4), one of the few surviving (or ever produced?)\textsuperscript{13} pieces written by the hand of a Scottish minister against witches. He retells the story of the traitorous witches and concludes that the almighty had thankfully rescued James and his wife and protected them from the perils of such devilish practices. He did so because “it is well known that the King is the child and servant of God, and they but servants to the devil”\textsuperscript{14} (Fian 1816:29).

I also argue – in league with all scholars of Scottish witchcraft - that witch trials were not a great concern of the nobility, not as prosecutors and surely not as accused witches. Yet, also in this respect the prelude to witch-hunting offers an unusual case. Jonet had declared in her trial that

\textsuperscript{12} All surviving documents of the North Berwick witch trials have been surveyed and interpreted in Normands and Roberts (2000). My tale is based on their account.

\textsuperscript{13} For details see Chapter 2

\textsuperscript{14} In all parts of this dissertation, I have taken the liberty to use and spell words from the original in modern writing for better readability. I have however left the grammar and choice of words as in the original to preserve its character.
she used witchcraft against the king following a command of the Earl of Bothwell – one of James’ number one troublemakers. Bothwell was interrogated and imprisoned but fled successfully and after many failed attempts to clear his name, reverted to the tactic of capturing the king by force. As Wormald notes: “Kidnapping the king was an old Scottish habit” (Wormald 2005:268). He entered Hollyrood castle with some of his allies but failed and had to flee. Only a short time later, in 1593, Bothwell tried again to capture the king only this time he was successful. He forced the king to restore his estates and to allow for a trial for witchcraft that would ascertain Bothwell’s innocence and re-establish his good name. This of course happened. The trial was led by members of the aristocracy (Normand and Roberts 2000). Scottish nobles were headstrong and had little natural inclination towards obedience, or so it seems.

The early years of James’ reign, before the Union of the Crowns in 1603 when James succeeded to the English throne, witnessed another small-scale witch-hunt in 1597. As I will argue in Chapter 4, both of these early hunts fall out of the scheme of the argument developed in this dissertation because they likely operated under different formal conditions and they were small. It is still noteworthy that this witch-hunt happened after a riot led by Presbyterians. This riot was subdued in 1596. Goodare has argued that the witch-hunt was a way to reconsolidate Presbyterian and royal factions because witch-hunting addressed their mutually held values (Goodare 2002d). Though this small hunt is not part of my investigation, we might see here the first signs of a correlation between the aftermath of political change and the occurrence of witch-hunting at the return of stability.
James’ reign was one of relative stability. James successfully maintained networks of loyal nobles and their kinsmen and he also managed to create a web of supporters from outside the aristocracy. He thus was successful in centralizing power when one disregards occasional kidnappings and the failure to impose new practices of worship upon the church in the Five Articles of Perth (to which I will turn in Chapter 2).

Most importantly, and to that I will turn in Chapter 4, James had “built up a loyal and efficient corps of officials composed mostly of younger sons and members of cadet branches of the aristocracy, lairds, and Edinburgh lawyers, whom he rewarded with pieces of the church property which had been annexed to the crown in 1587” (Lee 1980:316). It is a logical consequence that the holders of these lands would over time accumulate into a number of people loyal to the monarch and likely to support his policies (Wormald 2005:125). This would be true not only because they were rewarded but also because their entire livelihood would depend on those lands. In this respect, their situation differed largely from the economic position of longstanding magnates and noble families (Goodare 1993).

**Accession of Charles I and Covenant Revolution**

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15 The history of the reign of James VI reminds me of one of Sewell’s thoughts on the duality of social structure (Sewell 1992) and of the idea that social structure holds self-repairing capacities (Sewell 1996). James VI was able to introduce policies that could have led to revolt but did not. Smaller ruptures on one end were repaired through a conscious manipulation of structure on the other end.

16 There is some debate among historians about whether or not the comparative stability of the time despite the successes in the centralization of power can be attributed to James’ abilities as a ruler (Lee 1985; MacInnes 1991; Stevenson 1973) or if the instability that would come after his reign had more to do with long-standing shifts due to state making (Goodare 1993).
After James’ death in 1625, his son Charles I succeeded him to the throne. He led Scotland into a time of turmoil and into the Covenant Revolution in 1638. Jenny Wormald, who is probably one of the most vivid narrators of Scottish history, starts her introduction to Charles’ reign with: “Charles I was a disaster, and not only in Scotland” (Wormald 2005:132). Of course, he was also a disaster to himself. His reign ended with his execution by the English under Oliver Cromwell in 1649. Three witch-hunting waves occur between Charles’ succession and his execution. These happened in 1628-30, 1643-44 and 1649.

What led to this revolution underneath the surface of religious ideology has received considerable attention among historians. Some, focusing more on political narrative and royal decision making (Lee 1980, 1985; MacInnes 1991; Stevenson 1973, 1982, 2011), have attributed the revolution to the formation of discontent among elites with royal policies, while others have highlighted the problem of communication that existed between the court in London and the Scottish elite (Kishlansky 2005; Macdonald 2011). From a more socio-structural perspective it can be argued that the revolution has older roots in an array of changes brought about by the centralization of power (Goodare 1993) and that Scotland’s elite revolted because they became marginalized through the move of the court to London (Mitchison 1997). The impetus for open resistance against the king and his policies was the introduction of a new Anglican style prayer book in 1637. Insurgencies started in Edinburgh and radiated out into the lowlands. In this context of political unrest, a document was drafted in 1638 called the Covenant, which was signed by a great number of Scots. Copies were sent to every parish thus giving this movement nationwide scope. Taken by its word, the Covenant was a re-establishment of the Presbyterian Church System in the form of a treaty with - not in opposition
to the king. But of course, given that its content included the abolishment of bishops (Stevenson 1973), and therefore the eradication of one of the most important civil servants available to early modern Scottish kings (Goodare 1993), and also included resistance to the very policies that Charles had envisioned for the Scottish Church, the Covenant was a revolutionary document that could not possibly be signed by Charles (Stevenson 1973). The Scots were heading for times of great turmoil and a complete unraveling of their political system, including civil war both within Scotland and in England as well as the abolishment of monarchy altogether through the rule of Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector.

Charles tried to regain control through military means. The first Bishop War started in 1639 and brought victory to the Scots. Finalizing the process towards revolution, the Scottish Parliament met against the will of its monarch and passed an array of acts determined to establish control over the country. Confident of their military strength, the Scots invaded England. In this stream of events, the Civil War in England was born. Charles was forced to summon the English Parliament in order to get funding for his military campaigns. The covenanted Scots allied with the English Parliament in a contract called the Solemn League and Covenant in 1643. In this contract the English made a promise they would never keep. England was to join Scotland as a covenanted and Presbyterian system and in return Scotland would fuel the war with soldiers and weapons. In 1643-44 a witch-hunting wave occurs.

Charles, now facing armies of both of his kingdoms, lost the battle at Marston Moor in 1644. Yet the absence of Scottish soldiers fighting in England made possible a military campaign led by the Earl of Montrose whose men, in cooperation with Irish troops, won battle after battle and for a short time seized control over the country. However, as his forces were breaking apart,
Montrose and his royalist campaigners lost the battle at Philiphaugh in 1645. These royalist campaigns, however, had changed the situation in Scotland and weakened the covenant regime. The Covenant Government split into two factions when a clique of nobles started negotiations with Charles to restore him to power if he agreed to introduce a Presbyterian Church system in England for a certain number of years as a trial period. The Engagement movement, as it came to be called, ended in the battle at Preston in 1648 where the New Model Army under Cromwell won. Control of Scotland fell into the hands of what remained of the Covenant regime: the radical Presbyterians. This period, often called the Rule of the Saints, was not of long last but - in the short time it had until Cromwell occupied Scotland - it introduced an unprecedented level of Calvinist ideology. It also ventured – through the Act of Classes – a cleansing of royalist or, in fact, non-radical Covenanters from all official posts. To this I will return in more detail in Chapter 4. The Scots had entered as a proud nation and army into the Solemn League and Covenant. By the end of the 1640s the country had deteriorated. The war had taken its toll both on lives and property (Stevenson 1987).

Cromwell

The Scots reaction to the beheading of Charles I in 1649 was to proclaim Charles II as king – not only of Scotland – but also England. In the same year, Oliver Cromwell invaded the country. Now under English occupation, Scotland nominally entered into union with England and practically into a military regime known as the Protectorate (Stevenson 1990). Scotland thus came to be an occupied country from 1653 until the Restoration in 1660 and the English brought
with them their own stock of officials – mostly from within the ranks of the military – upon which they felt they could rely to control the country (Buckroyd 1987).

Cromwell died in September 1658 and a new spell of witch-hunting began within the same year and continued into the following year. What would happen after Cromwell’s death was nominally clear, namely the succession of his son as Lord Protector (Manning 2003). However, only one year after Cromwell’s death, the Protectorate collapsed. With the collapse came the return of monarchy.

The Restoration

Charles II had signed the Covenant as a condition for becoming king, yet when he actually started to rule after the collapse of the Cromwellian regime it quickly became clear that his signature was worth less in practice than in theory. The Restoration in 1660 ended the project of the Rule of the Saints and brought back to Scotland not only Episcopacy but also a general rewind back to the state of affairs as they had been in 1633. The last great witch-hunt happened in 1661-62.

Data used in this Dissertation

Different types of data are used in this dissertation, and the data are used – albeit in different combinations - in multiple chapters. I will describe them once here instead of repeating these descriptions in each chapter.
The core dataset used in this dissertation is the Survey of Scottish Witchcraft (hereafter “SSW”) (Goodare et al. 2003). It records all detectable cases of accusations for witchcraft in Scotland for the entire time period in which witchcraft was a punishable crime (1563-1736).

According to these data, there were 3,212 named accused witches who faced prosecution and 625 unnamed individuals. There is great variation in the amount of information that has survived on these cases. Many trials left behind records with rich details including the date of a case, the residence of the witch, her prosecutors and the details of the charges made against her. Yet information is often missing, leading to reductions in case numbers for specific analyses (details for each case are in each chapter. See also Appendix B for an overview).

The authors of the database have surveyed all conceivable resources that might include hints about witch trials, including – for example – court records, records from the central authorities that granted commissions for witchcraft (Privy Council, Parliament and Committee of Estate), church records and gazetteers. The researchers of Edinburgh University have thus created a dataset as complete as any data on Scottish witches could be.

Data on the Ministry

Chapter 2 is based on a dataset containing details about ministers in selected parishes for almost the entire time period (1563-1710), yielding a total of 1,498 ministers. The data includes information on the time of appointment in a given parish. Where available, information on

17 Detailed information on the sources used and all variables can be accessed at: http://www.shc.ed.ac.uk/Research/witches/
university and graduation year, birth and death years, the reason the minister left his post, the parish he transferred to if any, and other variables were included.

The data is coded from a collection of short minister biographies. This list is published in multiple volumes entitled *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae*\(^1\). This data is a remarkable work on the ministry in Scotland but it also has some shortcomings. Especially for the period before 1600 many ministers are likely missing (McCallum 2008:12). John McCallum, who graciously shared his data with me, had already coded ministers of the county of Fife up until 1640. I have included these cases in my sample. I have also matched, where possible, the parishes in this data with SSW information on witches (For further information see Appendix A).

The sampling unit is presbyteries. Those lie within the borders of five Scottish counties: Ayr, Edinburgh, Haddington and Fife (see Map 1 below for their location). The reasons for this choice were manifold. They cover areas with the most severe outbreaks of witch-hunting (see Map 2) thus allowing for within region comparison of parishes with varying degrees of witch-hunting. All four regions are similar in terms of density of burghs (urban settlements) and topographic aspects (all are in low areas) (Whittington & Whyte 1983) and all four are among the more densely populated areas of Scotland (Flinn 1978). Because of the great variation in the frequencies of witch trials across parishes within the chosen area, this sampling strategy allows for between parish comparisons among four counties whose contribution to Scottish witch-hunting was substantial.

\(^1\) *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae: the succession of ministers in the Church of Scotland from the Reformation* (8 vols., Edinburgh 1915-50).
Map 1: Counties of Selected Presbyteries

Map 2: Witch-Hunting Numbers and Parishes
The following is a list of the presbyteries sampled and the counties they belong to. The total number of accused witches per presbytery is indicated in parentheses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presbytery</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ayr</td>
<td>Ayr</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greenock</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irvine</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fife</td>
<td>Cupar</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dunfermline</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kinross</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kircaldy</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>St Andrews</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh and Haddington</td>
<td>Dalkeith</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Haddington</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Linlithgow</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This data allows for a reconstruction of the relationship between witches and ministers by making it possible to match ministers with witchcraft cases that occurred during their time of service in a given locality.

**GIS Data**

To illustrate some aspects of the geographical distribution of witch-trials, I use historic boundary data. This data was created by the Great Britain Historic GIS Project (see Appendix C) and consists of a GIS file with parish boundaries as they existed around 1851. This is much later than the period of witch-hunting but it is the earliest cartographic data available. Earlier maps, hand-drawn by the pioneering geographers of the 17th century, provide visual information on settlement patterns and land-use but do not lend themselves to country-wide analyses of Scotland.
I have matched the boundary data as far as it was possible with the parishes of the SSW data. Some uncertainty and loss of information, however, has to be taken into account using this data (Appendix C). 273 witchcraft cases from 75 parishes are lost because the witches’ residences couldn’t be matched with the boundary data. In total, the geographical description contains 1,833 out of 2,106 accused witches for which the SSW contained information on their residence.
Chapter 1 – The Puzzle and Theories on Witchcraft

There is a vast array of theories and findings that help us understand witchcraft persecution as a social phenomenon\(^ {19}\). As much as this literature offers a toolkit with various theoretical ideas to pick from, it has not yet offered a mechanism that explains two of the well-known macro properties of the Scottish case at once: (1) the temporal amplitude of case numbers and (2) the disproportionate engagement of gentry in witch-hunting.

The Puzzle

Temporal Amplitude of Cases

Figure 1 shows, using the Survey of Scottish Witchcraft (Goodare et al. 2003) described in the introduction, the distribution of accused witches through time. There are spells in which the phenomenon is completely non-existent and then accusations for witchcraft resurface in great waves\(^ {20}\). First and foremost, my study aims at explaining these clear-cut waves.

\(^{19}\) This chapter selectively reviews, from the vast amount of literature on witchcraft, those studies that may serve as tools for theory building. For an overview of existing work on witchcraft in general see Ankerloo et al (2002), Barry et al (1996), Levack (2001), Gaskill (2008), Oldridge (2008) and exclusively for Scotland, see Macdonald (2003). Furthermore, there is an array of studies concerned with the cultural content and origin of witchcraft beliefs. A comprehensive review of those would exceed the scope of this chapter. Ginzburg (1991), Stark (2003) and Thomas (1971) offer good entry points into this literature.

\(^{20}\) The fact that witch-hunting occurred in waves is common knowledge among scholars of Scottish witchcraft. The first graph of this sort was produced by Larner with now outdated data (1981). Martin and Miller show the same graph I have reproduced here with the same data (Miller and Martin 2008)
Disproportionate Engagement of Gentry
The second conspicuous property of Scottish witch-hunting is the disproportionate engagement of lairds, a fact that has been noted by Christina Larner, the first sociologist investigating Scottish witchcraft, in her seminal work ‘Enemies of God’ (1981). Lairds were part of a class of smaller landowners, some of which were barons. Brown shows that the term “gentry” occurs for the first time in the 17th century when it is used both by the king and government officials. With the union of the crowns in 1603, the language in government circles underwent a process of Anglicization that led to the usage of the term gentry to denote the Scottish laird. Doubts have been raised as to the meaningfulness of a categorical distinction between lairds, who were also designated as the lesser nobility, and the peerage, as nobles with a right to sit in Parliament. Anecdotal evidence shows that lairds were very conscious of rank when it came to their status as members of the nobility (Brown 2004:12). Rhetoric aside, lairds were on all sociological dimensions relating to the research question of this dissertation landed gentry and there was a distinction between a laird and a noble with honorific title. Often, lairds are referred to as barons not by title but by description, however not every laird held the charter of a baron (Larner...
The gentry could include both those whose land was granted directly by the crown (freeholders) and those who feued land from another superior landowner (Macinnes 1991:7).

**A Big “Little” Detail**

A detail both small and consequential about Scottish witch trials will become one of the most prominent themes in this dissertation. Witch trials allowed for individuals without official civil jurisdiction to engage in prosecution. While every study on Scottish witchcraft accusations mentions this legal detail, the importance of it for the temporal dynamic in witch-hunting has been overlooked. This detail has the power to spin off the course of witch-hunting. With few exceptions, witch trials were a local process with authorization from the central government (Goodare 2002a:9). Once a suspect was found and the evidence against her collected, local authorities had to make a request to the central government, e.g. the Privy Council or the King, to hold a *commission for the trial of witchcraft*. The role of these commissions can best be described as local and temporary courts, granted for specific accused persons, in which the suspects were convicted and a sentence was decided upon (Goodare 2002a). The central state government, which authorized commissions, used to check evidence against suspects quite carefully against the background of the standards of the time. Central authorities could therefore prevent witch-hunting (Goodare 2002e). I will show in Chapter 4 that there are indications for different levels of encouragement by the central state but never did the Scottish central government openly prevent trials nor did it ever directly engineer them.²¹

²¹ James VI was the only monarch who in the 1590s was directly involved in witch trials.
Previous explanations for Witch-hunting

Witches in Scotland
For many decades the study of Scottish witchcraft has made step-by-step improvements in bringing together the sources that allow for a thorough investigation of witch trials. Early data on case numbers (Black 1938; Larner, Lee, and MacLachlan 1977) were the foundation for many studies that revealed useful insights about witch trials in early modern Scotland. In 2003 the Survey of Scottish Witchcraft (SSW) – the remarkable dataset used in this dissertation - was created by historians of the University of Edinburgh (Goodare et al. 2003). In reviewing the latest publication based on SSW data (Goodare, Martin, and Miller 2008), Hutton began by stating that “This collection of essays represents what will probably be the last direct outcome of the Survey of Scottish Witchcraft” (Hutton 2009:364). This dissertation obviously contradicts this claim. As the explanations I propose for Scottish witch-hunting waves differ substantially from existing theories, my work gives new life to old data. The SSW had sparked a new wave of witchcraft studies, yet it had not dramatically changed the array of existing explanations of Scottish witchcraft, not least because the wealth of information the SSW contains yet to be exploited.

Therefore, even though Christina Larner used even older and now outdated data, her work remains an authoritative figure in this field of inquiry. The details she provides are rich and her descriptions of the contexts of the Scottish witch-hunt are meticulous. Her main claim is that witches are a means used by the ruling class to impose godly discipline on Scottish localities (Larner 1981). It has also been claimed that witch-hunting was a way for the state to claim jurisdiction over women who before the Reformation were not within the scope of civil
authority (Goodare 1998). In short, these claims call for a connection between witch-hunting and state making; this is a connection my work follows up, interrogates, and builds upon.

Levack picked up on this insight as well. His argument emerges, although not explicitly, out of a gap in Larner’s theory. Larner noted the prevalence of gentry in witchcraft commissions, but never described a mechanism to establish the link between these and the state. The state and the ruling class are somehow intermeshed without any clarification of the connection between this very particular set of elites and the central government. Levack rightfully points out that local lairds were not agents of the state. In addition, there is no evidence that state officials took any initiative in initiating trials. If one can argue for any responsibility on the part of the state in witch-hunting then it would be only because it allowed too many commissions for witchcraft. Levack’s positive argument is that local elites hunted witches ferociously not because of but despite state-making. Witch-hunts, in his theoretical approach, are a sign of state failure in preventing local elites from exerting freely their authority over the periphery (Levack 1998, 2008). It remains unclear in his account why local elites wanted to hunt witches in the first place.

Goodare argued in a similar way that state and locality cooperated in witch-hunting as they “shared the same goals: to identify and punish witches in order to purge the land of ungodliness” (Goodare 2002e:134). He also put forward the theory that witchcraft trials worked to the advantage of the state because it was a public crime and its prosecution was witnessed by many people. “Those people all learned something about the kind of behavior that the authorities were not prepared to tolerate” (Goodare 2002e:140). Gentry were involved because they were closer
than the nobility to the parish population and hence observed their breaking of godly discipline most immediately (Goodare 2002a:4).

Other than that it has been argued that the real agents behind the hunts were church actors who acted out of Protestantism’s obsession with godly discipline and establishment of local control (Graham 1996; Macdonald 2002b; Maxwell-Stuart 2000; Wormald 2003). Some singular trials also suggest the possibility that some victims of witchcraft had mental disorders that were explained through witchcraft (McDonald, Thom, and Thom 1996), but these instances have not been said to drive the dynamic of witch-hunting.

In short, previous studies have identified the salience of members of the gentry in witch-hunting but have either not explained that salience or have drawn on ideology as an explanation for it. This dissertation shows that ideology cannot explain waves of witch-hunting. To my knowledge, Larner (1981) was the only scholar who tried to explain the timing of every wave of witch-hunting. She argues that the timing of witchcraft trials is explained through variation in central state interest in witch-hunting. I will follow her idea to explain the chronology of witch trials in Scotland. Like her, I focus on the historical context of the waves and position of witch-hunters in social structure. However, my conclusions differ. I find that the number of witch trials is dependent on variations in opportunity.
General Theories on Witchcraft

Witchcraft and Community-level Processes
If one takes the trial documents of Scottish witchcraft cases at face value, the impression is that witchcraft accusations emerged out of the typical quarrels and conflicts of a peasant society. Patrik Lowrie was accused of bewitching a cow so that it would give blood rather than milk, Issobel Greirsoune had conceived a great hatred against Adam Clark in the parish of Prestopans and one day while Adam was lying in bed with his wife, Issobel “in the likeness of her own cat, accompanied with a great number of other cats, in a devilish manner, entered within her house, they made a great and fearfull noise and trouble”\(^{22}\) (Pitcairn and Justiciary 1833:524). At the same time the servant girl living in Adam’s house encountered the devil in the appearance of a man. He dragged her through the house by her hair and soon after she lay in bed with a life threatening weakness. Ewfame Mackalzane bewitched a man through “taking of the power and ability of his right side, arm and leg” (Pitcairn and Justiciary 1833:249).

It is misfortunes like these, small and great, that are the most conceivable contents of witchcraft accusations. These elements of confessions and indictments help us to reconstruct the context in which accusations were placed. The diverse dealings with the devil that occur in these documents are of a less immediate nature. They are the product of very complex developments in European belief systems with a history much older than the period under study here; these are the subjects of study concerned with the content and origins of witchcraft beliefs (Blécourt and Davies 2004; Clark 2005; Cohn 1975; Davies and Blécourt 2004; Gibson 1999; Ginzburg 1991).

\(^{22}\) My own translation, grammar from the original
The more immediate contents of the accusations have led scholars to theorize that witchcraft accusations emerge out of community relations. In a community framework, witchcraft accusations emerge in neighborly village relationships. Conflict, caused by micro interaction but also by macro shifts of social change, is at the core of these theories. Confessional conflicts that ended with the peace of Westfalia have been claimed to drive persecutions (Stark 2003). For the Salem witch trials in New England it has been argued that accusations are a psychological outlet for grievances and latent conflict induced by economic and social change. Macro-level changes, such as the advance of capitalism triggered tensions that translated into local relationships (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974).

An implicit assumption of many theories of witchcraft, especially those that analyze communities, is that witches were outsiders. Midelfort, who studied witch trials in Germany, made this explicit. He does not offer a theory of why accusations emerged. Rather, he tentatively proposes a reason for why they came to an end. It seems that hysteria about witches lasted locally as long as there were enough outsiders to be persecuted. Once the accusations reached a set of well-integrated people they came to a halt (Midelfort 1972).

Robin Briggs, who studied trials along the German-French border, argues that witch trials are merely the outcome of imagined attacks on people’s lives and fortunes. These trials would have happened much earlier if only the legal system had contained a means to realize them. Witches, so the argument goes, were a substantial part of village life. They were feared for the harm they could do and at the same time consulted to remedy harm inflicted by other sources. A hint

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23 In analyzing the socio-demographics of the Scottish case, Martin and Miller show that Scottish witches were probably drawn from integrated parts of their communities (Martin and Miller 2008).
supporting the idea that some witches were actually cunning folk\textsuperscript{24} can be found in Scottish trial documents as well. In 1607, for example, Bartie Patersoun from Newbottle was accused of “the crime of sorcery and witchcraft, in abusing of the people with charms (...) and administering, under form of medicine, of poisonous drinks” (Pitcairn and Justiciary 1833:535). However, these cases are more of an exception than the rule in Scotland\textsuperscript{25}.

Briggs argues that the willingness of worldly authorities to prosecute witches was a prerequisite for witch-hunting but the reasons for witch trials found their origin in the everyday things that happened among people living together in agrarian communities. Through treating the observable waves of persecutions in Scotland and also other parts of Europe as exceptions, Briggs avoids the need to explain witch crazes. He concludes, “Witches were people you lived with, however unhappily, until they goaded someone past endurance” (Briggs 1998:398).

MacFarlane’s study on witches in England presents a similar argument for the social process that generates witches, but his theory provides some room for making a connection to global waves of hunting, even if this is not the central part of his argument. Witch-hunts start with misfortune (such as disease, damaged property and accidents) but only conflict between individuals connects these misfortunes to witchcraft. Conflicts provide the witches’ motives for cursing people. Where conflict precedes misfortune the victim attributes the misfortune to the witchcraft of the person with whom the conflict broke out. Conflicts are structured by higher-level changes in socio-economic relationships that alter social relations in communities.

\textsuperscript{24} Cunning folk are also sometimes called folk healers.

\textsuperscript{25} In a local study on Essex, England, MacFarlane (1999) also finds that a minority of cases had something to do with cunning folk (4 out of 41 cases). His argument is that eliminating cunning folk was dangerous, given that they were the only ones who had remedies against otherwise hopeless situations.
MacFarlane argues that the development towards an agrarian market economy and the hardships of the 16th and 17th centuries increased the chances for local conflict (MacFarlane 1999). According to this logic, witchcraft cases become more numerous when conflict becomes more likely. Many conflicts in MacFarlane’s sample were about charity. Helping the poor was a strong social norm and people who refused charity could easily feel guilty. Feeling guilty generated expectations of revenge and thus helped in connecting conflict with misfortune. A subsequent unfortunate event was then all too easily associated with the person whom the charity was denied. Conflict was also found to drive accusations in New England, but there witch accusations were said to be outlets for frustration (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974). Persecution, according to this logic, is then a function of the potential for conflict in a community. The latter comes into play because a perquisite for the situation here described is that misfortunes happen after a conflict had taken place in a not too distant past for the misfortune to be linked causally to a curse. For example, diseases such as plague produced witches only if there was previous conflict.

Keith Thomas is arguably one of the fiercest advocates of the theory that witches were a bottom-up process fuelled by anxieties of early modern parishioners. “It was the popular fear of maleficium which provided the normal driving-force behind witch persecution, not any lawyer-led campaign from above” (Thomas 1971:548). The introduction of the Anglican church in England had destroyed the protection that magical practices within Catholic practices of worship (such as pilgrimage) were able to provide, thus robbing the population of protective mechanisms against harmful magic or maleficium (ibd.).
Theories on the community level are useful in explaining an important aspect of witchcraft persecution: namely, the questions of who was accused and what they were accused of. In this sense, witch trials feed on conflict and quarrel as well as on misfortune. And in fact, many of the singular witch trials that happened outside the great witch crazes might very well emerge from exactly such community-level processes as those described above. Conflict and misfortune, of course, are everywhere. It remains unclear, therefore, why so many more communities did not yield witches. There is of course fluctuation in the level of conflict and numbers of misfortunes in every community. But this cannot possibly be the only reason for witch-hunts to cease or never start. For a majority of communities, especially in the Scottish case, witch-hunts are extremely rare. Conflicts, however, occur in every community, and the pool of misfortunes which can be tied to acts of witchcraft is surely greater than the numbers of witches would suggest. This is especially the case in early modern Europe where there was hardly any scarcity of sick people, diseased animals or damaged objects. There is hence something missing in community-based explanations of witch-persecution.

Despite this limitation, community studies have contributed much to our understanding of what witchcraft meant in the daily routines of life in the early modern period. People feared witches and oftentimes an inexplicable event found in witchcraft a convincing explanation. While these are valuable contributions to understanding the micro foundations of witchcraft accusations (e.g. how prosecutors select specific suspects of witchcraft and why people believed witch trials to be

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26 I show in Chapter 4 that large scale crises such as famine and plague did not correlate with witch-hunting waves. One could argue that it was not the collective misfortunes that created accusations: if witchcraft accusations are based on dyadic conflict in which the witch had been offended by someone, a collective feud might not qualify for the construction of a witch narrative. To investigate this directly one would have to use data on individual misfortunes.
legitimate), one needs to take the prosecutor side more strongly into account. Those who were able to bring witches to trial had great leverage in interpreting accusations either as evidence of malicious witchery or simply as slander by the accusing party. The latter happened frequently, as can be seen in church records (McCallum 2010:173; Todd 2002:244–248).

**Witches and Uncertainty**

Somewhat akin to community level theories - although many are on another level of analysis - are arguments that focus on uncertainty and instability. Famously, Theodore Rabb has argued that witch accusations were, among other things, an outcome of the crumbling of social relations through war and disaster (Rabb 1975).

The Salem witch trials have attracted considerable scholarly attention27 – maybe because of a very detailed account of this witch craze published in the eighteen-sixties (Upham 1867) that lends itself to further study. Norton, for example, argues that the severest trials emerged because the communities lay at the fringes of a continuous armed conflict at the frontier. This produced fears among the people who had a direct connection to the wars. It is those people who are found at the core of both the accusing side and the pool of accused (Norton 2002). The Salem witch trials have also given way to one of the few gender studies that works towards a causal explanation for witchcraft accusations28. Reed argues that the motivation for witch trials is rooted in Puritan meaning-systems of sex-relations on the one hand and religious categories of good and evil, god and devil on the other hand. The defense of the gendered moral order is said

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27 Reed 2007 is a good point of entry to these studies.

28 Most studies on gender – of Salem and beyond – focus on the question of why accused witches were predominantly women rather than the question of why there were witch-hunts at all. Recent examples are Bever 2002, de Blecourt 2000, Bailey 2002. For an overview see Whitney 1995 and Opitz-Belakhal 2009.
to be the background to these accusations, and the concept of gender in Puritanism is the key to their content (Reed 2007).

Most prominent, however, is the interpretation of witch-hunting as a remedy for the social symptoms of crisis. This approach associates social, economic and political changes with witchcraft accusations and argues that these changes led to instabilities that societies then cured with witch-hunting. Ben-Yehuda (1980) in his seminal article on witchcraft offers one of the most complex explanations for European witch-crazes. He argues that elite interest in witch-hunting emerged long before witch-hunting turned into a Europe-wide witch craze. Intellectual shifts in the meaning of witchcraft met a professional interest of Catholic clergy to signal theological competence through persecution of witches and minorities, but it was only when witch persecution achieved wide popular acceptance that witch crazes really took off. In his argument, the decay of the medieval order produced the social and cognitive structures on which the legitimacy of witchcraft accusations is based. Urbanization brought about a rising middle class that had no place in the existing feudal order. At the same time, intercultural exchange through increasing overseas trade destabilized the clear-cut social hierarchy and homogeneity of medieval society. Economic and mortality crises through stress exerted on the population aggravated these circumstances. In reference to Durkheim (1951), Ben-Yehuda argues that the anomie resulting from these changes, “a feeling that society had lost its norms and boundaries and that the uncontrollable forces of change were destroying all order and moral tradition” (Ben-Yehuda 1980:13), were fertile social ground for the growth of witch crazes. Witchcraft persecution was a reactionary social force to the modernization of society, science and the economy all together. “By persecuting witches, this society, led by the church, attempted to
refine its moral boundaries” (Ben-Yehuda 1980:14). In other words, witch-hunting functioned as a psychological mechanism with a promise of re-establishing solidarity; this was a promise it did not keep.

Erikson’s book on witch-hunts in New England, *Wayward Puritans* (1966), points towards a similar direction. It is based on the fundamental idea that societies need an inverse image in order to establish and maintain solidarity. The higher the threat to solidarity the higher are the chances that societies attempt to redraw the boundaries between good and evil through finding enemies inside and outside. Deep-cutting changes in society, such as shifts in the constellation of power or the rise of outside enemies, so the argument goes, shift boundaries and out of these shifts arises the need to redraw boundaries. Interesting is the idea that regardless of the level of stability in society, the rate of deviance remains constant, as it is an outcome of the capacity for policing and the availability of judicial resources. Rather than increasing the crime rate, historical change that ruptures internal boundaries shifts the focus of prosecution onto crimes that have heavy moral loadings.

There is a structural idea hidden in the closet of these ‘outsider’ theories. This is the conception that group solidarity is based on a “dual exclusivity logic”. One is the old Simmelian (1955) idea that conflict with out-group members creates internal solidarity and the other is that exclusion of an “inside deviant” (Kurtz 1983:1088) strengthens internal belief systems and thus leads to cohesion. In contrast to community level theories, approaches that focus on uncertainty and moral boundaries factor in the question of why elites were motivated to hunt witches. In a way, these studies also relate to the temporal aspect of witch-hunting in that they identify exogenous causes for witch-hunting, such as the macro-historical transformations of early modern Europe.
But timing here means timing in terms of the beginning and ending of a century of persecutions. When Ben-Yehuda claims that the study of witchcraft should make more effort to explain timing, he also refers to the question of why we see witchcraft persecutions in the 16th and 17th centuries (Ben-Yehuda 1981). However, this approach cannot solve the puzzle of the waves.

**Witchcraft as Scapegoating**

There are already indications of a process of scapegoating in the theories concerned with community level relationships mentioned previously. In contrast to these, however, the scapegoating approach directly relates to the question of waves. Some studies on other countries have focused on scapegoating and misfortune and found empirically connections between exogenous shocks and witchcraft accusation (Baten and Woitek 2001; Behringer 1995, 1999; Oster 2004; Pfister 2007). A very recent study on the Scottish case (Jensen 2007) approached the same question using time series techniques. Jensen notes that mortality crises have an effect on witch-hunts in 1661-62 that is independent from rises in the price of wheat (and hence from subsistence crises). He concludes that there must have been some kind of disease in the year before those two witch crazes, probably a small pox epidemic. Even if these speculations are true, it is unclear what they mean for explanations of witchcraft accusations. I show in Chapter 4 that plague was not always followed by a witch craze. How can some outbreak of

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29 This study is based on data published by Black (1938) which was corrected by the Survey of Scottish Witchcraft in 2003 (Goodare et al. 2003). But this is probably of no great effect as this data had already recognized the 1661-62 hunt.
disease beg for a scapegoat and another one not? Did the Scots have so little trust in the abilities of their witches that they saw them limited to the causing of small pox?

Using new data, I confirm what Larner (1981) has already argued, namely that those predictions do not hold for the Scottish case: famine and plague – as indicators of crises – are not associated with the temporal distribution of witch-hunts.

**Witches and Ideology and Authority**

Scapegoating theories and frameworks of instability or moral crises all use in their core empirical arguments the large-scale historical shifts and crises of early modern Europe. The same is true for elite models. In all of these approaches the exclusion of witches creates power. Scholars who place witchcraft persecution in the context of other persecutions of heretics and minorities have argued that intolerance became a general property of European societies long before the 16th century (Moore 2001; Trevor-Roper 1969).

Moore identifies persecution as a prominent part of society dating back to what he calls “the age of classification” (Moore 2001:88). He argues strongly against any theory that ascribes to the populace any type of need or psychological motivation for persecution. He argues that persecution became a tool for elites to maintain and enforce their authority over populations. They accomplished this through a process of sorting people into stereotypical categories and through the social construction of both the threat that emanates from these groups and the sheer numbers of people belonging to them.

extracting from the development of the justice system the development of society (Durkheim and Simpson 1933), Moore emphasizes the historical coincidence of the idea of “victimless crimes”30, the centralization of power and the rise of persecution as a central element of society. He theorizes that when rule becomes more centralized so does jurisdiction. A centralization of jurisdiction in turn transforms legal codes from interpersonal mediation to abstract law. Morality then becomes the core of legal activity and for the first time the existence of crime without a victim is possible. Law becomes a means of coercion and persecution is its vehicle.

Cohn (1975) also draws parallels to the general salience of persecution in early modern Europe. He notices a similar master narrative of secrecy both in the persecution of heretics and in witch-trials. For Cohn, peasant beliefs in witchcraft are one thing and elite beliefs another. Peasants used charms to protect their kin and cattle from harm. Witchcraft for this stratum of society was a matter of maleficium. The question of why the witch-hunt started in sixteenth century Europe is for Cohn a question of changes in elites’ understanding of witchcraft. His argument is that witch-hunting was a product of elite beliefs in the reality of the witch sabbat, the nocturnal meetings of witches. This belief connected witchcraft to narratives used in previous centuries to justify the persecution of heretics and minority groups.

The relationship of witchcraft to ideology and authority is also present in explanations that have directly mentioned state making as a trigger for persecutions. A classic is Muchembled’s argument that persecutions emerged in a reciprocal process of community receptiveness to fear

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30 That witch-hunting was related to the emergence of the concept of punishment for victimless crimes as opposed to punishment as compensation for the victim of a crime has also been identified by Larner for the Scottish case (Larner 2008)
of witches and state encroachment upon local relations through law enforcement (1990). In comparative perspective, Levack considers that the geographical patterns of the trials might lead to the opposite conclusion. In extremely decentralized areas, such as the German-speaking parts of the Holy Roman Empire, witch-hunting was at its worst. Regions with little central control such as Elwangen in Southern Germany yield incredibly high numbers of witches of 400 at a time (Levack 1987:138; Midelfort 1972:98–100). Yet state centralization, as the author himself notes, does not explain the near absence of witch trials in the very autonomous regions of the Northern Netherlands (Levack 1987). Others have argued similarly that the decline of witch trials in France correlates positively with the rise in taxation thus prompting the theory that witches are a symptom of weak states (Johnson, Koyama, and Nye 2011) and that weak states have more witch accusations (Johnson and Koyama 2012).

State making not only affects the relationship between locality and center but also between church and state. The most puzzling finding in relation to state centralization is that in countries where the state had granted the right to prosecute witches to secular authorities such as in Germany, the number of persecutions is much higher than in areas where witches were tried in church courts as was the case in Italy and Spain (Levack 1987). This has been attributed to the concerns of secular courts about social disorder (ibd.) but it is never really explained why local church courts were not as ‘zealous’ in persecuting witches. We would assume that persecution was a means for local control for both secular and ecclesiastical authorities.

Elite models assume explicitly or implicitly that witches were persecuted to communicate something to the population and that the content of the message was based on ideology. The ideology argument assigns to an entire social class a program of social control that is motivated
by Protestant beliefs. The argument is that elites wanted to establish a godly society and the eradication of witchcraft was a formidable starting point (Goodare 2002e; Larner 1981; Macdonald 2002a are the most prominent advocates). Christina Larner’s groundbreaking work was the first comprehensive study on Scottish witchcraft that offered both a detailed historical account of cases based on documentary evidence that she seemed to have uncovered in even the most remote corners of the archival universe and the first quantitative assessment of and treatment of witch-hunting waves. Owing to the pioneering nature of her work, the book is richer in descriptive detail than in theory. For her, witch-hunts are the product of social control efforts whereby “the term ‘social control’ indicates more than merely a radical view of ‘law and order’; it includes all the norms, ideologies, and sanctions by which certain types of social behavior are encouraged and others discouraged” (Larner 2008:177).

**From Belief to Action**

It is clear that beliefs play their role in witch-hunting. It is consensus in the historical research on witchcraft that people, including elites, understood witches as a real threat. Even Thomas Hobbes – who admits he believes the witches’ power to be imaginary - justified witch trials (Bostridge and Bostridge 1997). It is likewise uncontroversial that the Calvinist program of the Scottish Reformation requested the establishment of godly discipline (Gorski 2003; Larner

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31 A similar argument exists in regard to state making in general: Gorski (2003b) argued that one of the reasons Calvinism fostered state making is that it induced elites to follow a religiously inspired disciplining program which made policing cheap for the central state. Here also ideology drives elites to act. Gorski, however, explicitly puts witch-hunting (together with heresy and blasphemy) into a category of persecution that differs from the persecution typically seen in Protestant church courts (Gorski 2003: 232).

32 Previous efforts to collect a list of cases had been made by Black (1938).
1981; Walzer 1965). However, these are only the base-line conditions for witch-hunting. What has been overlooked is that action comes out of a melting together of rhetoric and social structure (Bearman 1993). In addition, when large numbers of individuals act in concert, rigorously tested theories show that there is often in the background an event that functions as a trigger and sets them into action (Gould 1995).

Following Gould’s ideas my study identifies short-term changes on the political level as “critical events” (Gould 1995:19) that make latent identities salient. These latent identities evolved in long-term shifts that reallocated positions in the relations of elite groups (see Chapter 4). Gould’s question was how collective action comes about and how individuals who hold multiple relational identities come to realize their common membership in a structural equivalence class. Witch-hunting is not collective action in the sense that people come together to achieve a common goal. But the proposed mechanism still holds. I show that gentry developed latent identities as social order makers because they were members of an elite group whose role changed in society.

The main argument of this dissertation is that elites are indeed the right vantage point for an explanation of witch crazes in Scotland but elite action was not focused on its effects downwards in the social hierarchy. Elites did not prosecute witches with a view to solidify power over the population. They acted with a view upwards: Their witch-hunting was directed towards the center of power. Christina Larner has argued that witchcraft “is imposed on the powerless by the powerful” (Larner 1981:88). My findings show that witchcraft – imposed or not – is induced by those who strive for power.
What is the content of witchcraft accusations?

Witchcraft is both a universal and a particular social phenomenon. Its universal properties are the need of individuals to explain the inexplicable (Thomas 1971) and the fact that many of the effects of witchcraft can be attributed to the element of secrecy, and in particular the element of organized secrecy, as a powerful social element of the past and the present.

But witchcraft beliefs in early modern Europe are also particular due to their merger with Christian theology. Witchcraft beliefs changed their nature and their influence on society when they were merged with Christian belief through the pact with the devil (Larner 2008; B. P. Levack 2008; Maxwell-Stuart 2000; Thomas 1971; Ben-Yehuda 1980). There is much work on witchcraft as a belief (Anglo 1985; Henderson and Cowan 2001; McDonald 1997; Neill 1922; Williamson 2003) and beliefs in folkloric myths that relate to witchcraft (Hunter and Kirk 2001).

For the puzzle of how waves of witch-hunts emerged, the content of the cases is not of central importance. However, a brief summary of what witchcraft in Scotland was about should help in understanding the general nature of the accusations.

Martin and Miller used the SSW to describe some general properties of witchcraft accusations. On average, witchcraft suspects were forty years old, seven percent were under the age of twenty and another seven percent over the age of sixty. The majority came from the middling classes; elite members and extremely poor people were rather unlikely to be accused of witchcraft. These estimations are derived from very small subsamples including slightly over ten or less percent of the witch population because information in the source material was scarce.
However, they give an approximate idea of the social background of the accused (Miller and Martin 2008).

The presence of the idea that witches had a pact with the devil has been demonstrated for Scotland (McLachlan and Swales 1992); so has the connection with fairy beliefs (Henderson and Cowan 2001) and with the phenomenon of second sight (Hunter and Kirk 2001; Hunter 2001; Purkiss, Diane 2000). Healing and herbal medicine were also of some relevance. The number of witches who were tried because of healing activities is, however, probably low (McDonald 1998). It is low even though healers were associated with witchcraft. Specifically, they were said to practice white witchcraft, which was the use of magic to achieve positive ends. Therefore, the dearth of practitioners of white witchcraft in the pool of the accused is understandable as people, especially in earlier times, had relied on them for healing (Maxwell-Stuart 1997, 2000).

Perhaps one of the most curious ideas in Scottish conceptions of witchcraft is the existence of the devil’s mark. This was believed to be a spot on the body insensible to pain and unable to bleed when injured. Witch-prickers were called in trials to insert pins as tests and evidence that the accused person was a witch (McDonald 1997).

As mentioned, witchcraft beliefs are a meshwork of old folk beliefs and new religious ideas introduced in the course of the sixteenth century. For example, in some trials elements of an old Scottish fairy belief come to surface in two very different forms. On the one hand, witchcraft might be used to cure enchantment by elves. This is a narrative element that one observes especially towards the beginning of the period. As time progressed, witchcraft beliefs merged with fairy beliefs and elements of the power of fairies become interwoven with *maleficium* (Hall
Wilby showed that connected to the idea of the fairy was the concept of the familiar. In England a familiar was often an animal. In Scotland it was often a human. Familiars were spirits that connected to the witch in powerful and seductive ways. In popular belief they often merged with fairies while elite ideas translated into them to mean the devil. Familiars in trial records appear often as men dressed in a specific color (often green, the color of fairies) but they could also transform into an animal, often into a dog. Familiars usually appeared in situations of despair and they carried with them the hope that things would make a turn for the better. Some accused witches in Scotland claimed that the familiar came and gave the power to heal, indicating that some accused witches might have actually been cunning folk. Wilby also shows that the price for the transfer of power from familiar to witch was part of an implicit or explicit contract that defined a service in return. Widely known, at least among the readers of Goethe’s *Faust*, is that the witch offers his or her soul as an exchange, but this notion was much more common in elite conceptions of witchcraft. Many witches were also said to renounce their baptism or allow the familiar to suck their blood (Wilby 2000). Wilby, by showing the closeness of fairy and witchcraft beliefs brings up an important point about the content of witchcraft cases. The cases exploit a disparity between popular beliefs and the translation of those popular beliefs by prosecutors into the highly theologized version of witchcraft associated with a pact with the devil. But fairies can do good and harm. In fact, they only harm when they are offended. The devil by definition cannot do good. Witches confessing dealings with fairies might not have anticipated that these confessed alliances would be interpreted as evidence of a pact they had made with the devil. Because fairy beliefs were widespread, the fact that they could be translated into demonic witchcraft makes the job of a prosecutor easy as it offered material in
the confessions of the accused to work with in the construction of a demonic pact (Wilby 2000:302).

In investigating closely the occurrence of a pact with the devil in witchcraft cases in Fife, Macdonald finds that there was great variation in the shape and form of the devil as well as in the frequency with which the demonic pact occurred. Not all accusation contained a pact with the devil. Importantly, his findings show that elites also adapted their beliefs to the popular notions of fairy beliefs (Macdonald 2002a).

Based on these insights about the general properties of witchcraft narratives, I have picked one part of a witch trial story to give an impression of how cases were constructed. While it is outside the scope of this dissertation to engage in a more systematic and large-scale narrative analysis, I take this opportunity to use a single example to propose a sociological approach to the narrative analysis of witch trials in early modern Scotland.

Meaning comes from networks of people, places and events all relationally dependent on each other (White 2008). In witchcraft cases, witches, victims, witnesses but also places, objects and animals are connected narratively through magical and non-magical events. Every witch is located within a network of people, places, objects and animals. These in turn can be associated with different roles. Among these roles are victims (people, things and/or animals), witnesses (people only) and accomplices (other witches and/or objects used as magical devices). Relations are established in a narrative through story-tellers who, driven by their theory about the story, select events and meaningfully connect them to each other (Bearman, Faris, and Moody 1999; Bearman and Stovel 2000; Smith 2007). Through narrative, witches are brought

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33 This idea is also a methodological borrowing of the idea behind Actor Network Theory (ANT), where objects are part of networks with individuals. For an introduction see Latour 2005.
into relation to their victims, accomplices and witnesses as well as to places, things and animals that they have used and affected through their witchcraft.

To illustrate this, I use the example of Isobel Young, who was prosecuted in 1629. The transcript of her trial was published by Black (Black 1941:4f). I will not use the entire narrative but only a small part for illustrative purposes. What follows is the original text - translated to modern English - of two out of 24 accusations made against Isobel:

“In so far as the said Isobel Young having conceived an ill will against George Sands, Miller at Brandsmill, she by her sorcery and witchcraft made the said mill unable to grind to him any stuff by the space of ii days together. And sometime thereafter because the said George retained her stuff till the duty for grinding was paid to him, she made his whole worldly means go back and reduced him to great poverty and necessity. She being observed in a tempestuous night of wind and rain, when the mill horse were scarce able to cross the water between her house and the mill, no bridge being thereupon, to have come back from the mill to her house through the water by extraordinary transportation without horse or other help. And at another time when the said George Sands went out with his fisher boat to the Herring drove, she by her witchcraft ordered it that when the whole boats of the town of Dumbar received their full loading he was altogether disappointed”

“That the panel threatened Thomas Carse for being in company with a messenger who put a copy of a summons in the lock of the door, that he should repent it: And thereafter his right leg drew up and he became a cripple.”

The stylized network this narrative creates is shown in below (Figure 2). It shows how complex the network of interconnected elements in this witchcraft case is even if one only looks at two out of the total 24 points of accusation.
Figure 2 One Witchcraft Charge

One can also depict this narrative with the addition of time and causality. Figure 3 shows that the story looks much more ordered then. This is a visualization of the fact that prosecutors in constructing a witchcraft case in interaction with the accused had to find a causal story among misfortune, conflict and the power of witchcraft.
Prosecutors are like spiders. They search and find elements for their story. Early modern parish life provides an abundance of events that supplies elements. By weaving these together through narrative, prosecutors create an accusation of witchcraft. Weaving is achieved by interpreting sequentiality as causation: The death of a cow after a curse becomes the death of a cow because of the curse. In that sense, witchcraft narratives are constructed in the same way as conspiracy theories today. They are both the building of a secret.

Conclusions

This chapter has reviewed the literature on witchcraft in general and in the specific case of Scotland. It has set up a puzzle that existing accounts cannot satisfactorily explain: How can we explain both the overrepresentation of gentry – rather than feudal superiors or state actors – in witchcraft commissions and the fact that cases surged in great waves? Much of the
historiography of Scottish witchcraft has assumed that the church prepared the evidence and lay prosecutors conducted the trials. Indeed, many reasons can be found to support this hypothesis. The 17th century, as the next chapter will show, was one of religiously encoded conflicts and changes. Are these the birthplaces of witch-hunting waves? The Reformation brought a new agency for enforcing social discipline into Scottish localities. Historians agree that the local church courts, the kirk sessions, introduced an unprecedented level of surveillance into parishes (Graham 1996; Leneman and Mitchison 1987; McCallum 2008, 2009; Mitchison and Leneman 1990; Todd 2002; Wormald 1991). Can it be a coincidence that their emergence after the Reformation coincides with the dawn of witch persecution?
Chapter 2 – The Ministry

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor principalities, nor powers, nor any other creature, is able to separate me from the love of the majesty, which is in Christ Jesus, my Lord” (Kirkton 2010 [1703]: 15)

Introduction

When Reverend John Welch wrote the above lines in his prison cell he contemplated the relationship between church and state. While imprisoned because of his Presbyterian preaching, he tells his wife – the daughter of Scottish Reformer John Knox – that the only authority he is willing to accept is that of a higher power than the king. The ideology is underlying this statement is more complex than Welch’s voice implies. It’s more than an ideology of opposition. Calvinist theology had a great impact upon Scotland’s Reformation movement and it offered an entirely new image of society, church and the body politic.

This image made place for neither magic nor witchcraft. Witchcraft came to be seen as a pact with the devil – a secret allegiance with the antichrist. Before, witchcraft had been the use of secret means to inflict harm or relief, now it turned into a conspiracy. I have already offered in Chapter 1 some theoretical ideas on how secrets impact social relationships and how they create anxieties among those excluded from the inner circle of secret holders. When the “cultural repertoire” (Swidler 1986) of secrecy merged with that of the covenant or bond with an
otherworldly power – the combination was explosive. As I elaborate in more detail below, Calvinism created an entirely new idea of what constitutes society through introducing the idea of the covenant as a bond with God that citizens enter into freely (Walzer 1965). In the narrative of witchcraft cases the pact with the devil became an inverse image of this bond (Larner 1981). At the same time, as I describe in this chapter, the role of local church courts in social control was dramatically enhanced and ministers faced great responsibilities in enforcing the project of a godly society. Hence, given the greater role of local church courts and grater responsibility of ministers in local disciplining we would expect ministers to be highly motivated actors in the production of witch trials. The problem was that ministers had no formal right to prosecute witches. It was beyond their jurisdiction. As I describe in Chapter 2 Scottish law prescribed the death penalty for witchcraft – a sentence church courts had no right to impose. Therefore, ministers had to ask for help from secular authorities if they wanted to see witches tried.

I use in this chapter minister biographies for selected geographical areas (Scott and Macdonald 1915) to investigate the relationship between the ministry and witches. I find that there are no sociologically meaningful connections suggesting that ministers actively sought witches. Witch-hunting is not induced by role behavior. It is not the outcome of an institutional socialization process. There is no strong enough evidence that peer-group interaction creates witch-hunting ministers. In general, there are no individual-level properties that distinguish ministers whose parishes yielded witches from those whose parishes didn’t: Ministers do not carry along witch-hunting proclivities when they leave their parish context and move to a new parish. Ministers are not the channels through which witchcraft accusations diffuse.
I argue that ministers are hesitant to accuse witches not *despite* the fit between Calvinism and witch-hunting but exactly *because of it*. Witchcraft cases threatened ministers’ identities and social status because they showed failure in keeping local discipline without giving the minister a tool to re-assert his control over the community. Other cases of ungodly behavior – such as adultery or drinking – scratched only the surface of community relations and the ministers had the tools to work against them. Here ministers could maintain their authority and even buttress it through the legitimate use of their jurisdiction. Witches however were a malaise at the core of the project of a godly congregation and one that necessitated external help. Therefore, as long as ministers had a choice, they refused to let witchcraft become a reality. There were however times when ministers’ choices were limited because their footing in communities had become unstable.

Towards the end of this chapter, several findings will be described that support the theory that ministers cooperated in witch-trials when their position was weak. I show that power struggles and ideological change alone did not induce witch-hunts thus making it implausible that ideological triggers motivated ministers to hunt witches. Then I show that by far the greatest waves of witch trials occur right after the right to appoint ministers had changed hands from one set of people to another. Of all changes in the organization of the Scottish church, only changes in the system of patronage coincide with witch-hunting. To be sure, there will always be ministers in some localities whose positions are contested and whose embeddedness in the social

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Footing is a term oft used by White to indicate a stable position in the web of relations that define ones identity. I use this word here more or less in its every day meaning, however the concept of identities that seek for stability through connection and the instability that might come from changes in these connection are a Whiteian way of thinking about social relations (White 2008).
relationships that constitute their parish communities is unstable. And indeed, lay witch-hunters did find ministers who cooperated even when the ministry as a collective was unaffected by political decisions. However, when - due to positional change - great numbers of ministers were in uncertain situations, their involvement in witch trials rises significantly.

Calvinism – a Witch-Hunting Ideology?

In his book “The Revolution of the Saints” Michael Walzer shows that Calvinism as a new Weltanschauung was a driving force of revolution\textsuperscript{35}. One learns from Walzer’s account that Calvin saw obedience to authority as God-given and as a means to establish tranquility in a world that - left to the natural inclinations of the humans living in it - would have been a troublesome place. Calvin offered a belief system that encouraged obedience in theory but led to disobedience in practice with “its extraordinary capacity for organizing men and sending them into battle against Satan and his allies – even when those allies turned out to be kings and noblemen” (Walzer 1964: 19). If God instituted aristocratic leadership as the order of a state, how does revolution fit into the picture at all, whether against a benevolent or tyrannical leader? The answer is counterintuitive and includes the kind of circular reasoning that only predestination\textsuperscript{36} can bring about. The Calvinist logic is that if God bestows his will unto a class of feudal lords, it must be from within this class and on behalf of the prophets and ministers

\textsuperscript{35} For a critical assessment and the argument that this held true only under certain conditions, such as where there existed a Catholic king and a strong parliament see Gorski 2002(Gorski 2002).

\textsuperscript{36} Predestination produces circularity through a distortion of time. Calvinists become capitalists because of pseudo causation that relapses in time. Membership among the select is proven in retrospect through discipline. The motivation becomes a psychological trick (Weber 2001)
predestined to speak against evil that revolution against kings must take place (Walzer 1964: 61).

Calvinism required total obedience but this was a form of obedience that was truly internalized, or as Walzer puts it, conscientious. When ties of personal loyalty and kinship held feudal society together, a godly state in Calvin’s definition was based upon a bond or contract with God that people entered into conscientiously (Walzer 1964). The Scottish Covenant regime, albeit not considered by Walzer, is close to this Calvinist ideal type. As a consequence of this contract between God and the Scots, religion became more encompassing, leading to an even deeper intrusion of religious ideals into secular contexts and thus to higher expectations in regards to ministers’ efforts at social control. Everything man did was now to be interpreted and, importantly, judged against the background of a godly society. This included lay authorities who were, just like anybody else, a part of the project of creating a godly society: “….everyone belonged to the spiritual estate” (Kirk 1989:233). It is only logical that when this bond was broken – by peasants or kings – the makers of the bond, clergy and civil actors alike were called upon to enforce it. And so they did in the Covenant Revolution of 1638.

What Calvin – in contrast to Luther – contributed to the fall of worldly power holders was his focus on organization (Walzer 1965; Zagorin 1982:146). Through it, he envisaged a church that was, as Walzer puts it, a polity in itself (Walzer 1967: 53)\(^\text{37}\). In the middle of the seventeenth century the Scottish Covenanters were building a church that became “a state opposite to the state” (Makey 1979). This state was in practice as authoritative as the feudal order that it

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\(^{37}\) Luther retracted claims of independence of the church. Zagorin argues that this had real political consequences in that Lutheran states handed their churches over to the authority of the state (1982: 147)
replaced but more concerned with social discipline. Walzer concludes that the revolution of the saints was based on two macro-level historical outcomes rooted in Calvinist theology: “a fierce antagonism to the traditional world and the prevailing pattern of human relation and a keen and perhaps not unrealistic anxiety about human wickedness and the dangers of social disorder” (Walzer 1964: 302).

What, one might ask, lends itself better to this image than a witch-hunting minister? Alas, history proves this to be a hasty conclusion. Ministers had, as I will show in this chapter, no hand in triggering witch-hunts – a finding which shows that rhetoric does not translate straightforwardly into historical events (Bearman 1993; Gould 1995, 1996). I argue that Scottish Protestantism, when it met social structure and was filtered through it, did lead to an intrusive system of moral and religious discipline on the local level but not to witch-hunts.

**Previous Studies on the Connection between Ministers and Witches**

This chapter associates ministers with witches quantitatively. Historians have argued that the church was very interested in witch persecution (Graham 1996; Henderson 2006; Larner 2000; Maxwell-Stuart 2000; Wormald 2003; Young 2006) and Goodare attested a “harmonious cooperation between kirk session identifying witches and privy council authorizing trials” (Goodare 2002b:134),

It makes sense to start an explanation for witchcraft by looking at the church. All of these scholars were of course aware that the General Assembly, as the highest church court at the

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38 The basic idea to take insights from studies focused on ideology in general and Walzer’s in particular and interpret them as one aspect of identity (the other being social structure) is borrowed from Gould (1995: 16).
center, issued demands for a stricter persecution of witches within the realm in the 1640ies. Most clearly this happened two years before the witch-hunting wave in 1643-44 when the General Assembly both encouraged ministers to hunt witches and appealed to Parliament to enforce discipline (Larner 1981:73). Witchcraft was article 13 out of 14 requests addressed at Parliament by the church. The petition issued in 1646 read: “They petition that the acts of parliament regarding charmers, sorcerers and consulters with witches be renewed, and a solid way taken how the same acts may be put into execution”\(^39\). There is however no general correlation between witchcraft related initiatives of the General Assembly and waves of witch-hunting. Goodare finds no further evidence for the involvement of the General Assembly apart from these ten years between 1640 and 1649 and there wasn’t an assembly at the time of the great Restoration witch-hunt in 1661 (Goodare 2002b:138). Considering that the General Assembly as national organ of the church was arguably in charge of setting the agenda for the creation of a godly state, the historical material seems to yield strikingly little evidence of their involvement.

There is yet another fact that challenges the notion of witch-hunting as driven by church actors. The same studies that have claimed a great role of the church in the persecutions also established the puzzling scarcity of evidence in support of an active involvement of local ministers in witch trials. The one famous sermon, given by James Hutchison in 1697\(^40\), is cited many times in the literature (Bostridge 1996:313 see for example; Macdonald 2002:47; Raffe 2012:44). Of course, future research might uncover material that resembles Hutchison’s sermon


\(^40\) (Neilson 1910)
in the archives. In a sample of records from Lowland Scotland, Graham found that only one percent of the kirk session (local church court) cases are concerned with witches (Graham 1996:299). This dearth is explicitly mentioned but never treated as a puzzle. On the contrary, it has been argued that kirk sessions had a substantial interest in witch-hunting. Probably because anything else would be too counterintuitive, scholars have explained the scarcity away: “But such cases of leniency or reluctance to prosecute should not blind us to the fact that ministers and elders, like most of their contemporaries, viewed witchcraft and magic as grave dangers” (Graham 1996: 306).

Two arguments have led to a neglect of this puzzle. One consists of a shift in the unit of analysis from the level of local kirk sessions and ministers to the realm of the presbyteries – the regional decisional body of the church. MacDonald finds that it was them who ordered local church courts to investigate witches (2002a). Evidence comes from presbytery records. Based on this evidence one can conclude that at times presbyteries were concerned about the problem of witchcraft. But, compared to the bigger picture, the involvement of presbyteries is minimal. Graham (1996) finds that only three percent of all presbytery cases in his sample related to witchcraft. The second argument is that ministers were as zealous in the prosecution of witchcraft as they were in disciplining other transgressions but they had doubts in what regards the validity of the evidence that would prove a witch guilty (Graham 1996).

As a reader of the literature on the early modern kirk sessions one needs to dig deep to find explicit contradictions of the hypothesis that ministers supported or even initiated witch trials. Only studies for which witchcraft was such a marginal topic that it didn’t even warrant a subheading have explicitly doubted the motivation of ministers to find witches. Todd, whose
study was not about witchcraft, remarks explicitly that the hesitance in pursuing witchcraft as a crime in church courts speaks against the claim that accusations started usually in the parish ministry (Todd 2002:244–248). She found that when accusations against witches did emerge from within the parish, the church courts treated them as slander and punished the accuser rather than the accused. Women with a reputation for being a witch at times even proactively contacted the kirk session complaining about a person who called them a witch. In some cases this actually lead to the recovery of these women’s reputation within the village (ibid.). This is confirmed by McCallum’s study on the ministry in Fife (McCallum 2008:173). As he himself remarks, McCallum’s study didn’t cover the period of the greatest witch-hunts (ibd). Did ministers only prevent accusations for witchcraft when they thought that the lay authorities weren’t receptive for such charges? Todd’s finding that the kirk session of Dysart parish averted a witchcraft accusation in the middle of the witch craze in 1628 speaks against that (Todd 2002:248).

Are these local phenomena or do they hint at something more general? Whether or not ministers are involved in active witch-hunting can only be conclusively assessed through supplementing the lack of qualitative evidence with quantitative data. The witches who were accused throughout the seventeenth century must have been from the congregations served by some of the ministers. They must have come from somewhere. It’s therefore important to investigate in whose congregations witchcraft accusation flourished.
No Evidence for Witch-Hunting Ministers

For the following analyses, I use the ministry data described in the data section. I have associated a minister with a witch trial on the basis of the residence parish of the witch and the trial date. The connection thus established allows me to capture the relations between witches and ministers without making any assumptions about their motivations. The term connection or association with a witch is meant to indicate that one of the focal minister’s parishioners was accused of witchcraft – be it through active engagement, passive neglect or despite attempted resistance of that minister. In that sense, I will speak of dyads between witches and ministers.

I will show that many of the connections one could plausibly propose to describe the nature of involvement and explain the commitment of ministers to witch-hunting fail to produce patterns. Negative results cannot falsify theories, but through a series of negative results uncovered in the process of excluding theoretical ideas, my chapter builds an alternative idea, namely that ministers were hesitant to accuse witches. The chronology of this chapter resembles closely the process of inquiry that began with the plausible working hypothesis that ministers are the deliverers of witchcraft suspects to the counterintuitive notion that they delivered witchcraft suspects only reluctantly.

The Great Ideological Shifts

If one isolates ideology from social structure one would expect that ministers were intrinsically motivated to hunt witches. On the macro-level, the Reformation coincides with the beginning of witch trials in Scotland. This is not true for witch-hunts in different parts of Europe. The first
European witch trials commenced in the first quarter of the 14th century, long before Luther’s time (Levack 1992:111; Ben-Yehuda 1980:4) while the first known occurrence of the early modern witch – that is a witch in pact with the devil and out and about night-flying – occurred in 1428 in France (Cohn 1975:203). In Scotland however, there is no historical evidence pointing to the prevalence of large-scale witch persecution before the introduction of the act against witchcraft in 1563. There were trials but they were rare (Goodare 2002b). Witchcraft is much older than the Reformation but apparently witches were not such a big problem for church or state before the emergence of the Scottish protestant church: All evidence points towards the fact that “medieval people didn’t seem to be haunted by these beliefs.” (Goodare 2002a:1) Is there then a causal connection between the Reformation and the zealous persecution of witches? One reason it is intuitive to conceptualize ministers as zealous witch-hunters is that in Scotland witchcraft cases were closely connected to the idea of a pact with the devil (Larner 1981; Macdonald 2002a; Martin 2002; Wormald 2003). Larner argues that in Scottish Calvinism it was the idea of the covenant that attached a new and more dramatic meaning to witchcraft. In Scotland and elsewhere, the covenant - a bond between God and his people - was a central aspect of theology with deep-cutting political implications. In this context, witchcraft as a contract with the devil represented the “particularly horrific inversion” (Larner 1981: 172) of this bond. Her implicit sociological idea seems to be that the image of an actual bond between God and society created a virtual relationship between God and the people, consequently defining witches as outsiders structurally and on the collective level. Ben Yehuda, who finds that in Europe as a whole the concept of witchcraft had already been transformed in the 14th century, argues that witchcraft before that transformation was a technology used to help or
harm. However, in the course of a dogmatic transformation through elite discourse it turned into a form of serfdom to the devil. It was this shift that legitimized persecutions (Ben-Yedua 1980: 3).

The relationship of witchcraft cases and the concept of a bond with the devil have been discussed extensively. It has been argued that the pact with the Devil, rather than resembling the contract in covenant theology, was closer to the idea of the marriage contract (Martin 2002). MacDonald qualifies this interpretation by showing that in the county of Fife, the devil was present in many cases but not all. He also finds that the notions coming forward in these cases differ greatly from elite ideas about a satanic pact (Macdonald 2002a).

Independently from the kind of contract evoked in witchcraft accusations, the social meaning of witchcraft changed from the secret of an individual to the secret of a group.

To the heightened severity of the crime of witchcraft through its connection with the devil one might add an increase in ecclesiastical concern about popular discipline. MacDonald argues that the salience of witch trials correlates with the rising importance of the general populace and their godly behavior. Protestant ministers, so the argument goes, are much more concerned with the godly behavior of their flock than Catholic priests thus leading to tighter social control in all fields, be it heresy and witchcraft or sexual and moral indiscretions. According to Macdonald, witch-hunting was really an ideologically driven church project: “The church was attempting to build a godly society, and the burgesses, local lairds, judiciary and nobility were willing to go along with most elements of this program”41 (Macdonald 2002a:49).

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41 This reminds one strongly of Gorski’s (2003) argument that Protestantism helped state building because it supplied elites with an ideologically driven motivation to impose social order.
Witchcraft accusations, as the previous chapter has shown, erupted in waves. Any argument, ideological or structural, has to account for these temporal dynamics. If ideology was the driving force behind witch-hunting, one needs to think about historical developments connected to Calvinist theology that might have triggered multiple localities at once into witch-hunting.

In the introduction, I provided the reader with a brief sketch of the historical period under study. A detailed account will be given in Chapter 4, and I will turn to historical events at the end of this chapter as well. It suffices therefore to give here only a short sketch showing that – whatever their role in witch-hunting was – ministers were not drawn into it as a consequence of the great turns in Scottish history.

The first witch-hunting wave (1628-1630) starts and ends before the signing of the Covenant in 1638 – the takeoff moment for an increase in radicalism with regards to Presbyterianism. The first years of the revolutionary regime up until 1643 are characterized by an almost total absence of witch trials in the country. Only in 1643 and 1644, after the outbreak of civil war in England and coincidental with the signing of the Solemn League and Covenant did witch-hunts resurface. Afterwards they ceased and Scotland, which was now in war with its king, suddenly turned into a place apparently free of witchcraft-related anxieties. In 1649, one observes the first instance where a surge in ideological relevance for national politics actually coincides with a witch-hunt. The Covenant regime had by that time ruptured into two factions – those who negotiated the comeback of the king on one hand and the more radical Presbyterians who finally succeeded in 1649 on the other. I will argue in chapter 4 that this wave is indeed connected to the political events it correlates with but not in terms of ideology. It follows the time of occupation by the English under Cromwell. There is apart from a smaller outbreak 1658-59 no
witch-hunting at this time. Only in 1661-62, after the comeback of Charles II and the Restoration of monarchy did witch-hunts resurface.

**Ministers, Roles and Identities**

Ideological change alone didn’t produce witch-hunting waves. In the following paragraphs, I will tackle the question if never the less one can make an argument for the ministry’s involvement by showing that witch-hunting was a part of their social role as ministers in the reformed church. I find no evidence indicating that witchcraft accusations had anything to do with role behavior – at least not among ministers.

My sample includes areas with the severest outbreaks of witchcraft accusations and covers a large part of the total number of accused witches in Scotland (1,148 out of the 2,106 accused witches of whom we have information on their residence). Yet, most ministers in my sample, eighty-five percent of them in fact, never saw a woman or man from their parish in front of a commission to try cases of witchcraft.

Given the small number of ministers associated with witches, it’s interesting to see how the numbers of ties to witches are distributed over the small set of ministers who are connected to witchcraft cases. The graph below (Figure 4) shows two things: First, that most ministers had a rather small number of accused witches among their parishioners. And second that few ministers were connected to an extremely high number of witchcraft accusations. Two of the biggest outliers fell only a little short of 60 witches.
Figure 4: Ministers and the Number of Witch-Cases with which they are associated

The low number of witch-hunters shows that becoming part of the clergy did not turn actors into persecutors. However, the fact that there is no witchcraft related role behavior in this professional class does not preclude the possibility that there were behavioral mechanisms that brought about witch persecution. It only means that if there are mechanisms they must have operated on the level of a less inclusive group and not on the level of the clergy as a social category.

Institutional Socialization
Social roles might have emerged in smaller contexts below the level of professions. The universities of early modern Scotland are a good candidate for that. In Reformation Scotland, university education was a formative part of a minister’s life course. Hence, it makes sense to investigate if witch-hunting varied with the alma mater of ministers.

University attendance was common among ministers. The church insisted on highly educated men (Kirk 1989: xii), to such an extent that it would rather accept a vacancy in a parish than a
minister whom they saw as unfit for the job (McCallum 2008). As a consequence, the majority of ministers were educated (Makey 1976: 102, McCallum 2008). Education began early in the life course; usually at the age of sixteen and the normal time to graduation was 4 years. Typically ministers took a post-graduation course in theology after completing their MA (Makey 1976: 102). It’s not entirely clear from the available sources how many ministers took a course in theology after graduation. Makey identifies this strategy as typical, but McCallum based on graduation data produced by Reid (2011) finds that twenty percent definitely pursued such educational training. But because the attendance of these non-degree programs went often unrecorded the number is likely to be much higher (McCallum 2008:123).

I have data on 791 ministers. The bulk of these ministers went to St. Andrews, Edinburgh and Glasgow University. Recall that the sample of ministers covered areas in the counties of Fife, Edinburgh, Haddington and Ayr. The universities that are located within these counties and that hence supply most of the ministers in their respective counties are St Andrews, Edinburgh and Glasgow. If one looks at all university graduates contained in my sample, a complex relationship occurs. Falling only a little short of statistical significance at the five percent level, the table below (Table 1) shows that while the connection to witch-hunting is somewhat unclear in the case of the three local universities, Aberdeen as a university quite far away from the counties in my sample has a strong tendency to deliver less ministers to the phenomenon of witch-hunting than any other university.
Table 1: University Attendance by Connection to Witches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Minister – no witches</th>
<th>Minister with witches</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeen</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(31.4)</td>
<td>(6.6)</td>
<td>(38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>97.37%</td>
<td>2.63%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(177.5)</td>
<td>(37.5)</td>
<td>(215)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>79.53%</td>
<td>20.47%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(133.8)</td>
<td>(28.2)</td>
<td>(162)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>84.57%</td>
<td>15.43%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Andrews</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(308.8)</td>
<td>(65.2)</td>
<td>(374)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>81.82%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abroad</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.5)</td>
<td>(0.5)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>82.58%</td>
<td>17.42%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson chi2(4) = 8.3900  Pr = 0.078
*expected values in brackets

Are Aberdeen graduates less likely to get drawn into witch-hunting? Maybe because they are outsiders who left family and kin to find a parish post further away and hence lack support networks? The story that explains the abstinence of Aberdeen ministers from witch-hunting is likely very simple.

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\(^{42}\) St Andrews and Aberdeen consist of different colleges summarized here because information was inconsistent – sometimes giving the university as a whole and sometimes broken down by college. St Andrews housed St Mary’s, St. Leonard’s, and St Salvator’s college and Aberdeen King’s and Marischal College.
below shows the times of the first appointment to a parish. Most of the Aberdeen graduates, for reasons that are still unclear, were appointed at a time when the great witch-hunting waves were over – that is after the last big wave in 1661-62.

Figure 5: Aberdeen Graduates and Year of First Appointment

If we restrict the sample to include only graduates from the three main universities, we really see that there is no connection between city of graduation and a future association with witch-hunting (see Table 2 below).

Table 2: University Attendance in Core Institutions by Witch Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Minister – no witches</th>
<th>Minister with witches</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nr.</td>
<td>(Mean)</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>(175.8)</td>
<td>79.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>(132.4)</td>
<td>84.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Andrews</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>(305.8)</td>
<td>81.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>614</td>
<td></td>
<td>81.76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson chi2(2) = 1.5710  Pr = 0.456
The proportions of ministers who are associated with accused witches are strikingly similar across these three institutions. Twenty percent of the Edinburgh graduates, fifteen percent of the Glasgow students and eighteen percent of those who went to St Andrews are connected to witch trials in the course of their careers.

Those analyses are based on a rather complex sample, which has a selection problem systematically influenced by geographical region. For most of the ministry sample, I have included - where available - information on university graduation from the source document used for this dataset (see data and method section). The information compiled therein was – as is often the case with this kind of material – not collected on the basis of any scientific sampling technique. Its aim was completeness of information but, within this goal, information that is more easily accessible is more likely to be included. Another part of this sample, namely all data on the county of Fife up until ministers’ careers starting in the year 1610 is much closer to a complete coverage of ministers’ educational backgrounds. John McCallum, whose dissertation is based exclusively on the ministry data about Fife, collected this data. It was not possible within the scope of my dissertation research to consult as many additional sources as McCallum did in striving to complete the data on educational attainment (for an overview of the source material, see McCallum 2008: 116). Witch-hunting ministers, because their activities by definition cross-cut with secular institutions (which produce their own administrative data) are more likely to fill historical documents with information than ministers who do not engage in secular legal activities. If this was true, I would overestimate the number of ministers with a connection to witch-hunts in all universities and maybe slightly less so for the sample for St
Andrews University which is for a portion of the period under study researched more thoroughly. The effects of this bias however should be marginal.

**Interaction and Peer-effects**

While institutional socialization does not explain why some ministers were associated with witch-trials and most ministers weren’t, there might still be peer-influences operating on the cohort level. Identities emerge in social interaction (White 2008, Gould 1995). Peer group interaction, through some external trigger or simply through chance, might have created homophily among some minister cohorts in what regards the framing of witchcraft as an ever-present danger in society.

University cohorts are the most likely places for such processes. Once the minister entered his post in a parish, he was comparatively isolated from peer influence as there was only one minister in a parish except in a few cases – for example in the more populated burghs where more ministers served one congregation. Ministers met regularly in presbytery meetings (Whyte 2006), which might also serve towards identity formation. However, their shared experience and strong interaction in the formative years of the university education must have been stronger agents of socialization.

My data allows me to track many ministers through all stages in their life course except the gap that occurred between graduation and their first post. After their university education, just as in England (O’Day 2000), Scottish clergy gathered the skills needed for their work through practical training and apprenticeship by filling in for vacant posts, by serving as temporary schoolmasters and private preachers in noble houses – sometimes for years (Makey 1976: 102, McCallum 2008) before they finally received a call for the ministry. In the synods Glasgow and
Ayr it was normal for a minister to get his first parish post as much as six years after his graduation (Makey 1976: 102). There is unfortunately no data that allow for an investigation of the social influences ministers experienced in these years. However, arguably if the intense interaction with peers during their study time at university didn’t affect identities in terms of witch-hunting, one would not expect the post-graduation years in which ministers dispersed to different places to have an influence.

If witch-hunting ideologies were a result of interactive processes on the cohort level and those processes were taking place within universities, one would observe a high prevalence in some cohorts and a low prevalence in others. I have defined cohorts as overlaps in university attendance through time windows of four years. This is based on a normal duration to the MA of four years plus one year post-graduate study. As mentioned previously, it’s unclear how many ministers took part in post-graduate study and hence a time window of four years might be too large. I will address this issue at the end of the analysis. Table 3 reports for moving time windows of four years the proportion of ministers who are associated with witches in the parish they served for. In all three universities, there are few time windows in which more than fifty percent of the ministers are witch-hunters. In Edinburgh about thirteen percent of all time windows have more than half of their ministers later connected with witches, in St Andrews only two percent and in Glasgow about eight percent. There is no university where the percentage of ministers later connected to witches was higher than a quarter of all students for more than half of the time. Still, there appears to be enough temporal lumping to warrant a more detailed analysis.
Table 3: Cohorts and Proportion of Ministers connected to accused Witches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportion of Ministers with accused parishioners in time windows</th>
<th>Percent of all time windows</th>
<th>EDINBURGH</th>
<th>ST ANDREWS</th>
<th>GLASGOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 25%</td>
<td></td>
<td>54.62% (65)</td>
<td>70.83% (199)</td>
<td>73.98% (91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% - 49%</td>
<td></td>
<td>31.93% (38)</td>
<td>26.79% (45)</td>
<td>17.89% (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% - 74%</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.24% (11)</td>
<td>2.38% (4)</td>
<td>8.13% (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75%-100%</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.20% (5)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another way of looking at this is to visualize the network of students who studied together at these three universities. The following graphs show these networks. Ministers who were later on connected to witches are colored in dark gray. The advantage of these graphs compared to the above table is that the graphs provide a sense of time. Time automatically progresses through the means of social relationships from one tail of the component to the other.
Figure 6: Minister Cohorts - St. Andrews

n=325 ministers, ties = 3.568 (isolates deleted)

---

This and the following two network visualizations are made with Igraph for R: Csardi G, Nepusz T: The igraph software package for complex network research, InterJournal, Complex Systems 1695. 2006. [http://igraph.sf.net](http://igraph.sf.net)
Ministers at Edinburgh University, 1563–1710

Figure 7: Minister Cohorts - Edinburgh

n= 196 ministers, ties=1.551(isolates deleted)
Theoretically there are a couple of possible outcomes. One possibility could be that witch-hunting dogma is initiated by one person and multiplies over time through social influence. In this case, as one follows the direction of the graph, one would observe spells of increasing proportions of ministers with witch-hunting ideologies. This increase could turn into permanently high portions of zealous witch-hunters when ideologies become so stable as to
infest every incoming cohort. Here one would expect an increase in a minister’s likelihood to hunt witches dependent on the number of peers who do so as well.

Alternatively, the proportion could have gone through up and down waves. If witch-hunting ideology works like the virginity pledge in today’s US high schools (Bearman and Brückner 2001), for example, it would function only as long as it remains a minority movement: once a critical threshold of zealots has been reached the proportions decrease again. Here one would expect that ministers are less likely to be connected to accused witches if a critical mass of peers are connected to witches during their time of service in a parish.

Empirically, there is slight evidence for both proposed theories in some universities but no consistent evidence across universities, especially not when temporal variation in the opportunities to hunt witches is accounted for. Table 4 shows that the distribution of ministers who have a connection to witches is dependent on the proportion of peers with later witch-hunting connections, even if the student population of Glasgow University fails just slightly to be statistically distinguishable. The lower bound of less than nineteen percent witches contains all cases where the number of ministers with a witch-connection was lower than expected assuming that witch-hunters are distributed equally across time and university. In all three universities, there are less ministers with a witch-connection in this category than expected. As the proportion of peers with a later association to witches goes up, the chance of ego having a connection to witches rises as well, except for Glasgow University where this is only marginally the case. Edinburgh and St. Andrews however, show indications of a cohort effect on witch-connection. Puzzling, however, is the highest interval of witch-hunting peers. Here, Edinburgh yields less and St. Andrews only slightly more ego witch-hunters than expected. In other words,
if there is a cohort effect, this effect reaches a ceiling, which would support the minority movement theory. Once the number of peers with a witch-hunting connection exceeds forty percent, the cohort effect goes away. However, this makes little sense considering that when the proportion of witch-connected peers is low, there are less ministers than expected who later have a connection to a witch trial.

There is, however, a problem with this analysis because even if ministers are motivated to hunt witches, witch trials can never be entirely driven by their motivations alone. They needed secular authorities to hold trials. I have already shown in various parts of this dissertation that witch-hunting is strongly clustered in time. If this temporal clustering is produced by forces outside the ministry, which is one of the main findings and arguments in this dissertation, then the cohort effects measured here could be an artifact of the waves of witch-hunting.

Table 5 reports cohort effects controlling for variations in witch-hunting opportunities through time. I have conditioned peer proportions on the global number of ministers with a witch connection for each cohort. For each generation of ministers (cohort pooled across universities) I have calculated the proportion of witch-connected peers. The intervals indicate the deviation of each university cohort from the global cohort. This allows me to capture cohort effects relative to the available witch-hunting opportunities for cohorts. The question is now if, for each university, ministers with more witch-connected peers than expected for a global cohort are more likely to have a connection to witches themselves.

In this analysis both the distributions of Glasgow and Edinburg fail to achieve statistical significance and the deviation from the expected values is - with between one and two ministers in each category - very small. St. Andrews on the other hand, has a significantly different
distribution of ego ministers who served in witch-hunting parishes across peer proportions than would be expected. However, here the direction of the effects makes little sense. There are more ego ministers with witch-connection than to be expected both when peer proportions are lower than the global average and when they are higher. Only when the local proportion of witch-connected peers is more or less equal to the global one, are St. Andrew graduates less likely to serve in a witch-parish.

Table 4: Cohort Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportion of Peers with Witch- Connection</th>
<th>Glasgow</th>
<th>Edinburgh</th>
<th>St Andrews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ego no witches</td>
<td>Ego witches</td>
<td>Ego no witches</td>
<td>Ego witches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (0 - 0.19)*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>69.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium (- 0.4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>56.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (highest)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fischer's exact</td>
<td>0.058</td>
<td>Chi2</td>
<td>11.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*.19 is the average number of ministers later connected with witches in cohorts
Table 5: Cohort Effects conditional on Minister Generations

Deviation from generational average

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Glasgow</th>
<th>Edinburgh</th>
<th>St Andrews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ego no witches</td>
<td>Ego witches</td>
<td>Ego no witches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less (-.32 to -.04)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same (-.04 to .02)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2 ▼</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>52.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More (.021 to .42)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7 ▲</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>83.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| N              | 108     | 22       | 154        | 41         | 266           | 59          |
| Fischer’s Exact: | 0.278 | Fischer’s Exact: | 0.611 | Chi2 | 12.02 | df | 2 |
| p              |         |          |            |            | 0.002         |             |

* intervals are tertiles of the overall distribution

Possibly, the logic of witch-hunting in Scotland changes over time. During the time of the great witch-waves, cohort effects might become more pronounced as witch persecution reaches a certain level of salience and thus the issue rises in importance in university discussion networks.

Table 6 reports the same relationships as Table 4 only this time exclusively for ministers who served between 1625 and 1663. There is a statistically distinguishable effect for Glasgow and Edinburgh. However, the direction of the cohort influence on ego ministers (indicated by arrows even for small deviations from the expected values) does not reveal a coherent pattern. In Glasgow, nearly twice as many ministers are connected with witches if their peers range amongst the lowest proportion of witch-hunters. In the medium category, there are less ministers than expected. For Edinburgh, both ministers with less than twenty percent witch-hunting peers
and ministers with a medium number of such peers are more likely to be later connected to witches. Edinburgh is the only university of which we can speak of having a high number of ministers with later witches in the middle category. But even Edinburgh fails to achieve statistical significance when global cohort opportunities are controlled for.

### Table 6 Cohort Effects for Ministers in Service during 1625 - 1663

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportion of Peers with Witch-Connection</th>
<th>Glasgow</th>
<th>Edinburgh</th>
<th>St Andrews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ego no witches</td>
<td>Ego witches</td>
<td>Ego no witches</td>
<td>Ego witches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (0 - 0.19)*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9 ▲</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium (- 0.4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4 ▼</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (highest)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8 ▲</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| N                                        | 51      | 21        | 57         | 35          | 118         | 48         |

Fischer's exact 0.007  Fischer's exact 0.030  Fischer's exact 0.369

*0.19 is the average number of ministers later connected with witches in cohorts for the entire time period

I conclude from this that there are things happening on the cohort level to some degree but there is not enough evidence to hope that a consistent cohort effect with a universal direction in all universities explains the connection between waves of witch-hunting and the ministry.\(^{44}\)

\(^{44}\) This conclusion does not change when a smaller time window is selected. When using a time window of three years with few exceptions all effects maintain their direction. St. Andrews in the simple cohort effect table (Table 4) has more witches than expected when the proportion of peers with a witch-hunting connection is highest. Glasgow oversteps the threshold of statistical
In interpreting these results caution is in order. A stipulation of graduation class sizes shows that my data is very incomplete – not only because of missing values but also because it only covers ministers who ended up serving in one of the sampled areas. On average, there are two ministers in each graduation class. Even if I only include the three universities that are situated within the geographical area covered by my sample, the class size increases by less than one. Sometimes incoming classes were very small in Scottish universities. For example, in both 1582 and 1583 only one student entered St. Andrews University to study divinity. As time progressed however, classes became larger ranging somewhere between five and seventeen with some few outliers (Reid 2011:283). It’s clear therefore, that my data covers only fractions of cohorts.

**Minister Careers and Witch-Hunting**

One might argue that while witch-hunting has no connection to events that influence the ministry as a collective, there might still be socially patterned processes in the careers of the ministers that motivated them to accuse witches. The next section therefore deals with the question if there is anything in the course of a minister’s career that would explain the occurrence of witches in his parish. To anticipate the results, the ministers’ life courses show high levels of inertia with little movement between posts. If witch-hunting ministers do move, however, they do not tend to carry along witchcraft accusations. This section is therefore the last significance (p=0.045). In the table that controls for the proportion of witch-hunters in the global cohort (Table 5), Glasgow and Edinburgh flip the direction of their effects in the middle category. Edinburgh now yields a significant result at the five percent level (p=0.035) but the direction of the effects does not make sense, as ego witch-ministers are now twice as numerous as expected in the lowest category of peer proportions and fewer than expected in the middle category. For Glasgow, the results remain statistically insignificant (p=0.56). Other than that the results are constant and no results changes status in terms of significance.
piece of evidence brought forward in this chapter that justifies the conclusion that whether or not a minister had witch trials in his parish is dependent on the context of the parish rather than the individual minister or collective aspects of the ministry. In the following paragraphs I sketch the development and state of the ministry as a profession and then present data to corroborate this argument.

The Reformation had changed the clergy as a profession in fundamental ways. The new ministers were on average better off than their Catholic predecessors but variation in social mobility of the ministry decreased drastically. It has been argued that the ministry was no place for somebody on the lookout for a career, as payment was modest and the levels of qualifications requested were high (McCallum 2009; Whyte 2006). There were simply not that many high paying and influential offices to be achieved. Ministers neither inherited great estates (Makey 1979: 99) nor were ministers’ stipends a means to become very rich - except in a few cases in Edinburgh (Foster 1975:168). In fact some ministers lived in precarious financial situations. A study of the county of Fife from the Reformation to about 1630 (McCallum 2008, 2011) shows that variation was great in terms of income even within a parish over time. In other regions ministers seem to have been much better off. A sample of testaments from the areas of Glasgow and Edinburgh in 1662 shows that ministers left an average sum of £ 2,684 behind after their deaths, a sum only slightly below the financial status of proprietors, that is magnates and smaller landowners taken together, who left on average £ 3,134\textsuperscript{45}. To put this into the context of his parishioners, the average man of his congregation such as a farm servant or cottar possessed only ten percent of what the minister owned (Makey 1979: 116-17). This situation

\textsuperscript{45} 12 Scottish pounds were worth 1 pound sterling.
varied across time especially because of inflation. Inflation harmed some ministers more than others when their stipends were not adapted to the rise in prices. Payment in kind functioned as a certain level of protection but not every minister was paid in victualities to the same extent (McCallum 2011). In addition, the new church actively sought to prevent ministers from earning extra income as schoolmasters or clerks thus inhibiting the opportunities that were open to clergy at other times (Kirk 1989:xviii).

Yet, compared with their pre-reformation peers and with English priests, Scottish protestant ministers experienced more financial security so that, in short, one can argue that the average minister was neither extremely rich nor poor (McCallum 2011; Wormald 1991).

Importantly, financial security was dependent on the willingness of the benefice holders or the feuar if lands were held in feu-ferm\(^{46}\) to pay stipends. Benefices were strips of lands over which the benefice holder or feuar, had the right to collect the tenth part of the revenues. Two thirds of it, according to an Act by the Convention of Estates in 1561, were to remain in the possession of the benefice holder or feuar while one part of the third was to be used to pay the minister and the rest was endowed to the Crown (McCallum 2011). This system was not always as effective as ministers would have wished for and attempts were made centrally towards improvement. In 1606 for example James VI instituted a commission to investigate the state of stipends and to raise them where they did not provide sufficient funding for a local minister (Foster 1975: 160). But this commission was itself a deal made between the newly erected lords over former

\(^{46}\) Feu-ferm will become a topic in Chapter 4. It meant the granting of land to another person for an initial down-payment and a fix annual sum. For a detailed analysis of the practice of feu-ferm see Sanderson (Sanderson 1973)
ecclesiastical lands and thus the commission was able to influence the stipends of a very limited number of ministers (Foster 1975: 161). In 1617 and in 1622, further commissions with broader scope were brought to life so that gradually the system of stipends improved and complaints about it disappear from the archival material (Foster 1975: 164).

Under Charles I followed what was probably the most comprehensive attempt to reform the system of benefices and provide for ministers’ stipends (Foster 1975: 165). His scheme was to abolish the proportional nature of the tenth of the benefice and to replace it with fixed sums of money (Makey 1979). Unfortunately, it is not entirely clear how much impact these policies really had on the payment of stipends (Foster 1975: 167).

This system of provision for the ministry, one imagines, bears potential for temporal and geographical variation in the quality of parish posts. It has been argued that except for a town-country gap - stipends did not vary enough to induce movements between parishes (Whyte 2006: 439). However, there were substantial differences between wealthy parishes and poorer ones in what regards heritors’ abilities or willingness to pay high stipends. A minster in Collace, a small rural parish would earn £ 350 while a minister in Errol, one of the richer parishes received £ 912 (Makey 1979: 114). In some parishes at some times, financial security was more stable than in other parishes at other times, thus providing grounds to assume that there would be movement of ministers seeking better and more secure positions. Empirically however – at least for the parishes sampled here – minister didn’t or couldn’t strive for better posts. This high degree of stability was probably an outcome of lock-in processes in patronage networks.

47 Stipends were not the only income. In addition, ministers had a glebe and a manse, that is a piece of land to support them and a house (Foster 1975:170).
Candidates were often selected by patrons through kinship and relations to clients, which lead to localist recruitment practices (Whyte 2006: 437).

Table 7 shows that Scottish ministers were deeply embedded in their communities and served only a small number of parishes – in fact most (nearly 80 percent) of them served only one.

Table 7: Moves of Ministers in their Careers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Parishes served</th>
<th>Number of Ministers</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,194</td>
<td>79.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>15.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>3.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,498</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was little movement of ministers between parishes but there were also few ministers whose parishes had witches. Thus the more important question is if those ministers that do change posts are more likely to have a connection to witches. In fact, ministers who have a connection to witch-hunting seem to be a little more mobile but not sufficiently more mobile to justify any theory that would connect a minister’s propensity to change parish posts with his

48 Makey (1976) shows that this finding extends to all of Scotland and McCallum already showed this for the county of Fife up until the year 1640 (McCallum 2008).

49 Due to the sampling procedure, one might miss ministers who switched county and presbytery borders in their career. But, these cases must have been rare: a variable in my dataset indicating an entry in the source material about whether or not a minister was transferred anywhere does not yield any transfers for those who remained in the same parish. In addition, McCallum (2008) finds that most ministers in Fife remained in the presbytery where they held their first position.
witch-hunting activity (see Table 8 below). Within that population of ministers around 71% remain in the parish they were appointed to originally. Among those witch-hunting ministers that move, most have witches in only one parish (Table 8). Only four ministers are associated with the witches of more than one parish. This means, that ministers do not carry the idea of witchcraft from parish to parish. Like other parts of this dissertation, it shows that waves of witch-hunting are not a matter of zealousness traveling from minister to minister. It also shows that the parish context decided the existence of a connection between a minister and a witch or witches.

Table 8: Number of Parishes served by Ministers connected to witches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Parishes served</th>
<th>Number of Ministers (percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>170 (73.28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>50 (21.55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6 (2.59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6 (2.59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>232 (100)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Number of Parish-Witch-Case Incidences per Minister

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Parishes “hunted”</th>
<th>Number of Ministers (percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>228 (98.28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4 (1.72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>232 (100)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Plausible Explanation

These results are puzzling. They make sense, however, when the focus of the historical argument shifts to the identity of ministers in Scotland after the Reformation. This chapter began with the voice of John Welch at a moment of contemplation of the relationship of worldly and godly authority. “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor principalites, nor powers, nor any other creature, is able to separate me from the love of the majesty, which is in Christ Jesus, my Lord” (Kirkton 2010 [1703]: 15). This voice is a particular one. It’s the voice of a historical actor who became famous because he insisted explicitly on his ideological principles in times when these were sure to cause trouble for him. Even when one does not consider his relational closeness to John Knox and probably a wider network of radicals, John Welch is likely to be an outlier. With the work of Le Roy Ladurie, Ginzburg and others (Ginzburg, Tedeschi, and Tedeschi 1976; Ginzburg 1991; Ladurie and Morgan 2008; Le Roy Ladurie 1980) historical studies have long overcome the limitation of giving only the powerful a voice, but the problem remains that the voices of outliers are still heard more loudly than the voices of those who lived quiet lives and who were trying not to get involved in the whirls and troubled waters of historical change. These people are usually less visible and crucially they are less likely to leave behind material that we can use to understand their identities. In their cases we have to impute identity from patterns of behavior as they can be extracted from historical records. I have shown in this chapter that these data reveal no zealousness in witch-hunting. If anything, they
paint the image of a Scottish minister who remained largely unimpressed by events that changed his country – at least when it comes to witch-hunting. Why?

If one neglects ideological radicalism and thinks about quieter lives and the identities of the ministers living these lives, the focus slightly changes. Abstract questions of authority and design of government then step into the background and one imagines the minister in the middle of his parish community. How did he understand himself in the face of his parish flock and what was his position towards the more influential members of his parish, the heritors of the parish and those holding secular jurisdiction?

I cannot answer this question satisfyingly using the data available to me. But it is clear from the work of others that the Reformation affected the way in which ministers understood who they were, what their job and responsibility was and how their positions and status in the community were defined. Three points are worth mentioning.

First, the exclusivity of access to the Holy Scripture that made their Catholic predecessors the gatekeepers to salvation in their local communities decreased. Once scripture and sermon ceased to be in Latin, the clergy was no longer the keeper of a religious secret. This was supported by the increase in literacy and schooling of individuals from a more inclusive range of social origins than ever before. Reformers called for each parish to have its own school and many parishes followed this call and established schools with co-funding from church and property owners and better off parents (Todd 2002: 59-60). These educational initiatives offered good schooling coverage for the mid- and lowlands – the heartland of witch-hunting - but not so much for the highlands and the border region (McNeill and MacQueen 1997:437–49). However, in practice, access to the scripture was limited despite rising literacy rates. At no point in the
seventeenth century did the majority of ordinary families have a bible at their disposal (Whyte 2006: 439). Because of these developments, the minister remained the chief interpreter of scripture – an even more educated one than his Catholic predecessor – but “…he did not possess the same key to unlock the door to the kingdom of heavens” (Kirk 1989: xvii).

Second, the history of priests as gatekeepers to the knowledge of salvation did leave footprints in the construction of social status. Despite protestant doctrine, which aimed at eradicating superstition, ministers in Scotland continued to be seen as actors with a tighter connection to otherworldly powers than the average parishioner – they retained to varying degrees the character of a saint. It’s well known that early modern reformers abolished on the theological level the conception that the clergy are god’s representatives on earth descending from the apostles just as they banned saints and miracles from religious practice, yet these changes in doctrine didn’t alter the social status of ministers among their parishioners: “…Scottish clergy retained the roles of prophet, visionary and saint in an age when, in the perception of laity and clergy alike, miracles had by no means ceased” (Todd 2002: 386).

Third, magic survived Calvinism. It might have even survived modernity. When one counts as magic the many means people use to deal with things they cannot explain or things that cannot be influenced for the better, one might find it today as well (Thomas 1971). Sociologically, magic is a theory that allows for hope in hopeless circumstances without necessitating empirical evidence. Magic exists wherever there is a secret. Conspiracy theories of 9/11, pilgrimage to holy places, the end of the Maya calendar predicting the apocalypse all have in common the existence of one or more actors who held information or conducted actions that are secret. Calvinists tried to eradicate magical practices of what they interpreted as a popish misuse of
God’s name but this endeavor shipwrecked because of the persistency and ever-present construction of secrets in society. Misfortune in Catholic Scotland could be cured by pilgrimage to holy places and artifacts. In Calvinist Scotland the secret was no longer in the hands of the church. “The Reformed Kirk had attacked Catholic “magic”, but had as yet offered no alternative medicine of its own” (Graham 1996: 306). What did remain were witches, as keepers of secrets that one can use to explain misfortune.

As witches are a direct competition to the minister’s role in his parish, he should have wanted them persecuted and maybe he would have if he only had the opportunity to do it in a way which didn’t pose an even greater threat to his status. My theory is that, in the absence of means available to the ministry to prosecute witches, they simply didn’t believe they were there. They still believed in witchcraft but not in having a witch in their parish.

The Reformation gave local church courts a head start in local power. The capacity of the kirk sessions to hold jurisdiction and more importantly to actually successfully exercise it, affected the identity of the minister. Expectations of social control were directed towards him and the elders in the kirk session and the responsibly for social order rested on his shoulders. If witches broke loose in his parish, this was a clear signal that things were going very wrong indeed. An array of studies has shown that local kirk sessions engaged actively - even enthusiastically - in disciplinary action (Graham 1996; Hanham 2005; Leneman and Mitchison 1987; Mitchison and Leneman 1990). The result was a strong professional identity, which was defined through expertise in theological matters and a strong responsibility to enforce Christian law. Ben-Yehuda has argued that the Dominicans and the Inquisition in other parts of Europe used

50 Todd shows that this was often done not such much out of zealousness but with a view to maintain local harmony (Todd 2002)
witchcraft persecution to show their expertise as professional clergymen especially in areas where alternative victims of persecution were unavailable (Ben-Yehuda 1980: 11).

However, because church courts were not allowed to try witches in Scotland, witchcraft cases didn’t serve such purposes. On the contrary, rather than providing an arena to show professional expertise, witchcraft threatened the professional and social status of parish ministers. Ministers would have to confront themselves with an uncomfortable “truth” if there were witches among their parishioners. If witchcraft was practiced among their flock they would have to diagnose this as their failure in preventing sinful behavior without being able to re-establish order. This part – the enforcement of the law of king and god – had to be given away to lay people.

The classic argument of cognitive dissonance reduction (Festinger 1962) predicts that when situations occur that threaten individuals’ identities they either adapt their identity to the situation or they transform the situation to suit their identity. Luckily, there were no witches as long as whoever held jurisdiction didn’t wish them to be there and therefore, if not forced from other sides – ministers were able to model reality to fit their identity. Even when witchcraft accusations were brought forward by the population, there was still an exit option. Historical evidence suggests that ministers did indeed frequently opt out of witchcraft cases. There is more evidence of ministers and kirk sessions turning away parishioners who accused a neighbor of witchcraft and even punishing them for slander (McCallum 2008, Graham 1996) than there is on ministers accusing someone from their congregation of witchcraft. The SSW data also supports this idea through a curious fact. 790 dyads exist between witches and ministers in this dataset. Of these there are 289 dyads in which the minister is a resident of a different parish than the witch. This is remarkable considering that it makes no sense for a minister of another parish to
be involved in the trial of a witch.\footnote{790 is the number of those for which we have residence information on both sides. Not restricting the sample this way yields a total of 1.021 witch-minister dyads with 519 witches and 367 individual ministers. There are 2,355 persons involved in witch-hunting, including the ministers as well as witnesses, prosecutors and other roles.}

Consequently, it’s counterintuitive but on second sight reasonable that ministers were not actively engaged in witch-hunting. Witch-trials, simply because they were not within the authority of the minister, were a threat to his social status. Nothing shows more obviously the misguided state of a community than the use of witchcraft. It’s a pact with the devil and it’s a form of treason against the one entity that rules over humankind\footnote{Levack has pointed out that James VI in his concept of witches had politicized the idea of treason in witchcraft cases, which he based on the writings of the French philosopher Jean Bodin who had originally defined witchcraft as treason against God (Levack 2008:41).}. It’s also a magical ritual in a time when reformers have sought to eradicate all kinds of enchantment from the practices of worship (Thomas 1971). The existence of witchcraft meant that the resident minister failed in his attempt to establish a disciplined parish. In such cases, the signal was that secular authorities had to come in to establish social order.

Information from the Survey of Scottish Witchcraft (SSW) provides some interesting details about ministers’ involvement. When ministers were involved in witch trials officially they occur in the SSW data. 101 ministers can thus be allocated and associated with specific cases. A variable with additional notes shows the different tasks and roles the ministers had in these cases. It’s not always straightforward to make sense out of these notes. Often they indicate a form of involvement that says nothing about whether or not a minister was actively engaged in the case. Such entries are “involved in trial” or “attended her trial”. Many of these entries point
toward spiritual support such as “to confer and pray with the suspect” or “to prepare her for death”. In many cases however it clearly emerges that the minister followed a command in his involvement in witch-hunting. There are ten instances (that is ten witch-minister dyads) in which the notes indicate that the ministers was “ordered/appointed by presbytery to investigate”, nine times a minister was “ordered to attend the assize/justice ayr” and nine times “ordered to preach, find witnesses in the accused parish”, nine times “ordered to submit a request for a commission” four times “ordered to transport the suspect to the trial place” and three times “ordered to hear confession”. Many entries are less clearly a sign for external pressures to cooperate. For sixteen minister-witch dyads for example it’s merely said that they “attested their deposition” and for thirty-one cases the entry is that they “heard confession” or “witnessed a statement”. Similar entries are that a minister “attested her confession” which happened sixteen times and a minister was twenty-seven times involved as an “execution witness”. Other entries point towards a more active involvement. In fifteen cases it was noted that the minister “applied for a commission”, two times ministers “gave information about a suspect”, two “reported the accused to the presbytery”, two “exhorted to confess” and one even “complained that he was cursed”. This cannot be conclusive evidence. The data have not been surveyed systematically for this variable and too many entries are unclear. For many people involved in witchcraft cases, including ministers, there is no detail known about their involvement. Therefore, these data can at best serve to give a rough impression. Yet this impression points towards the possibility that many ministers – rather than initiating trials actively – were drawn into them through pressures from outside.

Therefore, it is likely that ministers weren’t themselves motivated. Rather they were an essential
part of witch-hunting in places where other authorities were able to pressure them into cooperation.

**History Re-considered: Ecclesiastical Cooperation in Times of Positional Change**

This new focus on the ministers’ embeddeness in local social structure calls history back to the table but now with a different question. Rather than trying to find a correlation between the great ideological shifts in Scottish history, one is now inclined to look out for events that had potential to alter the position of ministers within their congregations. There are multiple shifts in the power of different factions on a national level that could have destabilized the ministry on a local level. All of them were connected to a change in dogma. These are the re-introduction of bishops in 1610, the Five Articles of Perth in 1621, the abolishment of Episcopacy in 1638, the Act of Classes in 1649 together with the abolishment of lay patronage and the Restoration in 1660-62 together with the re-introduction of lay patronage. Yet, many changes didn’t lead to ruptures in the social structures in which ministers were embedded. In Sewell’s (1996) terminology, many things happened in the relationship between church and state that could have qualified as events but that didn’t lead to cascades of connected events, to a change of routine or to deep-cutting ruptures of social structure. Whenever power shifted between factions, a variety of reactions would have been possible: Religious persecution of non-conforming ministers, riots and insurgencies and even revolution. Some of these possibilities did come true at certain times, but at other times nothing of the sort happened.

Importantly, even among those changes that qualify as events only two correlate temporally with witch-hunting waves. Only policies that directly changed whose right it was to appoint a
minister coincide with witch-hunting waves. At these two points in time, when patronage rights shifted from one set of people to another, ministers were directly involved in witch trials. It thus appears that ministers cooperated in witch-hunting when their position in the parish was weak. Table 10 below provides a summary of the historical narrative that will follow. Exceptions are events that I have designated as governmental. They will be the concern of the next chapter as they do not immediately relate to the church-state relationship.

Table 10: Dogmatic and Positional Change in Connection with Witch-Hunting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Type of event</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Witch Craze In aftermath?</th>
<th>Ministers directly involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Re-Introduction of Bishops</td>
<td>Dogmatic</td>
<td>1596 - 1610</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accession of Charles I</td>
<td>Governmental</td>
<td>1625</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Very few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Articles of Perth</td>
<td>Dogmatic</td>
<td>1621</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covenant Revolution: Episcopacy abolished</td>
<td>Dogmatic</td>
<td>1638</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regime building Radical Presbyterianism:</td>
<td>Governmental</td>
<td>1640</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Very few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abolishment of Lay Patronage</td>
<td>Dogmatic &amp; Positional</td>
<td>1649</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Participation in government</td>
<td>Governmental</td>
<td>1655</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Very few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restoration and Re-Introduction of Lay Patronage</td>
<td>Dogmatic &amp; Positional</td>
<td>1661</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Many</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Re-Introduction of Bishops

The late 16th and the 17th century has been portrayed by many historians in terms of a tug of war between royalist and ecclesiastical factions (Kirk 1989; Macinnes 1991; Makey 1979; Stevenson 1973, 1975, 2011). These factions alternated in name and identity but were always meaningfully embedded somewhere between the dipole of state and church. The story begins with royal policies and a dogmatic shift from Presbyterianism to Episcopacy that had no connection to witch-hunting or the involvement of ministers.

At the core of Episcopacy lies the question of bishops, whose role in society became one of the most contested issues in seventeenth century Scottish politics. For a long time, their existence was nominal rather than real. In 1596 James VI had forced them upon the church but their role for the everyday workings of the Scottish clergy was negligible. They did have political influence in the secular realm: they served as civil servants of the king, they sat in parliament as representatives of the clerical estate and from 1609 onwards they held commissary courts where they had jurisdiction over what we might call today civil court cases such as cases of slander, debt and wills but also divorce cases and conflict over teinds (Foster 1975:22).

Bishops encroached slowly but steadily upon politics in Parliament, Privy Council and through high offices of state (Makey 1979: 16). Within these gradual increases of Episcopacy however the ministers in local kirk sessions (church courts) remained mostly unaffected. With the takeover of bishops in the overseeing of presentations of ministers to parish posts they started to interfere with local matters of patronage directly– at first gradually and then from 1610 on

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53 For a critique pointing out that this is an oversimplification see MacInnes (1994)
completely. Patrons however retained the right to present the minister – that is to choose a candidate (Foster 1975: 26). In theory protest against this coming to power of bishops could have led to turn-over in the ministry through the deposition of non-conforming clergy but most ministers did not protest. “The point had not yet been reached in Scottish history when changes in ecclesiastical polity would be accompanied by numerous deprivations” (Foster 1975: 29). As we will see later in this chapter, depositions were to come but their net effect on the organizational tightness of local kirk sessions remained for the entire period limited.

In hindsight, these changes did have potential to qualify as events in Sewell’s (1996) definition. They interfered with land-holding privileges and they increased control of the crown over a radical church. Yet they didn’t change routines, nor did they trigger-off other events. The structures they interfered with were repaired, not through fluid and self-reproducing structures in an “unevenly articulate network” (Sewell 1996: 842) of social formation but rather through conscientious political moves by the crown. Over the years, James had cleverly built for himself a network of supporters – among other things through the typical patronage politics of reward and entitlement (Lachmann 2000) that he was able to afford because the crown managed to get access to all former church land after the Reformation. He was able to sustain this network even when his policies affected parts of that network negatively. An illustrative example is his solution in regards to bishopric lands. When James restored, through Parliament, estates for bishops it was clear that someone had to let go. He counteracted the discontent that would arise from this policy by transforming abbey lands (which were under the temporal jurisdiction of a noble) into heritable jurisdictions (Foster 1975: 28). James also managed to influence the General Assembly – the highest church court – through clever manipulation. His first step was
to call an assembly in 1596, when it was not yet the legitimate right of a monarch to do so.

Through inviting to this assembly a set of ministers from the North with royal sympathies he managed to have the meeting acknowledged as a General Assembly and thus he established his right to summon the highest decisional body of the church and to influence its members. This became an oft-used tool in his strategies to increase control over the church (Foster 1975: 14).

By 1610 it must have been clear, even in remote parts of the kingdom, that the ideal type of a church separated from the state, its own master and sole authority over religious matters, was further removed from reality than ever. James had not only forced a class of civil servants upon the church, he had also deeply interfered with one of the most important aspects of the Scottish-Calvinist dogma that ascribed authority over ecclesiastical matters to the church. In their own words: “For this power ecclesiasticall flowes immediatlie from God, and the Mediator Jesus Christ, and is spirituall, not having a temporall heid on earth, bot onlie Christ, the onlie spirituall King and Governour of his kirk (...) Notwithstanding, as the ministeris and uthers of the ecclesiasticall estait ar subject to the magistrate civill, so aught the person of the magistrat be subject to the kirk spirituall, and in ecclesiasticall government”55. The reintroduction of Bishops represents a fundamental shift in the paradigm of a separated church. Yet, no witch-hunting wave accompanies these developments.

54 Bishops were civil servants in all but name because they were complete outsiders to the traditional hierarchies of kinship and land-based status and dependent entirely on the crown (Goodare 1993:176).

The Five Articles of Perth

Jurisdiction didn’t remain the only area into which James’ policies intruded. On the contrary, his next interference into ecclesiastical matters was spiritual. In 1618 he went a step further by attempting to gain authority over worship as well (Stewart 2007:1015). With the Five Articles of Perth, forced upon the church in 1617 and ratified by Parliament in 1621 mostly through the voting Parliamentarians with a connection to the court (Goodare 1995), James tried to leap forwards towards a unification of Scottish and English practices of worship. The articles prescribed five changes to religious practice: religious holidays (abolished at the Reformation) were to be observed again, communion and baptism could be held in private houses, confirmation had to be conducted by a bishop and the sacrament had to be taken in kneeling position. Especially the first and the last article provoked a reaction among the clergy and educated elites. The other two were partially already common practice and in all likelihood would not have caused much unrest if introduced without the others (Stewart 2007:1014; Todd 2002:85–86).

More than anything, the Five Articles were a shift in dogma. Decades later Scottish Presbyterians would pick up this event from the pile of past happenings and weave it into their revolutionary narrative – but for now – before the future would change history (Bearman et al. 1999), the Five Articles of Perth really didn’t alter the positions and practices of most ministers and their congregations very much. Only in Edinburgh were their consequences real. On the countryside, ministers and their congregations practiced the articles with much interpretative flexibility, if they didn’t completely ignore them. In Edinburgh, the situation was different. The Privy Council and the town magistrates couldn’t possibly ignore activities of people in their own
neighborhoods and from their own networks when those activities openly defied royal prerogative. Consequently, non-conformity to the articles was prosecuted in the capital but not in its surroundings: “Edinburgh had become a conformist island surrounded by a nonconforming sea” (Stewart 2007: 1024). And the inhabitants of the capital turned this fact to their advantage to the grave discomfort of those authorities who were – whether they wanted it or not - responsible for enforcing the articles. When Edinburgh ministers started to hold service in accordance with the articles, thousands of citizens – instead of conforming to newly introduced practices of worship – simply marched into neighboring parishes in the outskirts of Edinburgh where service was still held as before. As the Court of High Commission stamped out the practices of these outlying churches one by one, Edinburgh’s people retracted into the private and started to hold conventicels (Stewart 2007: 1024) – a form of passive resistance that would become a standard practice for Presbyterians in times of religious persecution. There was not much to be done against these meetings as “local justices or burgh bailies were not going to march into the homes of their neighbors and demand to know whether their regular Bible study meeting was actually a conventicle” (Stewart 2007: 1025). Time got the better of the articles and after 1622 they, for all practical purposes – ceased to be enforced (Wormald 2005: 130).

Even if the central state found no means to impose the Five Articles, they represent an attempted shift in dogma and the controversy about them was heated. Resistance to following dictated changes in ideology is after all just another way to engage in controversy. But no witch-hunting took place until the great wave of 1628-30. The only connection one can find is the individual biography of David Calderwood, who loudly protested against the articles. He was a minister, intellectual and contemporary observer who published widely on issues regarding church and
government (Calderwood 1620, 1636, 1638, 1678). He was also a minister whose parish in 1648 (twenty-seven years later) was home to forty accused witches. In terms of witch-hunting, the Five Articles of Perth had even less impact than they had on real local practices of worship. One might object that the lack of witch-hunts merely results from the irrelevance of the articles for most of the Scottish population. But, as I show in the following section, the Presbyterians did rise against royal policy two decades later, and this changed the entire country both in ideological and organizational terms and even then witch-hunts failed to appear.

The Covenant Revolution and the abolishment of Episcopacy

The dogmatic shifts introduced in the Five Articles of Perth reverberated in a great echo when Presbyterians started to resist the attempts of their absentee king Charles I to further meddle with their practices of worship. In the late thirties, contemporaries turned the policies regarding bishops and the Five Articles of Perth into historical events by interpreting them as the triggers and justification for upheaval (Makey 1979: 16). In 1637 Charles I introduced to Scotland a new Anglican style prayer book, edited by the bishops of Scotland (Makey 1979:17). This action became the trigger for a riot in Edinburgh that radiated out into the rest of the Lowlands and ultimately led to the signing of the Covenant in 1638 (Stevenson 1973). In this context of political unrest, a revolutionary document was drafted in 1638, called the Covenant. It was signed by a great number of Scots. Copies were sent to every parish thus giving this movement nationwide scope. Taken by its word, the Covenant was a re-establishment of the Presbyterian church system in the form of a treaty with - not in opposition to - the king. But of course, given that its content included resistance to the very policies that Charles had envisioned for the
Scottish Church and the abolishment of bishops (Stevenson 1973), and therefore the eradication of the most important branch of civil servants available to early modern Scottish kings (Goodare 1993), the Covenant was a revolutionary document that could not possibly be signed by Charles (Stevenson 1973). The General Assembly met in Glasgow in November 1638 and declared all decisions made by General Assemblies since 1606 as void – that included the General Assemblies that James had so successfully manipulated. This meant the abolishment of Episcopacy and the annulment of the Five Articles of Perth (Stewart 2007).

This dogmatic change led to the deposition of ministers who refused to conform but it didn’t alter the system of lay patronage. The by far severest period of depositions was from 1638 to 1640 when 78 ministers were deposed\(^56\) mainly in the areas of Edinburgh, St. Andrews, Glasgow and Ayr (McNeill 1997: 349) through especially appointed commissions (Stevenson 1975). Then, the depositions paused – interestingly in exactly the years before a great witch-hunt in 1643-44. Only fifteen depositions are detectable for the years 1641-43. Purges then resurfaced again during 1644-7 (McNeill 1997: 349) where about thirty-seven ministers were purged from office (Stevenson 1975: 328).

**Radical Presbyterians and the Abolishment of Lay Patronage**

These purges became even more drastic in 1649, legalized through an act called the Act of Classes when radical Presbyterians took over government. In 1648 the Scottish Parliament, through its treaty with - and a promise of military intervention for - Charles I, produced a split of the Covenant movement into two factions: The Kirk Party, consisting of radical Presbyterians

\(^{56}\) Stevenson’s estimate yields slightly different numbers when he argues that between 1638 and 1640 ninety-three ministers were deposed (Stevenson 1975: 326)
on one hand and the Engagers, the royalist faction (Stevenson 1975: 329) on the other hand.

Defeated at the battle of Preston in August 1648, the Engagers lost political influence and the radical Presbyterians took over (Wormald 2005: 138). Their policies were aimed at clearing offices and the ministry of people who had supported the engagement movement and thus in the years 1649-50 a high number of 105 ministers were deposed for their support of – or lack of opposition to - the royalist revolt.

This is the first of these shifts in church government that correlates with witch-hunting. It is also the first time that patronage rights changed. In the First Book of Discipline, where the Reformers laid out their vision for a new church and government, it is requested that patronage be handed to the church as its rightful possessor (Wormald 1991:124). However, in practice, lay patronage survived the Reformation (Kirk 1989, Foster 1975). Initially, in 1560, “while the kirk, its eyes raised to heaven, proposed to abolish patronage, the crown stepped in and took over almost the whole lot” (Wormald 1991:127). Its trick was to claim the patronage rights of the religious houses only, except that eighty-six percent of all parishes were under the control of religious houses. This era of almost total royal control decayed gradually but quickly through the Crown's extensive use for the purpose of patronage of the lands that formerly belonged to the religious houses. The land went into the hands of gentrymen and the patronage went alongside it as right of property (Wormald 1981). By the time witch-hunting came in the first great wave, the right to appoint a minister was vested in lay patrons – those lay patrons who were also entitled to receive revenue from former ecclesiastical land. After presentation through the patron, presbyteries tested the candidate for his knowledge in theology and ancient languages (Foster
The minister was then to preach in his future parish after which occasion the parishioners had the opportunity to object (Foster 1975: 140, Todd 2002: 363, Whyte 2006).

In April 1649 lay patronage was abolished by Parliament. From then on until the Restoration, ministers were to be elected by a complex procedure. Presbyteries and elders, that is members of the local elite with appointments to their local church courts, had the right to nominate candidates for their local ministry posts. The kirk sessions, the local church courts that during vacancies consisted of the elders, would then decide if they thought this candidate fit or unfit for the ministry in their parish. After this election of a kind, the congregation as a whole was asked for its opinion. If they approved, the presbytery would take the ultimate decision. If the congregation for whatever reason didn’t agree with both the presbytery’s and the kirk session’s choice of candidate, it had a right to be heard. Still, in the end the final decision remained in the hands of the presbytery (Makey 1979: 79-80).

**Restoration and Re-Introduction of Lay Patronage**

After monarchy was restored in 1660, this system of appointment reverted. Episcopacy was re-introduced and lay patronage re-established through a series of parliamentary legislation. In February 1661, acts passed by the Parliament of 1649 that had abolished lay patronage were declared null and void\(^57\). And shortly after that the ‘Act anent the Presentation of ministers’ was passed. The not exactly impartial historian Wodrow who published his book “The History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland from the Restoration to the Revolution” around 1721 and

\(^{57}\) RPS: NAS.PA2/26, 38-42 in Brown
who was born early enough to have known eyewitnesses of the time, stated that “to secure their designed model of church government now coming in, they re-introduced the unreasonable and antichristian burden of ‘patrons and presentations,’ upon this church” (Wodrow 1828:104). The Act anent the Presentation of Ministers, passed in June 1661\(^{58}\) and was re-enforced by an act in June 1662\(^{59}\) with an act forcing all ministers who had been appointed after 1649, and thus serving without the blessing and influence of lay patrons, to be re-appointed by a patron and confirmed by a bishop. As many as 274 ministers left or had to leave office because they could not or would not find a lay patron to re-appoint them (McNeill 1997: 400). Those depositions were especially numerous in the east west (Donaldson 1985:186) The first ministers involved in witch-hunting occur in May 1661 but their involvement increases after June 1661.

None of this came as a surprise to either clergy or lay people. The Scots had anticipated that radical Presbyterianism would not prevail (Davies and Hardacre 1962) once monarchy was restored and the first parliamentary sessions and proclamation by the king had left little doubt that Charles II would lead Scotland into episcopacy – despite his signing of the Covenant (MacIntosh 2007:36). Parliament had not prevented the surge of power that Charles granted himself over the state and the church. Hence, Presbyterians were aware that this new government would not resemble the ideas that the covenant revolution had put into governmental practice (Raffe 2012:73).

The graph below locates all events in time and connects them to the overall distribution of witch trials in Scotland. It shows that the temporal distribution of witch-hunts does not correlate

\(^{58}\) RPS: NAS.PA/27, f.38-38v. in Brown

\(^{59}\) RPS: NAS.PA/28, f.8-8v. in Brown
straightforwardly with power struggles in the church (see Figure 9). The above-described
historical development coincided only on two occasions with a witch-hunt, in 1649 and 1661.
This is a truly curious finding. Ideological change, change in worship and even purging of
ministers out of office had no effect on witch-hunting. Only when the right to appoint ministers
changed hands from one set of people to another did witch-hunts follow. Only when authority
over presentation was changed locally did ministers cooperate in witch-trials. The introduction
of bishops as overseers of presentation did not affect local relations in communities. As long as
changes didn’t affect local patronage there was no witch-hunting. This is yet another finding that
points towards the theory that ministers had to be pressured into bringing forward evidence
against witches. When patronage rights changed, all ministry positions were suddenly occupied
by clergy who had been appointed by legitimate means in the past that turned suddenly
illegitimate in the present. Their positions were outcomes of patronage and kin networks that
were no longer the locus of authority over appointments. Of course, in some and probably many
localities congregations and lay patrons held a consensus in what regarded their ministers.
However, where congregations had disagreed with the appointments made by lay patrons, the
minister was in a precarious position after the abolishment of lay patronage. On the flipside, in
1660, those ministers were in trouble that served for parishes in which the congregation
supported the minister but not the lay patron.
Figure 9: Temporal Distribution of Witch Trials and Changes in Patronage

This means that even on the local level, only structural – not ideological change – created uncertainty. As long as the security of one’s post was solely dependent on confirming with a new dogma, most ministers were not in precarious situations. Yet when the networks, whose support had led to their parish post, suddenly became irrelevant ministers got involved in witch-hunting.

To be sure, there are witch-hunts in times when patronage rights were not changed. Lay patronage continued during the sixteen twenties, thirties and the early forties. Yet there are waves of witch trials in 1628-30 and 1643-44. If ministers really tried to avoid witch trials and were less able to do so in times when their position was uncertain, these two witch-hunts show that uncertainty among ministers was not necessary to make witch-hunts possible. To anticipate the findings in Chapter 4, the motivation for witch trials originates not the in the ministry but among a class of gentry men struggling for social status.

This is confirmed by looking at the number of Witch-Minister Dyads over time as taken from the Survey of Scottish Witchcraft data (Figure 10). That is – in other words – the number of
times that ministers were actually involved in witch trials for any given year. It is very clear that ministers show a high degree of involvement in witch-trials only in times of a change in patronage appointment rights. Note that none of the previous analyses of the connection between witches and ministers have looked at the direct involvement of ministers in trials. They have looked at the question of whether there are witches who are residents of a parish in which a given person is minister at the time of the witch trial. The data used here measures involvement of ministers directly. For the graph below, in other words, only those ministers are counted who are actually present in witch-trial documents and are described as having been involved.

Figure 10: Direct Trial Involvement of Ministers through Time

Another fact is noteworthy as well. Witch-hunts following a change in patronage are much greater than all other ones, involving twice as many or more witches than before (Figure 9). Did cooperation of ministers make witch-hunting easier for those who wanted witch trials to occur? Apparently ministers when they could be brought to cooperate were useful in uncovering witches. This would make sense against the background that ministers knew their parishioners very well – in fact better than any other member of the parish elite. Not only did they see their
congregation on Sunday and on mid-week services in the church. They also visited the sick and the poor, they received all complaints about neighbors from within the parish and they were obliged to visit each family in their parish several times a year to catechize every member of the household (Whyte 2006: 439). One can only imagine the amount of local knowledge they gathered this way. Conflicts, misfortunes small and great and all kinds of things that happened in social relationships of each family and neighborhood must have come to their ears. Nobody was as close or closer to the stuff that witchcraft accusations are made of.

**Conclusion**

For ministers hunting witches was a status threat. Yet witches are a threat to social order as well. If it weren’t for the legal problem of the church’s inability to prosecute witches, ministers’ identities, as the keepers of social order and godly discipline, would have led them to promote witchcraft to the top of the list of ungodly behaviors to be prosecuted. Witches are a problem of social order and someone must have had a motivation to make this problem his own. The crucial question is who is the target of social order making? With whom in mind do actors impose social order? Ministers got involved in witch-hunting not when they wanted to interfere with the relations of their parishioners. They cooperated in witch trials when the relationship to their superiors changed. In investigating motivations to impose social order, the focus is usually on the effect this has on the population. This chapter has helped in shifting the focus away from the image of downward control to the question of what social order making induces upwardly – among the ranks of people who are higher in power than the social order maker himself.

In this chapter, has also pointed towards the parish context as the place where an explanation
could be found. No individual or collective property of the ministers explained why witches occurred in their congregations. The question of whether or not a minister had a witch case arising in his parish seems to dependent on the place not the minister. The next chapter will therefore look at the geographical distribution of witch-trials.

The chapter that follows will decompose the great witch-hunting waves of Scotland into their constituent parts to show what the local structure of witchcraft persecutions looked like. I will show how global waves are in fact local patterns that are woven together by a set of prosecutors who draw their witches from multiple localities. This indicates two things at once. On the one hand it shows that prosecutors are key to understanding witch-hunting waves. On the other hand, it suggests that witch-hunting had a meaningful relationship to the center of power in the Scottish capital, as the core cluster of witch-hunting parishes is located in its vicinity. This I will further substantiate in Chapter 4, where I show that gentry with perspectives for upward social mobility where the active witch-hunters who created waves of witch-hunting with and without the help of ministers.
Chapter 3 – Boundaries and Witch Trial Places

“Institutional systems do not have boundaries, instead they do boundaries through practices that evolve over time and according to vantage points. If you have access to God, fine, but the rest of us must swear off boundaries and their satellite mirages” (White 2007:199)

Introduction

Witchcraft has been a desert subject. Studies are based either on the mirage of national waves of witch-hunting or they have singled out oases. In the first case, what you see is an illusion, in the second your findings are real but they cover a small part of reality. To my knowledge, this chapter represents the first attempt to use network tools to find geographical patterns in witch-hunting. Regression and event history models (Baten and Woitek 2001; Jensen 2007; Oster 2004) have been used. These studies have sieved the sand with the result of probabilistic models based on economic factors. All these approaches suffer from boundary issues. I capture the boundaries of local witch-hunts through the practices of prosecutors. In my analysis, parishes are clustered into one space of witch-hunting by modeling the network of parishes connected through moves of prosecutors.
I find that witch-hunts do not adhere to administrative boundaries. They are organized in social units that transcend the boundaries of parishes. At the same time they remain below the reach of the regions. Hence there is little hope for studies using either one of these units.

**About Boundaries**

There’s a serious problem with the temporal distribution of witch-trials. Apart from local studies, almost all scholars have used the distribution of witch trials over time as it appears on the national level. Hence global waves have been the general explanandum in studies about Scottish witchcraft. Martin rightfully criticizes this approach and shows by disaggregating the data into witch trial distributions on the parish level that for most of its contemporaries, witchcraft accusations were hardly ever perceived as witchcraft panics. On a local level, witch-hunts were most of the time in most places simply nonexistent and if they yielded witches, communities rarely experienced more than one or two witches at a time (Martin 2008).

As boundaries are one of the central objects of this chapter, a definition of community as it is used here is called for. Most scholars implicitly use the parish as the geographical equivalent of a community. I will do so as well. This might sound inconsistent with the main argument made here, but one should be careful not to overdo the deconstruction of administrative boundaries. Social life draws the boundaries around its own units but – in contrast to the case of witch-hunting – there are good reasons for the parish to be a meaningful unit in most concerns of daily routine. Each parish had its own church and church court as the focal point to which

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60 See Hanham’s study for a great description on early modern parish life (2005)
parishioners were drawn (with the exception of the market place) and geographical mobility was limited for most people because they didn’t possess the means to travel. This is less true for members of higher social classes. Landownership connected gentry and aristocrats with various parishes – oftentimes spread out through large areas of the country (Brown 2004; Sanderson 1982). But for the greatest part of the population the parish or the smaller unit of settlement was the focal area of social life.

Thus defined, neither community nor ‘society’ seem to be the spaces where witch-hunting mechanisms evolve. The great global waves are deceptive. But, witch-hunts are also not contained within communities. My findings show that through the action of prosecutors multiple communities were drawn into persecution waves. The national context is thus too large and the local context to small when one searches for an explanation of witchcraft cases. Before I show how these extra-local areas come about, I will first bring forward negative evidence.

We cannot learn anything from parish-level distributions. On the parish-level, experiences with witch trials vary greatly. Haddington, Whitekirk, Libberton and Aberlady are four parishes in Scotland. If anyone had asked the inhabitants of these four parishes about their experience with witchcraft accusations the answers would have differed greatly. The person from Aberlady would have said that there have never been any witches in his lands. The inhabitant of Libberton would have claimed that he himself had never witnessed a trial but that according to the stories of the elder people there had been a witch in Calder once. In Whitekirk people would have said they had heard of witches and had found them on occasions. And in Haddington, people would have said that witches were a part of everyday life and almost every generation lived to see a witch trial.
Martin has already ventured into the arduous project of representing parish-level distributions through cross tabulations and graphs. She arrived at a paradoxical conclusion: regionally, witch-hunts appear as panics with many suspects drawn into the swirl of accusations, but locally there is no trace of panic (Martin 2008).

She distinguishes between two approaches to the distribution of witch trials through time and place. A suspect-based model whose object of inquiry is the clumping of accused persons in regions. And a witch-accusing community model that looks at distributions from the perspective of the individual parish. The suspect-based model starts at national waves of witch-hunting and disaggregates them into regions, defined as small groups of counties. From this perspective, witch-hunts are regionally dense and clumped to varying degrees across time. For almost all national waves of witch-hunting, cases are concentrated within a few regions. The only exception is the Restoration wave in 1661-62, whose scope was geographically widest with four regions involved in witch-hunting to considerable degrees (Martin 2008: 127). Witch-hunts did erupt in waves regionally but not on a national level (except maybe for the Restoration hunt - but even there, most of Scotland wasn’t affected). The suspect-based approach in other words, supports the idea that accusations for witchcraft were somehow connected to a whole bunch of other accusations, thus making room for the concept of witchcraft accusations as panic.

While this might call epidemiologists and advocates of self-reinforcing processes on stage, the witch-accusing community perspective buffers any enthusiasm for such theories. Using the same data, only this time from the perspective of the parish, Martin comes to the conclusion that “Most accusations, even during peak years, were made one at a time in separate parishes” (Martin 2008:138). My investigation of the data reveals that there were 1,233 accusations made
by witches accusing others of witchcraft. Importantly, the majority of these accusations (about 74 percent!) were made against persons who had already been tried for witchcraft, or, if not tried, had at least been accused of witchcraft before. Hence, only about a quarter of all accusations generated new suspects of witchcraft. There is very little support for the panic theory.

Martin’s point is well made and her book chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the distributional nature of witchcraft cases that goes as far as cross tabulations and distributional graphs can take us. The lesson learnt from this thorough and detailed effort is that disaggregating the data geographically helps to see the danger of quick assumptions made on the macro-level. Still, it does not offer a remedy against it. Witch-hunts are not national but they are also not community based. Yet, they are somehow connected or otherwise regional lumping would not occur.

**Witch Trials on the Local Level**

There are two problems with Martin’s analytical strategy. First, in the absence of network tools, the boundaries around local instances of witch-hunting are arbitrarily drawn when administrative units are used. One could get lucky if witch-hunts had adhered to civil boundaries, for example if witches had been tried in regular courts. As it happens we aren’t so fortunate. Witch trials take place in commissions that are defined through their members and not through their location. Second, as there is great temporal as well as spatial variation in witch-hunting, cross-tabulations and simple graphs fail to portray the dynamics of the processes under
study. With these methods there is no way around either collapsing time or space. Yet, collapsing either time or space is problematic seeing that all evidence points towards a combination of time and space as the place to look out for an explanandum.

To give the reader an impression of the raw data on witch trials in parishes through time, I use a sequence analysis tool⁶¹. Each parish constitutes a sequence of trial years and non-trial years. I have only included parishes that had at least one witch throughout the period of witch-hunting in Scotland. The country has 861 parishes in total but only 369 parishes had accusations for witchcraft (Martin 2008: 136).

The sequence plot (Figure 11) gives every single parish a horizontal line that stretches from the beginning of the study period in 1563 on the left side to the end in 1736 on the right side.

For the visualization that follows, I have stretched every witch-hunting event three years in time to improve visibility. For the plot used here, I have ordered sequences by how turbulent they are using a measure proposed by Elzinga and Liefbroer (2007)⁶². In a nutshell, the most turbulent sequence is from a parish in which periods of no witch-hunting, minimal witch-hunting and greater witch-hunting alternate most frequently. In more detail, the measure takes into account the frequency of changes from one state to another (0-1-0-1 is more turbulent than 0-0-1-1), the

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⁶¹ Sequence analysis has been used in a variety of problem sets that contained the search for typical patterns in data. See Aisenbrey and Fasang for a comprehensive and very accessible introduction (2010). I use it only to visualize but this idea is nevertheless based on Stovel’s pioneering work (2001).

magnitude to which these states are diverse (0-1-0-2 is more turbulent than 0-1-0-1) and the
time spent in any given state (1-0-1 is more turbulent than 1-0-0-1)\textsuperscript{63}.

**Figure 11: Sequence Plot of Parish Witch Trials**\textsuperscript{64}

*white = 0 witches, gray = 1 witch, black = more than 1 (n=369 parishes)

\textsuperscript{63} This means that a parish with a continuous stream of witch-hunting would be as steady as one
with long spells of no witch-hunting. This would be misleading but it is only a hypothetical
problem because no parish has spells of continuous witch-hunting. One could have ordered
parishes simply by the frequency of their witch-hunting years, however then the timing of witch-
hunts would not have factored into visualization and hence one would not see the pattern in
Figure 11 that looks a little like a mountain.

\textsuperscript{64} Visualization with Traminer for R by Gabadinho, A., Ritschard, G., Müller, N. S., Studer, M.
The plot shows that there is temporal pattern but also noise in this data. Most of the time there was a witch-accusation somewhere in Scotland. Recall, that for this visualization I have stretched every witch-hunt three years in time. Therefore, one should not be tempted to conclude from this graph that there is no year whatsoever in which the country was witch-free. But, for the most part, there was usually a witch somewhere. It’s observable through the stacking of some witch-hunting years on top of each other that there is a tendency to jump into witch-hunting during the great waves even among those parishes whose involvement in witch-hunting is limited to one or two years. Turbulence is a term that not only captures the properties of the measure but also the actual meaning for the people living in these parishes. In parishes at the bottom of this graph, life was not turbulent in terms of witch-hunting. In the upper half of the graph, things are different. Especially for those living in the middle of the period under study, witch-hunts were likely not a once in a lifetime experience.\textsuperscript{65}

Also visible in the plot is a high degree of noise. Apparently, in what regards time, a major part of the trials seems to follow a mechanism that produces temporal patterns. Yet, witch trials occur outside the pattern. My review of the theories that offer explanations for the emergence of witchcraft accusations in Chapter 1 has shown that a branch of scholars found evidence for local conflicts as the cause of witch trials. The evidence presented here may support the theory that some trials in some localities where locally endogenous. But the puzzle to be explained is the

\textsuperscript{65} Again, part of this one could have been described using simple frequency tables but one would have missed the fact that among those places with very few witch-hunting events, many yield great time gaps.
existence of waves. Therefore, one needs to find a way to separate occasional emergences of
witch trials from systematic witch-hunting waves.

Martin (2008) shows that taking only the time periods of the waves and aggregating those by
region does not suffice to adjudicate between different theories of witchcraft persecution. By
merely aggregating witch trials one cannot isolate noise from pattern.

If my main argument, that witch-hunting waves are driven by prosecutor action, holds true it
should be possible to distinguish systematic witch-hunting from noise on the basis of
prosecutors’ activity patterns. With the information available on prosecutors’ movements
through parishes, I can draw the boundaries around witch-hunting spaces more adequately. With
these action-based boundaries, I can locate more precisely where the heartland of witch-hunting
in Scotland really was.

**Boundaries through action**

This chapter is the first solution to the problem that while “obviously the drawing of boundaries
of some kind is necessary, it is important to recognize that the boundaries we choose are
boundaries that have been chosen, not given” (Martin 2008: 125). Through the techniques I use
in the following analysis, I avoid exactly that problem. Because I allow actors and their
activities to draw the boundaries around localities that are linked together in one outbreak of
witch-hunting, I capture given, not chosen boundaries.

There are no witch trials if nobody initiates them. The focus in explaining witch-hunting
therefore shifts from the accused to the accusers.
Prosecutors draw on witches from multiple parishes thus making their own boundaries through jurisdictional action. Archibald Douglas of Lumsdean for example served as Commissioner in the trial of witches from four different parishes in three different counties: Tain, Saltoun, Foulden and Coldingham. The rule, however, was to remain within limited regional scope such as was the case for John Home whose witches came from four different parishes, only one of which lay outside the county of Berwick or such as the case of David Drummond who adds up six different resident parishes, only one of which is outside the county Perth.

In technical terms this means that parishes are connected through prosecutor action. To capture the boundaries drawn through their collection of witches from different places, I use social network analysis. The analytical strategy is simple. Two parishes are connected to each other if at least one prosecutor hunted witches from both parishes. Figure 12 offers a graphical display.

Figure 12: Stylized Constitution of the Parish Network
At times we find nation state officers such as the lord advocate occurring in trial records. These prosecutors do not constitute ties between parishes because this would artificially connect parishes when in fact the witches concerned have been tried in the Capital by a national court procedure.

Witch-hunting takes place in clusters of parishes connected through prosecutors. It is these clusters that really constitute the waves. I have plotted parish clusters for time periods that contain the three largest waves of witch-hunting (Figure 13 - Figure 15). The number of witches coming from a given parish during that wave determines node size. Because of missing information on either the resident parish of a witch or the prosecutor, I can only include 1,797 of the 3,212 witches in my sample. The prosecutors that connect these parishes are either investigators, commissioners or directly labeled as prosecutors. These are a total of 1,607 individuals.
Figure 13: Parish Networks 1620-1640
Figure 14: Parish Networks 1646-1653
These graphs visualize a variety of new insights about the composition of witch-hunting waves. The number of witches in a parish determines node size. Many local incidences of witch-hunting are contained within the boundary of the parish. These are generally but not always instances where very few witches came to trial. But the graphs also show how witch-hunts transcended...
parish boundaries. Of course, the likelihood of a prosecutor to cross a parish boundary correlates with the number of witches in a parish because of the way I have operationalized the network. Prosecutors can only move through witch trials. However, the prosecutors can also draw on many witches from one locality constituting loops rather than in-between parish connections. When the number of witchcraft subjects reaches a critical threshold, prosecutors might be forced to look for witches from other localities. Seeing that parishes had up to 43 witches in one year, that threshold seems to be considerably high.

**Local Networks and Global Witch Waves**

At this point, the chapter has shown two different parts of the story. The over all distribution and temporal unfolding of events on a local level and the local clumping of witch-hunt incidences abstracted from time. The question is, is it possible to merge these two stories analytically? And can we connect them in any meaningful way to geography?

In the following paragraphs, I will collapse the ties shown in the snapshots above and all others not displayed here to investigate which parishes were by the end of the period of witch-hunting connected to each other. I will then match the core cluster with GIS boundary data in order to project it onto a map of Scotland. To anticipate the results, as time progressed, a cluster of parishes emerged that drives the largest part of the overall temporal unfolding of witch trials in Scotland. This cluster is located near the capital of Scotland, Edinburgh. Witch-hunts extended most in geographical scope and brought about the most witches, where they were visible to the people at the center of central state power. The resulting network, shown in Figure 16, consists of 268 parishes connected through prosecutors that persecute witches in multiple parishes.
The analytical strategy used here makes a few strong assumptions. Because time is collapsed over the entire period under study, I allow a tie in the most extreme case to be active for about 150 years. In addition, I allow a future tie to constitute a connection between two parishes in the present. In addition, one crossing of a parish boundary was sufficient to create a tie between two
parishes. This conceals the distribution of the number of parishes prosecutors collect their witches from. Figure 17 shows this distribution. 498 prosecutors crossed parish boundaries. Most people (1,109) involved in witchcraft cases only operate in one parish. They do not constitute a tie. This number is not surprising when one considers that a trial for witchcraft did not only include the main prosecutor, the so-called commissioner, but also a whole array of other people such as witnesses, clerks and assistant commissioners. It is even less surprising, given the fact that 935 people occur in not more than one witch trial and therefore cannot constitute a crossing of a boundary.

![Graph showing distribution of cross-cutting parish ties.](image)

**Figure 17: Boundary Crossing of Persecutors**

In general, we observe a commonly found pattern of ties where most people connect only two and very few connect more than six or seven parishes. Parish groups emerge from small to medium scale moves of many prosecutors rather than through a handful of people with
extremely wide geographical scope. Therefore, it is clear that parish clusters emerge out of a larger collective of prosecutors who disregard the parish boundaries as limits on their persecution activities.

Clearly there are two outliers: two people who operate in 8 and 10 parishes. Against the background of the danger of overestimating the geographical scope of witch-hunting, these two outliers were deleted before producing the graph in Figure 16 and before conducting the analyses that now follows.

In order to capture substructures and to divide the network into witch-hunting groups without overlap, I use community based clustering (Girvan and Newman 2002). This measure is based on Freeman’s betweenness centrality applied instead of nodes to the ties between vertices (here: parishes). Intuitively, the betweenness centrality of a tie measures the importance of a connection with respect to the connectedness of the entire network (ibd.). A network, which consists of multiple groups will typically have dense interaction within groups and fewer connections to other groups. Girvan and Newman’s algorithm proceeds by cutting out the tie with the highest betweenness centrality and then recalculating centrality and starting over until the network is entirely disintegrated. Not including isolate parishes, there are 28 community clusters in this network.

The figures below compare how well Martin’s (2008) regions and network clusters fare in sorting witches into geographical space. Figure 18 reports the number of witches in each network cluster. Figure 19 shows the number of witches in each region. Although regions are very large, containing several counties, the network clusters do very well in locating witches.
Each of the three largest network clusters have only about one hundred witches less than the three largest regions.

Figure 18: Cluster Contribution to Total Number of Witches

![Cluster Contribution to Total Number of Witches](image)

Figure 19: Region Contribution to Total Number of Witches

The parish clusters with the highest number of witches are quite homogenous in terms of region and they all lie in those areas that Martin has found to be the strongest areas of witch-hunting. The geographical location of the parish-cluster is still strikingly homogenous (Figure 20). This time the y-axis counts each time a parish occurs within a cluster and the colors show the regions the parishes belong two. It only shows clusters with more than eighty witches in total.
Figure 20 Parish Occurrence by Region in the five largest Clusters, 1563-1736

If one compares this with the regional approach taken by Martin (Figure 21), the findings are similar. Lothian and Fife emerge as the core areas for witch-hunting followed by the East Borders and Strathclyde (Figure 20). This figure only contains regions with more than eighty witches in total for the entire time period. The crucial point however is that these regions only roughly approximate the location of the core witch-hunting areas. The next section will show that the largest network cluster unfolds in direct vicinity to the City of Edinburgh in ways that a regional approach cannot uncover.
The Key Cluster

The largest cluster at the core of the largest component is key to uncovering the causes behind witch-hunting. The geographically largest of these clusters, the cluster that also supplies more witches (570) than any other cluster, is located near Edinburgh (see map below Figure 22).
Conclusion

This chapter came as close as the data allows to what Harrison C. White recommends for all those of us who lack access to God. I have sworn off boundaries and have given actors the opportunity to draw them themselves. Still, this analysis fell short of resolving some crucial issues that White’s quote alerts us to. I have collapsed time to connect local activity with the explanandum of global witch-hunting waves. In the process, I have made some unrealistic modeling assumptions about temporal duration and ordering of ties. There have however been

Figure 22: Geographical Location of the biggest Network Cluster

1: City of Edinburgh

*eight parishes couldn’t be located
benefits to this strategy. Through it, I was able to find that the core cluster of parishes that is largest in geographical scope and in its contribution to witch-hunting is located near the capital of Scotland. It will turn out in the next chapter that there are structural reasons for that. The next chapter will show that prosecutors orient their action in witch trials towards the center of political power and at the gatekeepers to office opportunities. Proximity to the focal point of central state power, the city of Edinburgh, means that witch-hunts were severest where they were visible to actors of the central state.
Chapter 4 – Witch-Hunters

The insights gained from previous chapters point towards another class of actors: the gentry. Two principal forces shape local structure and its transformations. One is the centralization of power through the state and the other is economic and socio-economic change. Both provide for opportunities and constraints among members of elite groups.

State Making

Witch-hunting is embedded in relations between elites and the state. Whereas others have argued that functioning state administrations inhibit persecution (Johnson et al. 2011; Levack 2008, 1998)\(^6\), I argue that witch-hunts are conditional on a functioning state administration. I do not argue – however – that the Scottish state used witch-hunts to impose discipline (Goodare 1998, 2002e; Larner 1981). Witch-hunts, in my view, were the unintended outcome of emerging state offices and the opportunities these offices created for elites. While political change and the emergence of state institutions are central to my theory, I shift the focus from state attempts to acquire power to the political adaptations of an elite group to the changes resulting from state action. Hence, my review of the literature focuses on state-society relations and neglects other aspects of state making such as the successes and failures of emergent central states (for a broader review substantively, geographically as well as temporally see Barkey and Parikh (1991)).

\(^6\) Levack’s argument is that the state encouraged witch-hunts before 1662 and institutionally prevented them after that date.
Despite great variety in theories on the emergence of states in early modern Europe, it is consensus that state making is, among other things, a process in which responsibility for social order shifts from local contexts into the hands of a central state. Consequently, relations of elite groups with each other and with other classes experience shifts as the state encroaches upon local structure. This process has many facets. One aspect is the disempowerment of competitors to state power in localities and peripheries either through coercion, negotiation or co-optation (Anderson 1974; Barkey 1994, 2008; Ertman 1997; Lachmann 1987, 2000; Tilly 1985, 1992) or through more subtle means such as the creation of what Scott has termed legibility (1999), the early beginnings of which can be seen in the standardization efforts and record keeping of early modern states. From a revisionist perspective, which argues that the boundaries between the state and local elites are blurry and continuous, one might add that states emerge in a recursive relationship of local and central interests and identities (Beik 2005; Gorski 2003; Kettering 1986; Sahlins 1989). In reverse logic, seen from the perspective of elite groups, co-optation opens conditional opportunities. Negotiation is the process by which some elites acquire opportunities trading off other resources. Coercion represents a constraint and results in the loss of privileges through force.

My findings support the claim that in its effect on social order state making does not stop at the frontier of centrally steered government institutions. In the context of changing opportunity structures, it creates unintended social responses and identities that positively feed-back into the process of centralization. As I will show below, one observes those identities in action in Scottish witch-hunting.
More importantly, the literature on social order making in the course of state building focuses on the imposition of social order directed downstream. Imposing discipline is a means to control the population. This holds true for approaches that have considered the bottom-up aspects of social control. When Gorski argues that the institutionalization of Calvinism through church organization and an elite with a religiously motivated program of social discipline helped state making, it is because the state could use these locally directed control efforts to its advantage (Gorski 2003). Even Higgs, who in his article on state surveillance explicitly points out that cooperation of state elites in state making “had more to do with their own need to preserve their position” (Higgs 2001:175), directs his explanation for social control downstream by arguing that “local elites gained power, prestige and authority from acting as the local agents of the Crown” (ibd 177).

Scottish witch-hunting shows how motivations to impose social order can be directed upstream towards the tip of the social hierarchy. Local authority might be one outcome but the reason individual actors engage in order making is because they want to communicate something to the gatekeepers to opportunities. Social order was not enforced in order to communicate something to the larger population. Witch-hunting was a message addressed at the gatekeepers to opportunities.

Unintended consequences of state making are nothing new per se but the literature has a tendency to focus on the destructive ones, i.e. those that lead to the unmaking of centralization efforts. It is known that by pulling strings on one end of social organization, state making can unintentionally unleash eruptions at another end. The consequences are upheavals, revolts and the formation of groups in active or passive opposition. At later periods in European history
these consequences included destruction of local and contextual knowledge and local practices of social order keeping (Scott 1999). Scholars find that resistance in the form of upheavals and revolution are typical consequences where states, through their intrusion into localities, benefited certain sets of actors at the cost of others (Goldstone 1993; Gould 1996; Skocpol 1979; Tilly 1985, 1992). One can comprehend why these consequences are often unanticipated by looking at studies that uncover the complex, relationship-based mechanisms in local contexts where people are tied to each other through kinship, loyalty and business relations as well as conflicts (Barkey and Rossem 1997; Bearman 1993; Gould 1996; Hillmann 2008).

**Unintended Consequences**
In short, state making induces movement in social rank, and the dynamics that evolve as a consequence are unpredictable. State making might start as a strategic choice but its unintended consequences are the result of percolation movements through social structures and of actions that are shaped and that shape, in turn, the relationships in which they are embedded. There are a couple of illustrative examples to be found in the literature. When English monarchs used the lands liberated in the dissolution of the monasteries, they did not anticipate that their efforts for centralizing power would backfire once policies had passed through the system and encountered the interdependent decision making of actors. Henry VIII ruled a localist society; Charles I was executed in a society that had formed national, ideological blocks that were crafted as a reaction to the decline of localism (Bearman 1993).
Another example is the seminal work of Schneider, who described – although this is not his main argument\(^67\) - how dueling was an unintended outcome of state making. The irony in this case is especially obvious against the background of Weber’s minimal definition of the state as a monopoly of violence in a given territory (Weber et al. 2004). The increase in dueling, and thus the increase in non-state controlled violence, was among other things a reaction of the noble classes oriented towards maintaining their status in the face of the social mobility of lower men into their ranks (Schneider 1984).

Witch-hunting is another unintended consequence of state making. Witch-hunting as state making – as has been described in more detail in Chapter 1 – was an important framework for some of the most central students of Scottish witchcraft. Along these lines, it has been argued both that states and the ruling classes used witch-hunting to impose control on populations (Goodare 2002c; Larner 1981) and inversely that the curtailment of local witch trials after 1662 was an act of state making (B. Levack 2008). While some evidence, discussed in later parts of this chapter, points to signals from the central state that witch-hunting would be welcome for a limited time, the state itself did not conduct witch-hunts. Witch trials remained local requests.

The signals given by central authorities have been over-interpreted in constituting an alliance between state and local gentry in imposing discipline.

Note that theorizing witch-hunting as an unintended consequence of state making is not necessarily generalizable to persecution in other contexts. Many persecutions have been everything but unintended. Barkey and Katzenelson (2011) for example show that the expulsion

\(^67\) He shows that undermining the duel represented state making through an extension of jurisdiction and was also a collaborative project.
of Jews from both France and England was an outcome of strategic bargaining. In England, the Crown succumbed to pressure from within the nobility, while in France expulsion was an outcome of solidified royal control. In a similar vein, the persecutions of heretics and other groups were argued to be engineered by the Catholic Church in its effort at strengthening control (Moore 2001). In the Ottoman Empire, diversity was not only tolerated but became a tool to organize society with a focus on the center of power. But in becoming a nation state the Ottoman Empire switched from toleration to persecution. Socio-economic transformation made toleration strategically less useful in the eyes of the central state. What led to the end of toleration was the increasing gap in wealth and status between Christians and Muslims that arose from a complex set of causes related to trading with the west, changes in identity, and the crystallization of a nationalist ideology (Barkey 2008).

**Elite Mobility**
Witch-hunting in Scotland is an unintended consequence of state making because the identities that make witch-hunting happen emerge out of mobility processes that are partly induced by efforts for centralizing power. Shifts in social structure are always a prerequisite and an outcome of state making. Hence, elite mobility has a prominent role in the literature.

**Elite Mobility as an Independent Variable**
As an independent variable, elite mobility is connected to the question of political stability. Various studies have shown that the centralization of power is dependent on the support of elite groups for the state and that political stability depends on the structure and direction of mobility.
In early modern England, times of upward social mobility of the urban middle class correlate with political stability while the troubles of the civil war are associated with downward mobility (Bearman and Deane 1992). Factionalism is an outcome of elite competition where exclusivity leads to radicalization (Goldstone 1993). Caruthers has shown for the city of London that the stock market – the most economic of all social spaces – was an arena for state making because it became a reservoir of creditors who had a vested interested in the viability of the state (Carruthers 2001). Famously, and heatedly debated (Stone 1952; Trevor-Roper 1951), is the argument that the rebellions in the Tudor monarchy arose out of the financial ruin of the English aristocracy (Stone 1948) and that the civil war in England was the cause of both downward and upward mobility. Upward mobility of the gentry, both financially and in rank, is said to have destabilized society (Tawney 1941), while Stone, whose contribution is based on Tawney’s work, emphasizes the decline of the aristocracy and its financial assets as the cause for political unrest but argues – in contrast to Tawney – that the mobility patterns observed were not inevitable but were rather a consequence of the fatal way in which the English peerage adapted to social change, namely through expenditure that far exceed revenue, a stubbornness in sticking to traditional rule of estate management, exaggerated investment in litigation and the costly service for public office (Stone 1948, 1967).

**Elite Mobility as a Dependent Variable**

Elite mobility has also emerged in the literature as an outcome variable. In Poland, entrance of new men into the office hierarchy underwent peaks when monarchs were weak and thus actively engaged in recruitment strategies that would foster their independence. Recruitment of new
men, and thus elite openness and upward mobility, are a function of the state’s attempts at centralizing power (Mclean 2004). In England, monarchs strategically co-opted landowners through office posts and patronage so as to circumvent the hegemonic influence of magnates (Lachmann 2002). In the Ottoman Empire, central rule was solidified through incorporating leading bandits into state offices and therefore through drawing outsiders into the local networks of power (Barkey 1994).

**Accelerants and Inhibitors of Elite Mobility**

Once mobility is possible, the social world finds its own pathways and channels to accelerate or inhibit it. Marriage has been shown to be a powerful mechanism in this respect (Padgett and Ansell 1993). Marriage can produce mobility even if actors try to achieve class-based exclusivity (Padgett 2010) and it can be an outcome of mobility corroborating the success of social climbers (Mclean 2004). For early modern England, Stone’s work shows in fascinating detail how in a time of social mobility the importance of maintaining class boundaries increases. English aristocrats did more than they could afford to maintain habitus (Bourdieu 1987). Extravagant clothing, costly entertainment programs for visitors, expansive education and great dowries for their children, luxurious manor building and the maintenance of townhouses in London were all parts of an increase in conspicuous consumption that happened at a time in history (1580s – 1590s) when the peerage could least afford such extravagances (Stone 1948). Creating exclusivity seems to have more important than financial viability.
An Additional Mechanism: Reputation

Mine is a case where state making led to witch-hunts through the mediating trigger of opportunities for elite upward mobility. This aspect of elite mobility illuminates reputation as an additional mechanism. One of the consequences of shifting access to political power from a small class of magnates to a more numerous class of gentry, is that kinship was not enough to channel selection processes. Witch-hunting became a means to gather reputation and those means become known to inner circles of power within the Scottish capital. Although this reputation-based mechanism may be on the fringes of the grand total of social mobility processes, its consequence (more than three thousand accused witches!) was dramatic.

Opportunities through shifts in elite relations

“Opportunity concerns the relationship between a group and the world around it” (Tilly 1978:7). It is an outcome of shifts in social structure (White 1970). These shifts can be remote in the sense that from any focal actor’s point of view the processes that generated an opportunity might be entirely unknown. Social structure constantly experiences shifting elements. Because of interconnectedness, shifts on one end lead to change in neighboring elements and that leads to events in areas even further removed from the original shift. As events percolate through the

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68 The concept of opportunity structures is widely used in social movement research (see Meyer and Minkoff (2004) for an overview and critical assessment). Social movement research is about collective action and witch-hunters do not act collectively. They act synchronistically in time but not as people “acting together in pursuit of common interests” (Tilly 1978: 7).
system, actors react locally thus giving each cascade of events little turns and changes of direction. This is the basic idea behind vacancy chains (White 1970).

Richard Lachmann explicitly translates this conception of events and social structure into the relationships between classes of structurally equivalent actors (Lachmann 1987). Lachmann defines occasions in which actors get a chance to alter their position within the social hierarchy “moments of strategy”. It is also true for Scotland what Lachmann writes for England: “Throughout most of English history, the vast majority of people were located at points within the social structure where they could not fundamentally challenge their relations to other social actors” (Lachmann 1987: 147).

Government of monarchies with rudimentary state centralization works through the channels of patronage. One can imagine the state as an assemblage of pyramid structures, that is, vertical relationships of patrons and clients in which resources trickle down from the top to the bottom (Kettering 1986). This is especially true for Scotland, where subinfeudation was common and legal (Goodare 1999), thus leading to long chains of land renting. Those chains could start with landlords as tenants-in-chiefs directly linked to the crown and go down to substantial farmers on the bottom of the hierarchy of people who held feus (Goodare 1999).

In such a system the crucial question is if and how the actors at the top of the pyramid gain the resources that get distributed within the pyramid to reward past loyalty and ensure future service of clients 69. Monarchs co-opt local elites with office or land grants and thus secure for themselves the local kin and followers of co-opted feudal lords (Lachmann 2002). In most of

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69 This is a simplified image, of course. Thinking about state making in terms of network structures can help to reveal much more complex insights. Barkey (2008), for example, shows how structural holes and the transformation of horizontal to vertical ties created the strength of the Ottoman Empire in its very beginnings.
Europe, the 16th century brought an end to the pure form of feudalism that had structured local relations for centuries (Zagorin 1982). Lachmann (1987), whose research agenda is no less ambitious than explaining the transformation of English society from agrarian production to capitalism, describes and explains these changes for the case of England.

Between 1250 and 1325 magnates were the central node(s) in the relationship between the Crown and lay elite groups. The crown was dependent on magnates financially and magnates dominated lesser landlords. Despite having no direct access to agrarian revenue and hence to the financial means needed to sustain the court, monarchs held a tertius gaudiens role in their ability to play magnates against the clerical estates who had direct access to their own land revenues.

A century later, this relationship had changed completely. In the 1530s, in the course of the Henrichian Reformation, the monasteries – and with them all ecclesiastical lands and the positions of their holders in the network of resource flows and political influence – were dissolved. Apart from the breakdown of the state in the 1640s, this was the most decisive moment in English state building in the early modern era (Lachmann 2002) as it led to a drastic change in the social order within a comparatively limited amount of time. Henry VIII did nothing less than to wipe out an entire class from the surface of class relations. The clerical estates simply dropped out of the system, thus eliminating the class that had been the main competitor to magnates of previous centuries. Yet their position did not become more autonomous. On the contrary, through strategic allocation of the resources gotten by the Crown through the dissolution of the monasteries, lesser landlords emerged as new competitors to the magnates for their position in the hierarchical structure. Offices and land were used by the monarch to promote landlords and thus to erode the monopoly of power magnates enjoyed
locally. The influence of large landlords was formalized through their membership in Parliament. But landlords did not only gain power upstream. Downstream, in their relationship to the peasantry, their control was solidified through the elimination of the clergy and through the gentry’s role as justices of the peace who regulated conflicts arising out of the local relationships of agrarian production. Expressed in the lingo of social network analysts, the gentry gained a brokerage position (Burt 1992) in the structures of early modern England. It is this brokerage position in combination with the hegemony of the crown on the national level that, according to Lachmann, became the foundation for the Civil War. Ultimately, the gentry became too numerous (see also Stone and Stone 1995) and too uncontrollable in their hold on local control and hence the project of centralizing power reverted to the opposite.

In detail and sociological theorizing, there is no comparable account to this one about England in the literature about Scotland. Because the transformation of elite groups is crucial for explaining witch-hunting, I address this gap by using a collection of historical studies that have illuminated parts of these processes to narrate the analogous pathway of events in Scotland. A goal of future research, data collection and analysis should be to track these changes more thoroughly. Such an endeavor might uncover an even more complex and nuanced picture\(^\text{70}\), but this would be a project of its own and is outside the scope of my dissertation research.

\(^{70}\) McLean’s work (2004) shows that direct empirical investigations of elite formation can yield structures that would otherwise be overlooked, as in his case of the emergence of a super-elite in Poland.
In Scotland

Though united under one king since 1603, Scotland and England were two dissimilar countries. Scotland was less developed and poorer (Whyte 1989; Wormald 1991), and, at the turn to the 17th century, more aristocratic (Wormald 2005:125) and less centralized (Wormald 1988). Its cities - represented as their own estate in Parliament and generating political decisions in the Convention of Royal Burghs - were a stronger force of localism than their English counterparts (Stevenson 1987). Before the Reformation, Scotland was still a comparatively traditional society even if its traditional relations had already started to deteriorate. In public perception, the Highland clans have probably featured most prominently. But also in the Lowlands the logic of kinship (in which kinship was a prevalent social category organizing local relationships) was still the principle on which social relations were built and understood (Mitchison 1983:2). Lordship was an additional and partially overlapping mechanism of social organization. Protection downstream and obligation upstream connected the lesser people to the powerful, often in formalized relationships, called bonds of manrent, in which greater Lords offered protection for service to lesser clients (Wormald 1985). It has been argued that the tight social relationships emerging from these bonds between peerage and the lesser nobility are also the reason the lines between nobility and gentry are somewhat hard to draw even in the 17th century. The bond embedded members of both classes in a common network and hence prevented the drawing of a distinct line between them (Meikle 1992).

By 1600 the changes in social structure started to accelerate. Bonds of manrent had decreased rapidly in number and finally they disappeared (Wormald 1985). At the turn of the century the nobility was still rooted deeply in county government and jurisdiction, yet the state was building an alternative to their local hegemony through the creation of new administrative structures in
places where there had been none before and the transformation of offices that existed only nominally into working state agencies (Goodare 1999). These administrative structures opened opportunities for some and made constraints for others. As I will elaborate in more detail below, the building of a central administration was embedded in long-term developments that created moments of strategy in Lachmann’s sense for members of the gentry.

Social class and elite groups are crude and often misleading constructs for thinking about state making (see for example Barkey and Rossem 1997; Bearman 1993; Gould 1996) but - in the absence of more detailed data - these categories may serve as auxiliary constructs. A classificatory note is in order before I describe these developments in more detail. Definitions of Scottish nobility are somewhat complex and distinctions are much harder to make than in the case of English nobility (Meikle 1992). Brown has dedicated much space to this idea in his comprehensive work on Scottish nobles and argues that many higher class Scottish families were considered and considered themselves as a part of the noble class without having a hereditary title (Brown 2004). Maureen Meikle has spoken in this context of an ‘invisible divide’ (Meikle 1992) between lairds and nobility. The Scottish nobility cannot be reduced to Lords and higher ranks with a right to be summoned to parliament (Brown 2004). Meikle argues that especially greater lairds can hardly be distinguished from the nobility. Many held great amounts of land and many of them were also entitled as knights. This group is similar to the English ‘knightly’ gentry although knights in Scotland were not – as in England – sons of nobles (Meikle 1992:72). For example, a laird with great landholdings but no formal noble title could still clearly be a member of the noble class such as was a “Sir Robert Ker of Cessford” (Meikle

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71 For the historical developments of the nobility before the 16th century see Grant (Grant 1978).
In addition, lairds were often denoted as barons. The term baron is of considerable ambiguity. It has often been used as a means to denote the gentry in official records as the term laird became colloquial and was considered to be vulgar (Goodare 2001:1106). However, not all lairds had baronial status (Brown 2004). A baron was considered to be lesser nobility but had no right to a seat in Parliament (Brown 2004). However, for all practical purposes lairds were by and large the equivalent of English gentry (Goodare 2001:1103).

Acknowledging these complexities, I will nevertheless speak of gentry and lairds interchangeably and I will use the term nobility where it refers to landowners with noble title. For my purpose it makes no sense to use the term nobility both for those with noble title (lords of parliament, viscounts, earls, dukes and marquesses) and the lairds. All members of the former category already had access to politics, as they were entitled to a seat in Parliament. This is exactly the distinction that matters for my purposes.

**Aristocrats**

As in England, only slightly later, the Scottish aristocracy was hit by a wide-ranging economic crisis between 1590 and 1610. Unfortunately, the sources for a study of the financial situation of the Scottish peerage and their estates are scanty. Brown, the leading expert on noble society in Scotland, notes in his article on noble indebtedness: “One would like to be wrong about this, but a true understanding of the wealth and incomes of the early modern Scottish nobility is unlikely ever to be within our grasp” (Brown 1989). Yet the evidence available does contain clear signs that there might still have been very similar tendencies of rising debt and financial ruin that
would suggest a similarity to the aristocratic crisis that Stone has diagnosed for England (Stone 1948, 1967).

As for English peers (ibd), expenditure was also a problem, as Brown shows, especially for the new members of the nobility who aspired to the same lifestyle as their more established peers but in many cases could not quite afford it. These newest (upwardly mobile) members of the nobility made up a large number of the total nobility. The size of the peerage had doubled within the last quarter of the 16th and the first quarter of the 17th century. And it had already been numerous before. There were as many peers in Scotland as in England (around fifty), even while England’s population was about five times that of Scotland (Brown 1989:60).

These promotions challenged noble status and they created, as Mitchison has termed it, a “nobility of service” (Mitchison 1983:11). These nobles held the titles of “Lords of Erection”72 and their grants were made – as in England though under slightly different premises (Stone 1967) – using former ecclesiastical lands. James VI relied on this rising class to govern Scotland during his absences (Stevenson 1973), which for all practical purposes meant the government of Scotland by distant prerogative as James (despite his promise to return regularly) preferred to rule Scotland by pen (Wormald 2005). They, who owed their social status not to longstanding relations of ancient kinship but to royal favor, “were the ones who were prepared to do the donkey work of government (Wormald 2005:125). That these new men were more often than not loyal allies of the king was as much a result of James VI’s strategic choices as of the boundaries that the old nobility drew themselves through the mechanisms of social exclusion that one observes so frequently, or so it seems, when the social status of such classes is

72 For a critical assessment of this and the argument that many church lands fell in great parts into the hands of large noble landowners see Brown (Brown 1989:27).
threatened by streams of upward mobility (Stone 1967). It has been argued by some that the new nobility integrated well with the old or that at least there did not seem to have been a cleavage between the two elite groups (Brown 1989:60). However there exists contradictory evidence in that a majority of the newly created Lords of Erection married into families of the class of their origin: the gentry (Mitchison 1983:11).

Gentry – opportunities for upward mobility

In many ways, the gentry emerged as the socio-economic and political winners of the period. Multiple developments, described below, contributed to this. Inflation worked to the benefit of many of them; also, the absenteeism of landlords holding the jurisdiction and the general vacuum the clergy had left in administrative functions brought with them opportunities for many members of the gentry.

Processes were shaping relations locally towards the emergence of a social structure that further fueled identities of social order making. Crucial factors in this were inflation together with change in landholding and estate management patterns.

The European great inflation between 1540 and 1600 may have hit other countries harder, more dramatically and earlier than Scotland but it still impacted Scottish society substantially enough to shift crucial elements of social structure (Makey 1979; Mitchison 1983; Sanderson 1982).

Most exchanges, including rents from land, were paid in kind thus remaining unaffected by the rises in prices of the second half of the 16th century (Brown 1989; Mitchison 1983:49). Crucially, however, there are two areas where inflation significantly decreased the value of land for its superior (the original proprietor of the land who also held its jurisdiction). The first is
former ecclesiastical land. The second are pastoral regions were rents were paid in money and not in kind (Makey 1979:5). While the latter areas vary by region, the former are socially stratified. Newly created peers were much more likely to hold ecclesiastical land than traditional families of peers (Brown 1989:54).

The sixteenth century witnessed an extensive proliferation of the practice of feu-ferm on former ecclesiastical land. Driven mostly by financial pressure, landlords sold the right to collect the teinds so as to pay taxes or repay creditors. This seemingly trivial accumulation of individual decisions concerning estates and income turned out to be one of the chief motors in the transformation of Scottish society (Makey 1979; Sanderson 1982). While teinds (the tenth part of land revenue) were paid in kind and thus robust against inflation, feus were monetary payments. Inflation thus brought the superiors of feued lands into a situation of financial strain. The result was that feuars of any given church land collectively made more money out of the land than the Lord himself (Makey 1979). This not only improved their position financially. It also started to dissolve local hierarchical control that had already begun to deteriorate: “the Lord’s grip on their followers and kinsmen began to slacken” (Lee 1985:231).

Sanderson shows\(^7\) that two classes benefited from this development more than others, both at the cost of the nobility. One were lairds who made up thirty percent of the feuars. The other class consists of the persons below the class of lairds whose heritable property was the first land they’d ever possessed (Sanderson 1973:118). Many in the latter category were small tenants

\(^7\) Sanderson’s study offers an excellent opportunity to understand the feuing of church lands. She has collected data on 2,707 feuars and their social class membership. Studies with such a wealth of quantitative material are very rare in the literature on Scotland.
who, by acquiring the feu charter, simply added a legal security to their tenancy\textsuperscript{74}. Others, however, acquired substantial proportions of land (ibd). The feuing movement benefited a class of existing lairds and created new pathways for individuals to enter into this class\textsuperscript{75}.

Former ecclesiastical properties are one side of the story. Makey has revealed that relations were also changing on secular estates. Specifically, Makey points to the centralization of landed property into the hands of a few great magnates who, as a consequence of their massive and oftentimes geographically scattered land ownership, were in many cases and over long time periods absentee rulers delegating their jurisdictional power to representatives. The representative of an absentee ruler was oftentimes his richest tenant or even a feuar of the land (Makey 1979). This development was a drastic one indeed. While in the previous centuries, lordships, baronies and earldoms appear as well-defined and ordered geographical areas, any attempt to map these units for the seventeenth century would inevitably fail. Too great is the dispersal of land and too numerous are the small areas of jurisdiction (McNeill and MacQueen 1997:201) to create such a map. The fourth Earl of Haddington, Thomas Hamilton, for example, inherited land in eight different counties (Fraser 1889:209). Estate management of absentee landlords was conducted by officers as representatives of the proprietors; some paid and some

\textsuperscript{74} In Scotland, tenants had no legal security to the land they occupied but it was customary that tenants remained on the land over generations and were not displaced by their superiors (Sanderson 1973, 1982)

\textsuperscript{75} Laird, as mentioned, was not a title. Therefore, in order to ascend into this class there was no need for ennoblement. Brown, who defines lairds as part of the lesser nobility, shows that access to this class was provided through “ennoblement, office, landownership, assumption and marriage (Brown 2004:15).
honorary. This also included the baron court which was presided over by a representative, the ballie, when the original holder of the jurisdiction was away (Whyte 1980).

Therefore, while secular estates were largely excluded from the development of feuing as it happened on kirk lands, they underwent the same process of alienation between land and jurisdiction. Therefore, the dissolution of feudalism did not spare the ancient estates of the old aristocracy. The actual exercise of jurisdiction then shifted to a different class of people, the lairds (gentry) who became the focal point of administration in seventeenth century Scotland (Makey 1979). Many of them were absentees as well as they used the rural parishes mainly as summer residences. Those landowners who remained, however, became increasingly important for the management of local communities. In general, the rule applies that the greater the landlord, the less likely he was to reside in the parish (Hanham 2005:9). As size and estate correlate positively with title and influence, the shift of the importance in local jurisdiction from nobility to gentry is a short way of saying that social order became the responsibility of the less substantial landholders.

In short, there is a broad consensus among Scottish historians that the gentry emerged as the socio-economic winners of the period preceding witch trials (Lee 1984; Meikle 1992; Mitchison 1983; Sanderson 1973, 1982; Wormald 1988) and they continued to rise in society during the period under study. They benefited from the decrease in value of their feu duties to magnates and from the fact that teinds remained stable despite inflation (Mitchison 1983:49). At the same time, landownership became more geographically dispersed and the greater the landowner the more distant – if not actually completely absent – he was from the people in parishes over which
he held jurisdiction. By the time of the Restoration in 1660 the transformation was complete and lairds had acquired an unprecedented role of power and influence (Mitchison 1983:71). Witch-hunting, not incidentally, accompanies these developments.

In the 17th century, another development added additional opportunities for non-noble families to acquire status and political influence. This was the increasing importance of a growing state administration. State careers became a viable means for upward social mobility (Goodare 1993; Wormald 1988).

The emergent administrative structure built by monarchs and further developed by the revolutionary regime of the 1630s and 1640s gradually introduced a competing system of social hierarchy that, with increasing relevance, co-existed with land-based relationships of patronage in early modern Scotland (Goodare 1993). This system differed from the logic of traditional patronage in which the crown had a monopoly on distributing rewards, which was crucial for control (Barkey 1994). In contrast to the exchange of mutual obligations, centralized office holding worked through royal authority, and that royal authority could give or take away offices. Public offices existed before, of course, but it is their transformation into “bureaucratic” as opposed to “patrimonial” forms – as Ertman (1997:8) has described it in reference to Weber (Weber 1922) – that opens new avenues and creates dynamics in opportunities. These dynamics turn out to be at the core of witch-hunting. The existence of newly created offices that cannot be appropriated by elites – a core characteristic in Ertman’s interpretation of patrimonial administration – opens up competition in Scotland for office holding among those who had traditionally succumbed to local land-based hierarchies (Lee 1985; Meikle 1992:235). Gentry started to pour into state offices in greater number than the nobility (Meikle 1992:79).
Locally, public officers were multiplying in the first quarter of the 17th century (Goodare 1999). By the end of the 16th century, sheriff courts already had to give up many of their jurisdictional powers (Malcolm 1923:298). Despite failures of the multiple royal attempts to convert sheriff courts into non-heritable jurisdictions, the 17th century saw their importance decline (ibd). Their foundation upon kin and estate and the discretion with which sheriffs exercised their office were increasingly scrutinized and undermined by the central state which, among other things, converted many sheriffdoms from heritable jurisdiction into offices by appointment (Goodare 2004:175–78; Malcolm 1923). Through the 1610 introduction of Justices of the Peace (hereafter, “JPs”), a direct competitor to sheriff’s jurisdiction, the Scottish state took further control over local matters of jurisdiction. Even if the holders of the JP offices were often unsuccessful in competing with the more traditional authority of sheriffs (ibd), these developments contributed to efforts at state making. In the latter half of the 17th century, however, JPs were a functioning governmental body in control over local affairs (Findlay 2000) that was “tailor-made” for a class of rising lairds (Meikle 1992:79).

The gentry also achieved representation in Parliament in 1587 where they joined the church, the Earls and Lords and the royal burghs as a fourth estate (Goodare 2001). Their role increased further under the Covenanters when the clerical estate ceased to be represented in Parliament and the gentry stepped in. In the course of this change, their voting strength was doubled (Stevenson 1982:xxiii). Instead of one vote for each county, the gentry were now entitled to one vote for each representative (Stevenson 1982:308). During the time of the Covenant in the middle of the 17th century the gentry made up the bulk of the committees through which the new regime ruled (Scally 1996).
This process was enhanced further by the ways in which the Reformation changed the role clergy played in society. Reformed ministers were not to pursue secular careers and their retraction from civil society created a vacuum; the gentry filled that vacuum (Makey 1979).

**Long-term Change and Identity**

These national-level changes induced by the central state opened the way for the emergence of a new identity of social order making. Socio-economic change – such as the practice of feu-ferm and the emergence of an absentee nobility with increasingly scattered estates (Makey 1979; Mitchison 1983; Sanderson 1982) – combined with an increase in central administration to pave the way for an unprecedented amount of upward mobility and access to authority and influence. The important detail of this change is that a transition from feudal patronage to office holding is not simply a relocation of power to another group (here the gentry). It brings with it a change of the entire logic of government and local control. Whereas before places of authority were filled through the funnel-formed channels of local, land-based and traditional hierarchies that were the backbone of client-patron relations (Wormald 1985), there is now a pool of people from which centrally organized leadership recruits personnel that is filtered and reduced in number through traditional selection mechanisms.

In some ways, this is a trivial fact in the new logic of government. But it is likewise consequential. In a traditional feudal system the crown has to deal with a handful of nobles personally known to the king, but the number of gentry men is much larger (Lachmann 2002). The sheer difference in number introduces reputation as the most important element to advance in society. Alterations in the relation of gentry to other elite groups not only change their prospects but also their identities. Absentee nobility creates a vacuum, the gentry fills that
vacuum and their role in local authority grows; all this happens at a time when political offices on the national level are opening. This leads to an understanding of self as social order maker that would not have been possible in earlier decades. In this respect, and in allusion to Weber’s concept of traditional authority (1922) where the main focus is legitimacy, I argue that pointing inwards, traditional control through succession in noble households creates a particular kind of identity. It is a new identity of place in social structure that melts with the pre-existing identities of the persons occupying said place. The new offices that emerge in the 17th century are still in many ways traditional, but their holders’ identities have different shapes. These actors were not born into jurisdictional authority, they self-selected into it. Their positions were not determined by leadership of an array of kinsmen and followers that they had ‘inherited’ from previous generations. They reached these positions not by birth alone but also by manner of showing that they could impose social order. *This is the point in the argument where witch-hunting becomes relevant.*

These identities are not oppositional to existing class hierarchies. Despite the competition for political influence, the nobility culturally retained their role as superiors (Scally 1996). Revolution was to come (and it came in alliance with many of the noble class (Macinnes 1991)). But the identities connected to witch-hunting were not *per se* revolutionary. These new identities were not revolutionary identities direct against central government.

**Short-term Change and Identity**

While the developments described above paved the way for upward mobility of gentry in the long term, I argue that immediate shifts in the politics of the period under study were the trigger
of witch-hunting waves. The focus now shifts from the relations of elite groups to the perspectives of individuals.

Identity is the *necessary but not sufficient condition* for waves of witch-hunting. Witch-hunters understand themselves as the ones responsible for and able to establish social order. Identity is here understood as something that is produced by a position in social relations and that defines who we think we are, what we believe and what we strive for in a specific context (White 2008). Actors are strategic but their strategies are locally patterned through social interaction (McLean 2004:168). An instructive example of how identity in concert with calculation and social structure explains action is Gould’s (1995) study of Paris insurrections in the 19th century. Protesters are more likely to participate in insurrections if their neighbors and friends do so as well. This is because, on the one hand normative pressures make them feel obligated to support others who are related to them, and on the other hand they calculate that with support from others the insurgency will have a higher chance of success. These actions are embedded in wider frameworks of critical events that trigger into action identities based on categories, i.e. of occupational groups, social classes and urban citizenship (Gould 1995).

Identity is the social prerequisite for the existence of witch-hunters but identity cannot explain why accusations were numerous in some years and entirely absent in others. Witch-hunters understood themselves as those responsible for the establishment of social order but they acted strategically at the points in time when they hoped that their efforts would be rewarded with office posts. It is political change that triggered these latent identities into action because they felt that there was something to be gained from showing their ability to enforce the law at this
time rather than another. Identity was the prerequisite for witch-hunting but opportunities triggered identities into action.

These opportunities emerge out of structure when vacancies in office hierarchies provide avenues for upward mobility (White 1970) in times when state control is solidified. Witch-hunters hoped that their efforts would be rewarded with office careers and while only some of them would see their hopes fulfilled, witch-hunting was still one of the few ways to establish a reputation when other channels such as kinship relations were absent. Instrumental action towards gaining a reputation as a social order maker is therefore the sufficient condition that – when added to identity – creates fertile ground for witch-hunting. Therefore, we expect that witch-trials occur only where both identity and opportunity are present.

One more ingredient is necessary. In addition to the shaping of actions through identity and opportunities, it was also true that constraints triggered action. These were of two different kinds. First, as already mentioned, the class of gentry was large\textsuperscript{76} and their lineages alone did not help them get recommendations for state office. Thus new selection mechanisms emerged. 

\textit{Reputation gathering through witch-hunting became a means to turn opportunities into careers.}

The second type of constraint was the denial of opportunities to those who held office through regime change and leadership shift. \textit{As the wind of history changed direction, vacancies emerged and turned constraints for one set of actors into opportunities for another set of actors.}

This could happen in unforeseeable ways. It is a challenge – when we know the end of the story – to understand and narrate history with the awareness that historical actors could not foresee the

\textsuperscript{76} The number of major land-owners alone was estimated to be at least 1,500 heads of houses (Brown 2004:15). Taken together with less substantial proprietors, one can expect a considerably higher number.
future (Barkey 2008:4). For historical actors, the challenge is to make decisions in the light of uncertainties. This is nicely illustrated by the situation in which the Earl of Haddington found himself on the eve of the Covenant Revolution in 1638. As member of the Privy Council, he had taken part in the issuing of the service-book that caused so much unrest in Scotland. Now he found his social network divided into those who would side with the King and those who supported the covenant. A friend, the Countess of Devonshire, advised him to not take either side seen that: “who can tell of which side the hazard lies or what heaven has decreed to be the means of security (…) I conceive if you be involute you are to share of all the misery that may arrive to that unfortunate nation” (Maitland Club (Glasgow), Macdonald, and Dennistoun 1840:354)\(^77\).

So people rose and fell in ways that became meaningful for witch-hunting. The opportunities they strove for were often quickly withdrawn by the speed of historical change. Witch-hunters’ engagement in social order making was often in vain as history was faster than their career growth.

**The Connection between Opportunities and Witches**

There are two reasons witch-hunting is causally connected to the aforementioned process: (1) a butterfly effect created by an administrative detail and (2) a great margin in the social construction of witches.

The butterfly effect is that the formal process of witch-trials allowed people with no prior office to engage in social order making, and this detail was met by an entire pool of people outside the

\(^{77}\) I have used modern spelling of words but kept grammatical peculiarities from the original.
cogs and wheels of government who strove for authority and sought to gain reputations as successful social order makers. For this pool of people, witch-hunting opened the door to a career enforcing justice even for those who held no prior office. As MacKenzie, the famous advocate of the time, remarked with some criticism, “Commissions are granted ordinarily to Gentlemen, and others in the Countrey who are suspect upon this account: and who are not exactly enough acquaint with the nature of this crime, which is so debateable amongst the most learned” (Mackenzie and Seton 1699:88).

Unlike other accused criminals, accused witches are tried in commissions that circumvent traditional court hierarchies (Goodare 2002a, 2002b, 2002e; Larner 1981, 2008). In principle, every man of sufficient social standing could request such a commission, which opens the doors for actors without prior office to participate in the prosecution. These commissions “were normally issued in response to a request by the would-be commissioners, who arrived at court with a story about a recent local crime and why they were the most appropriate people to punish it” (Goodare 2002e:126). As a result, these commissions bring witch-hunters in direct contact with the political elite in Edinburgh.

What was the role of the central state in granting these commissions? It has been argued that in 1597, the government abolished so-called standing commissions (Larner 1981:71)\(^7\). This has been interpreted as a way to curtail witchcraft panics (B. P. Levack 2008:105). However, apart from one episode in the first two decades of the 17th century (Wasser 2003), there is no evidence that the central state made much effort to stop witch-hunting in localities (Goodare 2002e). Only

\(^7\) For a critical assessment see Goodare (2002b).
after the last great witch-hunt in 1662 does one find clear indications of central state interference. From then onwards, central authorities exerted tighter control on unwarranted uses of torture in trials and they took more trials into their own hands (B. Levack 2008). The great witch-hunting waves were over.

On the flipside, the possibility of the state actively engineering witch-hunts is an unlikely one, even if there is some ambiguous evidence for it. To be sure, most scholars have at most accused the state of not preventing witch-hunts. Goodare, who is one of the strongest supporters of the state’s leading role in witch-hunting concluded: “Privy councilors did not sit round the council board and say to one: it’s time to cast off restraint and to plunge into a frenzy of accusations (…) For most of the panics, there was no concrete central initiative” (Goodare 2002c:137). The only exception Goodare notes is the witch trials of 1590-91, which were largely encouraged by the king himself (ibd).

While there is consensus that the trials were not initiated centrally, there is one instance in 1628 where we have concrete evidence for the central government encouragement of trials. Here the privy councilors set up a commission to report on crimes in Scotland, and their mandate listed witchcraft next to seventy other offenses (Larner 1981:72 f.; B. Levack 2008:171). 1649 and 1661 were also times when the central governmental bodies signaled that they would appreciate the enforcement of local discipline in general (ibd). Thencefore, in the period that witnessed the many great witch-hunting waves, local witch-hunters did not run the risk that their request for a commission would have been received with anything but positive reactions.
The second reason for a causal connection between witchcraft persecution and office vacancies is that the social construction of witches is not limited to any manifest number of offenders. Witches can be made through storytelling so that even if there are certain limits within which the number of accused witches is still credible, these margins are flexible and more than any other form of deviance, constructible. The limits of any witch-hunt will depend on the growth of fear among the population and the belief of the witch-hunters as to how many witches are at large in a given time and place. The persecution side, in other words, drives the very existence of witches. This does not, of course, exclude the possibility that certain people had a reputation for witchcraft, but it does mean that it was still possible to find witches even in the absence or dearth of individuals previously categorized as witches.

Opportunities for Office

Waves of witch-hunting are not historically random. Witch-hunting coincides with episodes in Scottish history that created high hopes for members of the gentry to achieve public office. In the following, I will describe these historical moments and their implications for office vacancies. My frame of reference starts at the turn of the century, when one can be sure that witchcraft trials had developed a form of institutionalization in which commissions for witchcraft were granted for specific suspects (Larner 1981; Wasser 2003; Wormald 2003).

On a collective level, deviance of course is always socially constructed (Becker 1963; Goode 1994). But the issue at stake here is not what society at large defined as deviant but rather what leverage individual prosecutors had within the frame of a social definition of deviance.

Due to limited positive evidence in the workings of witch-trials before 1600, there is some debate around the legal framework for early cases especially on the question of how much liberty local authorities had in trying witches. Goodare argues that witches were always tried by
From then onwards, witch-hunting waves coincide with two types of events: They happen immediately after ideological and regime change (as shock effects) or they emerge with some delay after events that are characterized by less eruptive changes in leadership or office structure (as percolation effects). In both cases the common trigger is office vacancies, but the ways by which, and time frames in which, they reach communities differs. Shock effects are associated with turns in Scottish government followed by legal procedures that purge vast numbers of actors out of office on ideological grounds. Percolation processes are found when changes in government lead to transitions in office holding that are of a less predictable and less drastic nature, therefore taking time to percolate through society. Both types of change take place within the context of a turbulent century in Scottish history. In a nutshell, Scotland runs through the following sequence of regime change: monarchy, revolution, occupation and once again monarchy. To summarize the historical narrative in Chapter 1, at the outset of the period of intense witch-hunting after the turn of the century there is a comparatively stable monarchy under James VI that runs into problems under Charles I who inherited the throne after his father’s death in 1625. The Covenant, a Presbyterian revolutionary regime, marks the period from 1638 to 1651. The English under Oliver Cromwell occupy Scotland from 1651 to 1660 when the monarchy was restored under Charles II.

**Percolation Effects**

Smooth changes in office hierarchies are accompanied by delayed reactions on the local level. Three of those transitional changes explain the remaining larger waves of witch-hunting. The centrally granted commissions and that the legal framework did not change throughout the period (Goodare 2002b).
first occurs when Charles I succeeded to the Scottish throne in 1625 and made a number of replacements in offices in his first years of regency (Lee 1980).

**Charles’ I succession**

Witchcraft accusations in 1628-30 rise somewhat slowly and reach their peak three years after the transition to the new monarch. The total number of victims was high. Considering only the three years with the highest case numbers, this wave brought nearly 350 witches to trial. This wave also trails off more smoothly than other waves, which end more abruptly. This is a direct reflection of the fact that here – in contrast to other waves – change in the relations of power and thus within the office hierarchy happened in a less dramatic fashion. The succession of a monarch is after all not comparable in speed and depth with revolutions or regime changes.

This wave of witch-hunting is probably the most puzzling of them all. It is still true what Lee wrote in 1985 that while scholars were able to bring forward “circumstantial evidence for the other three periods of intense persecution: what started this one is anything but clear” (Lee 1985:95). Since all existing theories on the causes of witch-hunting waves are in one way or another based on ideology, the absence of ideological turns before 1628 is a challenge. Those who have generally argued that witch-hunts were an outcome of elite and central attempts at imposing local discipline were left with the rather weak historical connection between an initiative taken by the Privy Council in “a general attack on crime” and the persecutions around 1630 (Larner 1981:73; B. P. Levack 2008:171). This appeal was made in the context of Charles’ attempt to re-install justice ayres – which were to try crimes in the localities – in an attempt at centralizing jurisdiction and to make an attack on the jurisdictional powers of the nobility (Lee
There is, however, no evidence that the ayres concerned themselves with witches at all. Rather, the usual form of commissions for witchcraft continued (ibd: 95). What the Privy Council did was nothing more or less than appeal to the realm for stricter enforcement of an entire array of crimes from rape to the destruction of growing trees. With this initiative the central authorities signaled that with Charles’ accession a new era of social order making would begin. It would be a time for identities of social order making to become active.

As Goodare shows, Charles entered into his reign with a clear agenda. He made no secret of his scheme to increase royal control by opening the doors for gentry to achieve upward mobility. In fact, as Goodare states, Charles – despite his general lack of successful communication with the ruling actors in Scotland – had not failed to make his plans explicit, rather “perhaps the problem was that he explained them too well” (Goodare 1993:178). Charles proclaimed that he wanted to “free the gentry of this kingdom from all those bonds which may force them to depend upon any other than upon his majesty” (quoted in Goodare 1993: 178).

He had made this bold statement in the context of the Act of Revocation. The Act was one of the most contested royal initiatives of the time; it was debated by contemporaries and continues to be debated by historians. It was an attempt to regain those former church lands that had previously been used so successfully in James’ politics of patronage. In the revised version of this act, landlords were obliged to surrender their feued lands to the crown at a fixed price whenever the monarch decided to purchase them while they were entitled to keep those lands which they held directly (Makey 1979). Historians attribute much of the discontent that rallied

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81 Register of the Privy Council, 2nd series, v2, p. 437-38
elites against their king in the Covenant Revolution to this act and if enforced the consequences it would have had for the landed classes (Goodare 1993; Lee 1985; Macinnes 1991; Stevenson 1973). There was more to it however. Makey argues that the real threat of the act consisted of the re-allocation of superiority from the nobles now holding the land to the crown. It was a question of jurisdiction (Makey 1979).

By its justification to free the gentry, the Act triggered gentry identity. It also came with concrete office opportunities. In March 1627, the Commission for Surrenders and Teinds was established. This commission was not only supposed to enforce the act itself but also to re-calculate and redefine both the resources that should be allocated to the minister in each land and the height of an annual tax to be paid to the Crown (Lee 1985; Macinnes 1991; Stevenson 1973). With the necessary administrative resources and with the right to sanction reluctant landlords this commission – In contrast to previous governmental bodies and commissions since 1625 – “had claws and teeth” (Goodare 1993:162). These measures signaled the prospect of future opportunities and, in doing so, I argue, triggered witch-hunting.

The Covenant Revolution

A similar course of events, albeit in a very different context, can be observed for the witch-hunting wave of 1643-44 during the Covenant Revolution. In contrast to what theories based purely on ideological argument would predict, one does not observe a witch-hunt in the immediate aftermath of the revolutionary turn in 1638.

All studies on the Covenant have explained the events of the late 1630s in categorical terms. There is no study that allows for an understanding of the concrete social relationships that sorted
some actors into the faction of the Presbyterians and let others remain royalist. But it is
evident in most studies that the Covenant was not an aristocratic revolution but rather rallied
forces from within the burghs, the gentry and the nobility (Goodare 1993; MacInnes 1991;
Mitchison 1997; Stevenson 1973, 1982, 2011). An exception is Lee who argues that it was the
“nobility’s Covenant” (Lee 1985). However empirically, from the very beginning, the
Presbyterian movement consisted of ministers, lairds, nobles and burgesses as can been seen by
studying the Presbyterian uprising in 1596 (Goodare 2010). It is not within the scope of this
dissertation to adjudicate between different theories about the emergence of this revolution.
What all of these studies have highlighted however is that the narrative used by the
revolutionaries to explain their action is one of religious and political ideology. It is religious
because the Covenanters revoluted against the English-style prayer book that Charles had
attempted to introduce. And it is political because it requested a church whose government is
independent from the state.

Ever since this great ideological shake in 1638, the Covenant movement gathered speed; still, it
was unclear if it would succeed. As the Countess of Devonshire, who I quoted earlier, said: who
would know on which side the hazard lies? Then came the first Bishop War in 1639 and the
covenanted Scots defeated Charles and his royal army. The second Bishop war followed in 1640
and the Scots won again. The Covenant had proven its viability; a new regime had begun.83
Witch-hunters appear on stage not a moment before the covenant regime had shown that it was
able to persist.

83 This paragraph is mostly based on Wormald (Fry and Mitchison 2002; Wormald 2005) and
Mitchison.
But another factor also explains the emergence of witch-hunters in 1643 and not earlier. The Covenant regime – for the first years of its rule – had not interfered much with the existing governmental structures in the localities (Stevenson 1972). Regarding central state government and national politics, Stevenson argues that the late thirties consist of two periods. From 1637 to 1641 was a period of revolution with all the uncertainty and confusion that is typical for situations of upheaval. The covenanters had built a central committee, called the Tables, which acted as a shadow government. After forcing the king – through battle – to accept their rule, the traditional institutions were activated with a view to “return to normalcy after revolutionary upheaval” (Stevenson 1982:xi).

By 1640 it must have dawned on even the cautious that the Covenant regime would establish a new form of government. In June 1640 Parliament met without royal consent and made its first step towards the constitutional transformation of Scotland. The Covenanters strengthened the role of Parliament by passing the Triennial Act that required sessions to be held at least every three years. But they also reduced the power of the Lords of the Articles. This had been a shadow Parliament of sorts in the decades before. Its members had included representatives of the lay and clerical estates and the king, and while formally its role was to prepare parliamentary sessions, its members were for all practical purposes legislators as they “prepared” all acts to pass before the parliament met. Usually the full assembly then passed all prepared acts within a day (Scally 1996). From then on, however, the renamed Committee of the Articles was to become more of the administrative body that it formally was and “Parliament became a

84 See Wormald for an introduction to this (Wormald 2005).
debating, consultative and legislative body” (Scally 1996:60). With the renewed importance of Parliament in making legislation the weight of the gentry’s vote in it also increased. In June 1640 the Committee of Estates was established as the first “constitutional formalization” (Young 2001:108) of the covenanting body politic. Many of its members were not parliamentarians, so many in fact that, as Stevenson shows, the members of estate of barons and burgesses represented in Parliament complained and achieved that further appointments could only be made if they had a 24 hour veto period against proposed candidates. As Stevenson concludes from that, “evidently they had been trying to pack committees with nominal baron and burgess members whose qualifications were not known to members of these estates in parliament” (Stevenson 1982:xxxix). The Committee of Estates continued to be staffed with such “outsiders”. Clearly, this was a time for people who had hitherto not belonged to the circle of government to gain influence even on a national level.

Within this move away from the revolutionary Tables to traditional forms of central government, new local offices were also built. The war was won and the king succumbed to the Covenanters’ demands. The Covenanters, who were now overtly in control of Parliament and the Committee of Estates that ruled between parliamentary sessions, started to meddle with local office structures (Stevenson 1973, 1982). Scotland was to become a covenanted state. The Tables of the late forties had been a central state committee that pretended not to be an official governmental body in the first place (Stevenson 1982) and the takeover of Parliament and Committee of Estates was a further development at the center.
On the local level, a variety of new committees was established (Stevenson 1982). We see here the prototypical case of state making (Stewart 2011a)\textsuperscript{85} with the exception that this was a revolutionary state, of course. War making sets off a process of state centralization because it is costly; on the one hand the cost forces the state to intrude into localities for taxation (Tilly 1992) and on the other hand the war legitimizes the centralization of power through the creation of external threat (Tilly 1985). The Covenanters built a new office and committee structure on the local level\textsuperscript{86} first and foremost to organize military resources (Stevenson 1972; Stewart 2011a, 2011b).

For this purpose, the committees of war were introduced to raise a military force under central supervision of the government in Edinburgh without having to use the still existing administrative mechanisms that were occupied by royal officials (Stewart 2011a, 2011b:73). But their function did not remain limited to militarization. These committees became “the basic units of local government” (Stevenson 1982:xxx). Their members consisted mostly of the landholding elites in the country. Even though few of their records survive, Stevenson found a clear predominance of lairds in these committees while nobles are found in them only occasionally (Stevenson 1982:xlvi). As Stewart argues, the first period of the Covenant revolution had been a not always uncontested cooperation between the burghs and the central government. Now the

\textsuperscript{85} Stewart mentions Tilly’s contribution to our understanding of the nonlinearity of state development but leaves his theory of war-making and protection racketeering untouched. Her main argument is that state making emerged in this case as a response to increasing costs of war.

\textsuperscript{86} There were no purges of local office holders in the traditional administration. They were allowed to continue unless they were overt supporters of the king. The new local bodies of government were simply superimposed and where traditional exercise of office collided with the agenda of the covenanters they took over responsibilities and let officers continue nominally (Stevenson 1982:xlviii)
gentry gained dominance in the movement (Stewart 2011b:74). It is then – and not before – that witch-hunting resurfaces and leads to a wave in 1643-44.

The new regime had, by the early forties, left no doubt that it was on the road to building a new government in Scotland. The witch-hunt in 1643-44 accompanied the regime’s administrative innovations. The certainty of covenant victory, however, vanished as royalists won battle after battle in 1644-45 and so vanished the witch trials.

The third instance of a temporal correlation between office vacancies and witch-hunting occurs at the very end of the English occupation period. Here opportunities for upward-mobility through office holding emerged when – in around 1655 – the occupation regime switched policies and went from a government exclusively conducted by military personnel and Englishmen towards a government characterized by more participation of Scots in office holding (Buckroyd 1987; Dow 1979; Stevenson 1990). The office of Justice of the Peace was re-introduced in 1655 and for the first time this office was attractive and efficient, as it no longer competed with the heritable jurisdictions of the barony and regality. These had been abolished in the 1650s (Dow 1979: 179 f.; Findlay 2000). Again, gentry identity as it relates to social order making was triggered. In 1658-59 there occurs another witch-hunting wave.

**Shock Effects**

Two moments in Scottish history produced a vast amount of office vacancies at once because of the interference of ideology with office holding.

**Radicalism and the Act of Classes**
The first occurred in the time of the revolutionary government of the Covenants and is associated with the witch-hunting wave in 1649. More than ten years after Scots across all elite groups had started to take control over the country against their monarch (Goodare 1993; Macinnes 1991), a royalist counter movement called the Engagers, emerged but was subdued. Now internally divided, the more radical side of the revolutionary regime removed from office every official who was shown to be associated with the Engagers with a law called the Act of Classes. It was passed in January 1649 (Stevenson 1982, 2011) and it was immediately followed by a witch-hunt that began within the same year.

The Act of Classes prescribed that: “…all such as have been employed in public place and trust and have been accessory to the late unlawful Engagement should forbear the exercise of their places…” 87. Through it, the now radicalized regime of the Covenanters put into administrative practice what the split of the revolutionary factions had brought about in ideological terms. And that was not enough. To clean out all radical covenanters from Parliament, an oath of allegiance had to be sworn and anyone who failed to do it was also removed from public office (MacIntosh 2007:19; Raffe 2012:72). This test was extended to the burgh magistrates and councils 88 in January 1661 and to the justices of the peace and constables 89 at the same session of Parliament. The acts prescribed that “if any shall refuse or delay the same that they be removed from public trust…” (ibd.).

I thus argue that it is this change in office relations that triggered witchcraft accusations. For witch-hunting, new cleavages in ideology were not enough. The emergence of Presbyterian

87 RPS: NAS. PA2/24, f.80r.(translation by Brown)
88 RPS: NAS.PA2/27, f.8. in Brown
89 RPS: NAS.PA2/27, f.66v-72v. in Brown
protest against Charles had not qualified as a trigger of witch-hunting. But when ideological change combined with anticipated transformations in office positions, witch-hunting resurfaced.

Larner has argued that this witch-hunting wave was a result of a “fencing match being played between church and state” (Larner 1981:74). The general assembly, that is the highest church court, had put in a request in Parliament in 1646 to supplement the witchcraft act with a new element regarding the punishment of charming. Parliament did not react until 1649 and its response was not enthusiastic. The decision was made that the original witchcraft act from 1536 was to remain unaltered. Despite this hesitant reaction of Parliament, Larner maintains her argument that interest on the part of the central state explains the temporal distribution of witch trials based on the fact that in the same year Parliament granted the many commissions of witchcraft to local lairds that made the wave of persecutions possible. For her, Parliament’s reaction was a signal directed towards the church that they would remain independent from the clerical estate. At the same time, they showed “by their readiness to pursue individual cases of witchcraft, their concern that wickedness should be put down and that the state should demonstrate the righteousness of God” (Larner 2008:74).

Larner also mentions another puzzling fact: In 1650 after the great wave of witch-hunting had abided, Parliament became very active in regards to witches. A committee was established to convict witches90. There was no witch-hunt following the institution of this committee. Larner’s conclusion is that it “does not appear that this committee was ever very effective” (Larner 1981:75). Indeed, it was ineffective in generating witches, but Parliament seemed eager to keep

90 (Larner 1981:74 f.) and RPS: NAS.PA3/2, f.4a r- 4a v. as well as RPS: NAS. PA7/7/9/2, no. 9, f.2r – 2v both in Brown
it active. On May 13th 1650 the committee made a report to Parliament regarding an accused witch named Isobel Alexander, and the committee was ordered to meet June 12th, 13th and 14th.

What is the meaning of this central state initiative for the dynamics in witch-hunting? There are two possibilities. The first is that the act for the committee, while appointing and authorizing people to try witches, could have really been an attempt to curtail the witchcraft wave of 1649. The act authorized the committee: “to take into consideration all papers and depositions to be given in to them concerning witches and to consider if the guiltiness alleged on them merits their further trial or summary execution”. This sounds as if the committee was appointed to check rather than to encourage witch-hunting.

The other possibility is that Parliament simply felt overwhelmed by the numerous requests for witchcraft commissions in the year before and conveniently created a committee to deal with them. This was at least the strategy chosen for many other areas of business which yielded an insurmountable amount of matters parliament had to deal with (Stevenson 1982:xxxiv).

For any of the three possibilities outlined above, the committee fits into my general account of witch-hunters as holding social order making identities that were triggered into action through opportunities for making social order. If the committee was established to encourage witch-hunting, it shows how ineffective such central initiatives could be in actually producing witches. This would imply that localities really had little interest in delivering witches only for the sake

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91 RPS: NAS.PA3/2, f.8r-8v in Brown

92 RPS: NAS.PA3/2, f.13v – 14r and NAS.PA3/2, f. 14v-15r. and NAS.PA3/2, f.15r-15v both in Brown

93 RPS: NAS.PA7/7/9/2, no. 9, f.2r – 2v in Brown
of cleansing society of ungodly behavior. If the committee was instituted to bring witch-trials to a halt, it signaled that applications for commissions to try witches would not be very welcome anymore. No matter what the intention behind the committee was, it outsourced decisions on commissions for witchcraft from Parliament to a small number of people. It thus rendered an application for a commission largely ineffective as a mechanism for gaining reputation within the inner circle of central government. Consequently, it is possible that witch-hunting stopped because its role in this very particular mechanism didn’t function as well anymore. In November the committee seems to have become obsolete as Parliament ordered the Committee of Bills (one of the various committees established at the time to deal with private petitions (Stevenson 1982:xxxiv)) to deal with petitions for commissions to try witches.94

The Restoration

The second instance of a shock effect precedes the largest Scottish witch-hunt in 1661-62 and consists of the Restoration of the monarchy in the context of which Charles II reversed all policies the previous regime had passed (Harris 2005; Jackson 2003; Mitchison 1983; Wormald 2005). In January 1661, the Restoration Parliament passed an act rescinding all previous Parliaments since 1633 with the justification that “most of the acts in all and every of the meetings of these pretended parliaments do highly encroach upon and are destructive of that sovereign power, authority, prerogative and right of government (…) serve only as testimonies of disloyalty and reproach upon the kingdom and are unfit to be any longer upon record”95.

94 RPS: NAS. PA3/2, f.71r-72r. in Brown
95 RPS: NAS.PA2/26, 124-126 in Brown
Disempowerment, fining and execution of individuals loyal to anti-royalist forces were the consequences, and vacancies in office posts followed\(^{96}\). The Committee of Estates that was authorized by Charles to take over government business until Parliament met, set to work with an agenda to clean out the country and public offices of those who opposed the Restoration (MacIntosh 2007:12). Therefore, already in 1660, “secure royalist personnel was being established in the localities even before parliament had first convened” (MacIntosh 2007:13).

When it did met in 1661-62, acts were passed to officially settle the Reformation and – as described in Chapter 2 – to finalize the clearing of all disloyal to the king from office. This included acts annulling previous parliaments, the first of which was passed in February 1660 declaring the Parliaments of 1648 and 1649 as unlawful\(^{97}\). It was followed by the Act Recissory in March 1661\(^{98}\), which declared all Parliaments held since the Covenant Revolution as null and void. By then witch-hunting was already well under way. Concern about remaining radical covenanters in public offices must have sparked another series of acts that required office holders of various sorts, first members of Parliament in February 1661 and then other officers such as sheriffs and constables in the following months, to take an oath of allegiance\(^{99}\). Those who refused were to forfeit their offices.

Both of these historical turns purged office holders on ideological grounds, thus leading to high numbers of vacancies at once and a high degree of immediate visibility of this change. Witch-

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\(^{96}\) See Harris, MacIntosh, Mitchison and Jackson for a comprehensive description of the events at the Restoration. My account is based on their work (2005; 2003; 2007; 1983)

\(^{97}\) RPS: NAS.PA2/26, 38-42 in Brown

\(^{98}\) RPS: NAS.PA2/26, 124-126 in Brown

\(^{99}\) RPS: NAS.PA2/26, 61-63, NAS.PA2/27, f.8, NAS.PA2/27, f.66v-72v. all in Brown
hunting was an immediate reaction because people striving for careers by means of gaining reputation became instantly activated.

**The End of a Mechanism**

After this Restoration period, the connection between witch-hunting and office careers suddenly vanishes. Uprisings and their defeats occur, but the two – albeit very small – witch-hunts in 1678-79 and around 1700 are not correlated with office careers and there are no other witch-hunts. After the great hunt in 1661-62, there are clear indications that central authorities changed their position towards witch-hunting. Some have argued that skepticism about the idea of witchcraft arose as a prelude to the Enlightenment (Larner 1981; Thomas 1997). Levack has offered the alternative hypothesis of increasing judicial skepticism. But he also shows that the state finally started to encroach more immediately and directly on local jurisdiction. Circuit Courts were for the first time turned into effective courts that tried crimes locally, torture without warrant was more closely prohibited and central authorities started to turn down more requests for commissions (B. Levack 2008). There has never been a register of denied commission in Scotland, so the evidence for the latter claim is rather anecdotal. Levack references, for example, a footnote of a contemporary’s account of the witches in Pittemweem which reads in the original as follows: “Upon a Complaint given in to the Privy Council as is above against those Witches at Pittemweem, the Council have ordered Her Majesty’s Advocate to insist against them before the Justice General, where all Circumstances shall be Examined...”\(^{100}\). Larner shows that the Privy Council also started to denounce witch-prickers, those people who had tested witches for the devil’s mark by inserting pins into witches’ bodies

\(^{100}\) (Pittenweem 1704) p. 12
and that it prohibited the imprisonment of witches without central authorization (Larner 1981:76).

These findings point to the possibility that the end of the central state’s welcoming of witch trials also brought to an end the temporal correlation between witch trials and events that might create office vacancies. But these findings also raise a broader question. I have offered in the preceding sections an explanation for why gentry started witch-hunting. It still remains unclear, however, why they stopped witch-hunting in the periods between the waves. For the Restoration wave, as I have just argued, the reason might lie in a signal from the central state that persecutions are no longer welcome, and a corresponding dearth of opportunities for mobility through witch-hunting. I have also mentioned above that in 1650 the hunt might have come to an end because the Covenant government might have signaled an opposition to witch-hunting. In any case, at this time the mechanism for reputation gathering was impaired through a central committee.

Further research might be able to uncover with certainty why witch-hunting ended after 1633 and 1644. Some speculations can however be made. The success of the Covenanters was crumbling in 1644. The Scotts won together with the English Parliamentarians the battle at Marston Moor but within Scotland royalists were rising\(^{101}\). It was, as Stevenson put it, a series of disasters following a period in which “the covenanting movement had moved on, seemingly irresistibly, from success to success” (Stevenson 1982:xxx). In the last half of the year 1644, royalist campaigns won victory after victory. Arguably these events not only discouraged local lairds from social order making, but they likely generated more pressing issues in the localities.

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\(^{101}\) For a great overview of battles and the Montrose royalist campaign see McNeill and MacQueen (1997)
and also at the center. In any case, the end of witch-hunting after 1644 is consistent with my other findings that it was in times of re-established stability, not instability, that witches were hunted.

The real puzzle remains in the case of the end of witch-hunting in the thirties. It is striking that this is the only witch-hunting wave that seems to tickle down smoothly while other waves end abruptly. It is possible that the pool of those who held latent identities as social order makers gradually ran dry. Alternatively, one might observe here the reaching of a threshold in what regards the number of suspects that can be accused as witches within the limits of legitimacy (see conclusion for further thoughts on this aspect of witch-hunting).

**Prosecution as Career Device II: Witch-Hunters become Justices of the Peace**

The conclusions drawn so far are all based on correlations at the group level, which is insufficient for establishing a social mechanism. Ideally, one would have a collection of biographies that covers all early modern witch-hunters in Scotland to show that their social origin is indeed Scotland’s gentry with unsubstantial landownership and that they were in fact aiming for an office career. It would be even better to have information on the entire population of gentry so that one could judge if witch-hunters were more likely to be promoted than non-witch-hunters. With 1,849 prosecutors, investigators and commissioners involved in the witch-trials of 3,212 witches this would be a great data collection effort requiring a multitude of different archival materials. It is therefore imperative to limit the focus of investigation.

For one wave of witch-hunting, I will show in the following section that witch-hunters gained offices as Justices of the Peace (JP) after their witch-hunting activity. An office adopted from England, where JPs were an important wheel in the system of local government, their
introduction in Scotland has a long and not always glorious history. It was not until after the Cromwellian occupation that the office became attractive to people in search for power (Findlay 2000). In the array of chances of upward mobility, the office of JP was by 1655 “tailor-made” (Meikle 1992) for gentry who aimed at achieving greater influence through office careers.

Searching in the records of the Parliament of Scotland\textsuperscript{102} for the witch-hunters of the 1661-1662 wave reveals that 75 of the total 466 witch-hunters received appointments as JPs in 1663. This might seem to be a small number. However, upon closer investigation it is clear that these 75 played especially prominent roles in the overall dynamic of witch-hunting at this particular time.

In any given witch-trial there is a set of prosecutors. This set – or parts of it – can reappear in other witchcraft trials. In this respect, the phenomenon of witch-hunting constitutes a network of cooperation between prosecutors\textsuperscript{103} in which any given actor has a tie to another actor if they cooperated in a witch-trial. Plotting the relations thus defined as a network (Figure 23) yields some general properties of the Restoration witch-hunt in 1661-62. The most obvious characteristic is that the seemingly global burst of cases consists in fact of multiple smaller contexts as can be seen by the fact that the network falls into completely separated components. This means that within the wave that appears on the macro level as one big epidemic of witchcraft, there are in fact many unrelated instances of witchcraft accusation each with their own sets of prosecutors.


\textsuperscript{103} This network is based on dichotomized co-affiliation data. An affiliation of two prosecutors with the same witch or witches constitutes a tie. In other words, two prosecutors are connected to each other if they are at least once involved in the same witch case. Visualization is made with Pajek.
Nodes colored in black indicate that a particular prosecutor has been appointed as JP in 1663. Apart from one instance where six such prosecutors make up the majority of one witch-hunting team with only one person not appointed, the future JPs spread out widely across different components. In addition, for the 290 out of 638 witches in this wave for which I have trial commission information, 217 faced at least one of these future JPs. This means that a substantial part of the wave in 1661-62 is indeed attributable to those people who made a state career afterwards.

Figure 23: 1661-62 COOPERATION NETWORK OF PROSECUTORS (N=466 PROSECUTORS – JPS COLORED IN BLACK)
However, one should not neglect the possibility that witch-hunting is not so much the initializer of a state-career as it is the consequence of it. The counterfactual question is then if those prosecutors appeared on the stage of public office holding before the witch-hunt. Again, it is hard to assert that they were not influential personalities before, as there is no universal way of measuring this. However I do have data on their office holding at the time of their witch-hunting activity. Even if one cannot completely rely on the fact that every prosecutor was noted in the documents with title and office, one would still expect to see patterns from those cases where the office had been recorded. According to the SSW, 67 of the 75 prosecutors involved had no office recorded at the time of their witch-hunting. Of the remaining eight actors, one was Lord Justice Clerk, two were sheriff deputes, four sheriffs and one bailie depute. Therefore, the future JPs involved in the witch-hunt of 1661-62 were in all likelihood not yet part of the office structure.

To be sure, not all JPs appointed in this period can be expected to be former witch-hunters. Many families will have had established a reputation in the center through previous office holding and other connections. To give a better impression of the overall pattern of appointment the list below supplies the names of all appointed JPs for the county of Fife along with their witch-hunting status (Table 11). Fife was one of the main areas of witch-hunting and is close to Edinburgh. 7 out of 43 JPs are former witch-hunters. So witch-hunting was not a prerequisite for achieving office. The county of Haddington for example had 12 out of 39 JPs with a previous connection to witch-hunting. Unfortunately, there is no way to investigate if and to what extent the non-witch-hunters had previous connections that recommended them for the office.
One can gain some very tentative idea relating to this question by looking at status. I have ordered the newly appointed JPs in the order in which they are mentioned in the parliamentary document\textsuperscript{104}. It’s unfortunately not entirely clear if this order mirrors social status but it is likely. Scots were very rank conscious. The riding of parliament – the ceremonial march on horse or foot through the streets of Edinburgh to the building where parliament was held, for example, strictly observed social rank and there was even an instance where Lords requested a duel because of the parliamentary voting order (Brown 2012). Lairds designated with “Sir” occur at times below others with no such designation but this even occurred in the attendance list in Parliament, which was clearly hierarchically structured. For example, of the lairds of Sutherland, Robert Gordon of Langdale is mentioned before Sir Robert Gordon of Embo\textsuperscript{105}. If the JP list is ordered by rank one can arguably speak of a tendency of witch-hunters to be among the lower ranked among those who became JPs even if there are still many in the lower tier who didn’t hunt witches. More research is needed to confirm this, but this list could indicate that - especially for lairds of lower status - witch-hunting was a means to achieve office.

\textsuperscript{104} The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707, K.M. Brown et al eds (St Andrews, 2007-2012), 1663/6/144. Date accessed: 15 November 2011.

\textsuperscript{105} The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707, K.M. Brown et al eds (St Andrews, 2007-2012), 1661/1/2. Date accessed: 15 November 2011.
### Table 11: Justices of the Peace 1663 for County Fife

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order named</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Witch-hunter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Alexander [Leslie], earl of Leven,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>John [Balfour], lord [Balfour of] Burleigh,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>George [Melville], lord Melville,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>David [Leslie], lord Newark,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>William Scott of Ardross,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sir Henry Wardlaw of Piteavie,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>John Lundie of that ilk,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>George Learmonth of Balcomie,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Arthur Forbes of Rires,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sir Philip Anstruther of that ilk,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sir James Lumsden, younger of Innergellie,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>James Beaton of Balfour,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Andrew Bruce of Earlshall, younger,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Patrick Lindsay, younger of Wormiston,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>James Arnott of Fernie,</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Peter Hay of Falside,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Mr William Ord of Carnbee,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>William Scott of Balmouth,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Michael Balfour of Randerstone,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Sir Andrew Murray of Pitlochie,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Robert Peter of Denmuir,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Sir George Morrison of Dairsie,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Sir John Preston of Airdrie,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Mr George Heriot of Ramornie,</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>William Pitcairn of Forthar,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>John Gibson of Durie,</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>James Lindsay of Mount,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Sir John Wemyss of Bogie,</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Sir David Auchmuty of that ilk,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>David Lindsay of Kirkforthar,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>John Malcolm of Balbedie,</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Sir James Mercer of Adie,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Robert Dempster of Balbougie,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Alexander Bruce of Broomhall,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>James Clerk of Pittencrief,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>William Halliday of Tulliebole,</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>John Scott of Spencerfield,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Mr Alexander Martin of Strathearn,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>James Arnott of Woodmill,</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>John Seaton of Lathrisk,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>William Douglas of Kirkness,</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>John Skene of Hallyards,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>David Balfour of Ballo,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To confirm this impression and also to give an idea of the rate by which lairds became JPs in this county, I have sampled gentry from the Service to Heirs – a central register of inheritance\textsuperscript{106}. I have included in this sample all lairds who inherited land between 1643-1663. Following Sanderson (Sanderson 1973), lairds are defined here as those designated ‘of their estate’. This data gives information only on inherited property and is thus not an entirely adequate representation of landed wealth. Still, it may serve to achieve with some reliability a sampled hierarchy of landowners in Fife. Details, including a comparison with findings from other studies and the problematic definition of nobility, especially when it comes to the title of lord, are given in the Appendix (D).

First of all, it’s clear that by far not all lairds were appointed as JPs. Matching their names with the list of JPs of all counties reveals that 9 out of 61 lairds in the sample became JPs in 1663. Two lairds were witch-hunters - one of them became JP and the other did not. Among those who didn’t engage in witch-hunting (and I have only included witch-hunters of 1662-63 as previous hunters operated under a different regime) the promotion rate was 8 to 51. With only two witch-hunters, this result is very unreliable of course. Although it does not relate to a general pattern, it’s noteworthy that 5 of these cases are among the richest in the sample with land worth more than £100 a year (the average annual valuation was about £51). Witch-hunting was neither a guarantee nor a prerequisite for becoming a JP but having great amounts of land seemed to have helped. Of course, there is no information on other

\textsuperscript{106} (Thomson 1811)
offices included in this analysis. Hence witch-hunters and other lairds might have achieved careers in other ways but this remains in the realm of speculation until further data is available.

In order to match the JPs in Fife with information on their peers of similar land-based wealth I have completed this sample by tracking outside of the original sampling frame as many JPs as possible in the Retours in order to show where they are located within the distribution of wealth in the county of Fife. I was able to find information on six additional witch-hunting JPs and one non-witch-hunter. These included, it is evident that the witch-hunters who became JPs did not achieve this because of any higher status in the income hierarchy. There are 3 witch-hunters among the very rich owning land worth more than £100 but the remaining 6 witch-hunters are somewhat unsystematically scattered across the hierarchy with maybe a slight tendency to occur in the middle but this cannot fully be substantiated. Regardless, if wealth was a determinant of promotion, there were many peers of the witch-hunters with similar propensities to be promoted who didn’t become JPs\textsuperscript{107}.

**Competing Explanations I: The Godly State Ideology**

As mentioned previously, scholars have argued that witch-hunting is driven by the ideological motives of prosecutors who aim at establishing a godly society. I have argued that beliefs are a necessary but not sufficient condition for waves of witch-hunting to occur. Figure 1, which depicts the number of cases for every year in Scottish witch-hunting, shows that persecution came in the form of remarkably clear-cut waves. I argue that those waves coincide with

\textsuperscript{107} Here again, one cannot exclude the possibility that they achieved a position in an office other than that of JP.
vacancies in state offices resulting from changes in leadership. An alternative explanation could be that those transformations in the political landscape also induce a climate of change in which actors with strong religious ideologies turn into zealous witch-hunters because they feel an urge to mark a new beginning through the cleansing of sin in their immediate environment.

My results show that this theory alone could not explain Scottish witch-hunting. Waves of witch-hunting occur after political change except at the one time when this change is most related to religiosity: The beginnings of the Covenant Revolution. If witch-hunting were due to ideology one would expect a surge in accusations after the signing of the National Covenant in 1638, which after all was a collectively signed pledge to establish a state modeled after God’s laws. This is not the case, however, as witch-hunting is at a clear low until the sixteen forties. Witch-hunting only picks up speed after the Covenanters started to seriously meddle with the structure of offices.

In addition to that, the SSW data also suggests that ideology alone is not the driving force behind accusations. Most prosecutors do not exhibit the kind of lifelong history of involvement in witch trials that one would expect if their motivation were purely ideological. In fact, of the 1,849 prosecutors, only 275 persons occur in the database in more than one time window of witch-hunting. All others either accuse witches in only one year or in two or three consecutive years. If ideology was the driving force behind witch-trials one would expect the same people to re-occur especially because the time windows for witch-hunting are close enough to allow for more than one witch-hunting episode in an average person’s lifespan.
Competing Explanations II: Witches as Scapegoats for Disaster

A further line of argument, as I mentioned in the literature review, is that witches were blamed for subsistence crises and witch-hunting was the outcome of panics driven by disasters such as plague and famine\(^{108}\). More than twenty years ago Larner (1981) showed that the case of Scotland puts these theories into question. Her data on witch trials are outdated. Using the data of the SSW, however, shows that her argument still holds. Table 12 shows the occurrence of famine and plague (as given by Larner) together with the number of years to the previous and the following wave of persecution (according to SSW data).

Table 12: Witch-Hunting Waves and Crisis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years to preceding wave</th>
<th>Type of crisis</th>
<th>Year of crisis</th>
<th>Years to following wave</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Famine</td>
<td>1594-8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Plague</td>
<td>1600</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Famine &amp; Plague in Edinburgh</td>
<td>1623</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Plague</td>
<td>1630</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Plague &amp; Famine</td>
<td>1635</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Plague &amp; Famine</td>
<td>1644</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Scarcity</td>
<td>1648</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Famine</td>
<td>1675</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Famine</td>
<td>1697</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Average time distance in years |                      | 9.56 |

\(^{108}\) Jensen (2007) identifies mortality crises shortly before the witch-hunting wave in 1661-62, which also points to the fact that there might have been other disasters not captured by information on famine and plague. However, what is important about the plague and famine data presented in the study at hand is the absence of witchcraft accusations after plagues and famines. For a critical review of his argument see Chapter 1.
From these data it is quite clear that witch-hunting does not correlate with famine or plague in Scotland. Sometimes persecution happens shortly after an episode of plague and famine and at other times those episodes go by without any high number of witchcraft cases in their aftermath. In fact, a look at the data shows us that arguing that famine and plague produced witches is as unconvincing as arguing that witches produced famine and plague.

**Conclusion**

I have argued that the history of witchcraft persecutions is a complex story of intertwining long-term changes in a society that was in the midst of a transition from feudal patronage ties to office holding, or, in other words, from one logic of government to another. I have empirically shown that, against the background of these changes, events triggered a newly emerging class of upwardly mobile gentry to take action against witchcraft. My theory was that these prosecutors understood themselves to be responsible for and capable of establishing social order and hoped to be rewarded for their actions with upward social mobility. The available opportunities presented themselves when central rule became solidified. In action theoretical terms: the necessary condition for witch-hunting is identity, the sufficient condition is instrumental action.
Conclusion

I began this dissertation with two puzzling observations. Why did some years in Scottish history yield hundreds of accused witches and others almost none? And why are most witch-hunters members of the gentry? I reasoned that the ministry might be the place where accusations started. Since the struggles of the 17th century were deeply embedded in religious rhetoric it seemed plausible that the root of witch-hunting waves would be found there: Witch-hunting could have been the collaborative project of these two classes of actors. The evidence in Chapter 2, however, suggests the contrary. Ministers seem to have abstained from witch-hunting unless they were propelled into it by the lay elite.

Protestantism and broader religious change in theological dogma have attached to witchcraft the power of the organized secret. Ironically, however, the authority of ministers did not feed on the eradication of this secret. This was not because the persecution of witches was irrelevant for the maintenance of a godly society. Clergy had played a great part in bringing the 1563 witchcraft act to life (Goodare 2005b) in the first place and there was no graver danger to the project of creating the perfect church than witches in pacts with the devil. While Calvinist ideology left little doubt in that respect, the legal requirements of the witch trials turned those trials into even greater threats to the status of a minister than the presence of witches in his parish. As a sign of failure in local clerical control and a peril that could not be averted without asking civil authorities for help, witch trials were an undesirable outcome for ministers. Only when their position in relation to civil society changed through changes in the system of patronage, did
ministers get directly involved in witch-hunting. It is hence likely that they were prompted into witch-hunting by secular authorities at times when they could not very well resist. These results suggest that prosecutors from within civil society are the key to understanding witch trials: The involvement of ministers is temporally patterned at times when forces from within civil society change their relation to the ministry. In addition, the fact that those ministers whose parishes have witches do not yield witch trials in their future parishes suggests that circumstances in a parish at the time a minister is there are more important than the properties of the minister. In light of these results, I venture in Chapter 3 to understand the geographical pattern of witch-hunting. I find that prosecutors draw the boundaries around the units of witch-hunting localities and that the core cluster of parishes is located near Edinburgh. Finally, Chapter 4 suggests a possible reason for the location of this core cluster in the vicinity of the capital. I argue here that gentry become active in witch-hunting when events on the national level make their identities as social order makers salient.

Some Concerns

Some concerns regarding the data used in my study need to be addressed. Despite every effort that the creators of the SSW data put into collecting all available information on witch trials, there might still be witch trials that are not captured in the database. Furthermore, a substantial number of witches drop out of the analysis because I have no information on their prosecutors. This makes it possible that I underestimate case numbers in times when witch-hunting goes through lulls and therefore might overestimate the extent to which accusation-waves are really clear-cut phenomena. This would be an especially fatal problem for the analysis because changes in leadership have a tendency to occur right after spells of chaotic political
circumstances in which record keeping and the adherence to formalities might have gotten out of focus. However, as the reverse argument does not hold – there is no continuity of witch-hunts in political tranquil times – one can exclude the possibility that witch-hunting always took place.

I have also lost cases in the geographical analysis of witch-hunting either because there was no information on the witches’ places of residence or because I was unable to match a resident parish with the GIS data. The danger of these missing cases lies in their likelihood to be overrepresented in areas further away from Edinburgh as record keeping in the periphery is likely to be less thorough. To address this issue, I have analyzed how missing parish information is distributed over larger regions in Scotland as defined by Martin (2008). I have lost the most cases where witch-hunting was severest (see Appendix F). By far the most witches without information on their parish residence came from the region Lothian. Strathclyde and the East Borders, the third and fourth most intense witch-hunting areas are third and fifth respectively in regards to the number of missing cases. In general, the number of missing cases is similar to the number of cases that had enough information to locate them geographically on the parish level. An exception is the region of Fife, which yields the second highest number of accused witches but has at the same time the lowest number of missing cases. I also lose the majority of cases from the region Grampian (124 out of 184). Grampian consists of the counties Aberdeen, Banff, Elgin and Kincardine. These are located in the Northeast. This is unfortunate, but with 124 witches out of 1,797 analyzed one can be confident that the missing cases of Grampian do not challenge the overall pattern found.
Beyond Scottish witches

It remains to be clarified whether my findings can be generalized beyond the Scottish context to other cases of witchcraft persecution on the one hand and cases of state making on the other hand. Witch-hunts are worldwide phenomenon. Yet, Scotland seems to be an exception in regards to the important administrative detail – the existence of commissions outside the realm of court justice – that made witch-hunting such an effective tool in gaining a reputation among the ruling circles in the capital of Scotland. In most countries, including the United States, Germany, Poland and England, witches were tried in regular secular courts. In fewer countries, notably Spain and Italy, ecclesiastical courts retained the right to prosecute witchcraft (Levack 1987). One cannot therefore easily generalize from the motivations of witch-hunters in Scotland to other cases.

What my findings do show, however, is that it is important to consider the motivations and identities and opportunities of those people who ultimately decided whether or not accusations would lead to formal trials. And my findings show that a causal explanation of witch-hunting that rests on ideology or diffuse social responses by society at large is unlikely to generate an adequate understanding of the social processes at stake.

The finding that state making operates on the basis of identities that emerge as a consequence of – but quite outside – the formal structures of central states has more potential for generalization. My study also points to the possibility that elites enter into a project of social order making to communicate something to the state and not to local populations. However, the exact form and shape of such responses can only be ascertained by further empirical research.
My results point to the complex interplay between socio-structural position and ideology in the emergence and reactions of identities; this is an addition to the deep-cutting insight that ideology does not straightforwardly translate into action (Bearman 1993; Gould 1995b, 1996). Ideology is not merely an imprecise predictor of witch-hunting waves, it predicts them incorrectly both in terms of the actors involved and in regards to timing. Ideology still mattered to some degree. The dogma of a godly society made ministers hesitant to hunt witches because of a formal setting that made witches detrimental for the formation and solidification of ministerial identities. We might also speculate that lay prosecutors held ideological views that made witch trials seem not only legitimate but necessary. These ideologies, however, did not ultimately trigger them into pursuing witches. They were only the necessary condition.

Second, my results motivate the search for tiny aspects of formal structure in explaining big counter-intuitive outcomes. In Scottish witch-hunting, the fact that capital punishment was outside the jurisdiction of the church steered the history of witch-trials into an unexpected direction.

**New questions**

This dissertation also generates new questions. In concluding this journey through the subject of witchcraft, I will point those questions out here.

There remains the question of class. In explaining historical processes, history and sociology have chronologically marched from classes as categories to elite groups as subcategories to networks as relational concepts for identity (Bearman 1993:10 f.). My argument is that a class of people benefited more *on average* from the socio-economic changes in the 16th and 17th century.
than other parts of society. It is this class that supplied most of the witch-hunters. But witch-hunting is not a class-based action. Only a fraction of all people who counted themselves to the class of Scottish lairds turned into witch-hunters. The social structures that operated within the category of the gentry to produce witch-hunting identities in some actors and not in others are subject to further research and require different types of data.

An important area of future research is therefore the relational embeddedness of those members of the elite who ultimately engaged in witch-hunting. How did they differ from those who abstained from witch-hunting? Office careers in the state administration were one way to achieve status, but of course there were others. Some might have built status by acquiring patronage over tenants. Others might have taken the avenue of becoming members of the kirk sessions. What channeled one set of people into alternative avenues for upward mobility and what induced others to understand themselves as social order makers?

Based on my results, I would expect that witch-hunters are social climbers who have experienced upward mobility and who have not achieved an equivalent rise in status. They have gained wealth but not jurisdiction. They have climbed up the income ladder but remained inferior to peers of equivalent affluence who held jurisdiction. I have argued that witch-hunting was most severe around Edinburgh because there witch-hunts were visible and more important to the center. But it is also likely that parishes surrounding the Scottish capital are denser in terms of the number of people who could make claims to influence and jurisdiction.

This question could motivate two kinds of research projects. It would be interesting to make a social anatomy of selected parishes in order to reconstruct the full scope of their social hierarchies. Such a small-scale study would also allow for an investigation of the local contexts
in which identities for social order making were triggered\textsuperscript{109}. Such a study could also clarify
the meaning of the changes in the relationship between ministers and patrons and their
relationship to the gentry. The latter is an especially interesting area for further research. On the
one hand, gentry were - as elders - part of the kirk sessions. On the other hand, gentry posed a
serious problem for kirk sessions’ efforts to discipline moral transgressions. It has been found,
not surprisingly, that members of the elite were called to church court hearings less frequently
than the rest of the population (Graham 1996) and that at times kirk sessions struggled to gain
control over lairds who simply ignored their call (Hanham 2005). Within the kirk sessions,
ministers and gentry had to cooperate or else there would have been conflict there as well (Todd
2002). Therefore, there is on the one hand tension between ministers and gentry and on the other
hand a cleavage between those parts of the gentry who were part of kirk sessions and those who
were not. Conflict is especially likely among those similar in social rank (Gould 2003). This
calls for further research on the dynamics of status hierarchy.

Legitimacy is another topic. I mention in Chapter 4 that the end of the witch-hunting waves is an
important subject for further study, especially for the witch-hunting wave in 1628-30. This
brings up the question of legitimacy. For the case of Germany, Midelfort (1972) has found some
tentative evidence that persecutions faded away once they started to target individuals of higher
social status. I mention legitimacy in the introduction, where I propose that legitimacy comes

\textsuperscript{109} I have reported in Appendix E some possible data sources for landownership. In addition,
local history sources can add detail that would make a social anatomy possible both of those
areas that were the core of witch-hunting (Miller 1844; Sibbald 1803) and those that were not
(Crawfurd and Semple 1782; Jeffrey 1857; MacKerlie 1870; Wood 1794) as comparison.
from the element of organized secrecy that witchcraft accusations construct. It is possible that the only thing prosecutors had to do to create anxiety was to make a convincing case for the existence of an organized secret. In Chapter 1, I suggest, based on Wilby’s (2000) findings, that in constructing this organized secret, prosecutors were able to draw on fairy beliefs and convert them into a pact with the devil. This connection to folk tales might have allowed witchcraft accusation to resonate with long-held beliefs in the population. This would be another avenue for future study.
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Appendices

APPENDIX A – MINISTRY DATA

Matching of Parishes with data from the Survey of Scottish Witchcraft

The creators of the SSW data have, among other sources, also used Fasti for a list of parishes, thus making it possible to merge the two datasets based on the parish name and county name. Yet some names did not match. Based on information on various sources (Gorton 1833; Groome 1884; Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS), the National Records of Scotland (NRS) and the National Library of Scotland (NLS) 2013; Stewart 2006), I was able to match the majority of them with SSW data.

The list of these matched cases is given below along with their parish id from the SSW data:

St Giles (Edinburgh) = Old Church, Great Church
High Kirk (Edinburgh) = New Kirk, Little Kirk, High Church, New Church
Holyroodhouse = Canongate: used id from SSW: P/ST/654
West Kirk = St Cuthberts: used id from SSW: P/ST/811
Hailes = Colinton: used id from SSW: P/ST/657
East-Calder = Calder-Clere: used id from SSW: P/JO/3545
Carrington = Primrose: used id from SSW: P/ST/655
Glencross = Glencorse: used id from SSW: P/ST/912
Calder (P/JO/3543) was divided in 1646 into Mid-Calder (P/ST/1213) and West-Calder (P/ST/1559)

Inveresk = Musselburgh: used id from SSW: P/ST/967
Humgie = Keith-Humlie: used id from SSW: P/ST/935
Parishes from Fasti that could not be matched: Logie, Campvere, Edinburgh Castle, High Kirk, Lady Yester’s, New North Church, North Leith, Tolbooth, Trinity College, Tron Ch.

APPENDIX B – SURVEY OF SCOTTISH WTICHCRAFT

Descriptives indicating missing information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persons involved (all)</td>
<td>2,178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only Persons with role Commissioner, Investigator, Prosecutor</td>
<td>1,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only local Persons with role Commissioner, Investigator, Prosecutor</td>
<td>1,607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witch cases that can be associated with all Persons</td>
<td>1,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witches with parish information</td>
<td>2,106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witches with parish information and case date</td>
<td>2,095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witches that can be included in parish networks</td>
<td>1,385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witches with Parish Information and resident in Parishes with known Persecutors (CH3)</td>
<td>1,797</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

110 There is also a parish called Preston in Berwick. This is not included in P/ST/1359
APPENDIX C – GIS BOUNDARY DATA

Source:


I matched the boundary data with information in the SSW. The creators of the witchcraft survey used the list of parishes as it is found in Fasti Ecclestia Scottia (see Appendix A). If one was to use those parishes which are contemporary to the witch-hunting waves, multiple problems would arise. The only information on their geographical location is either available through descriptions of the parish or multiple hand-drawn maps. Both alternatives are out of reach for non-geographers who lack the necessary expertise. In addition, any attempt at creating such a dataset would suffer from inconsistencies and incomplete information.

Some parishes changed their names over the centuries. To track those parishes, I used the same references as for the ministry data (see Appendix A). For parishes that were amalgamated with others, I coded their case numbers under the name of the parish with which they were fused. While this probably leads to an artificial extension of the geographical area in which the witch-hunt took place, it at least guarantees the approximate location of the hunt.

Out of 1233 parishes in the SSW data, I was able to match 757 with the boundary dataset. 75 of the unmatched parishes contained witches. Most of those contained only one or two witches but five contained more than ten (13, 19, 22, 33, 11).

APPENDIX D – LIST OF FIFE GENTRY
This is a sample of Lairds and Nobles who were officially registered to have inherited land in the county of Fife between 1643 and 1662. If someone inherited land in another county I indicated it in the column ‘Inheritance in other counties’. In these cases I tracked the retour and added the land value of these holdings to the total. For those witch-hunters who became JPs in the county of Fife, I conducted more comprehensive research using the same data source to assess their status. These additional cases are marked through brackets.

The data source is “Inquisitionum Ad Capellam Domini Regis Retornatarum, Quae in Publicis Archivis Scotiae Adhuc Servantur, Abbreviatio” published by Thomsen 1811. It contains the so-called Retours or Service for heirs. Detailed descriptions - from which the information below is also extracted – can be found in the introduction by the editor himself (Thomsen 1811).

In Scotland, property was not automatically handed down to an heir after the owner deceased. A local jury had to verify the claim of an heir and then they would send a return to the Royal Chancery, which then officially certified the title to land.

For crown vassals (that is, tenants in chief) this was in theory always the case, though practically many considerably delayed this formal process so that the date of inheritance indicated in the register is often much later than the death of the previous owner. Often land was held not from the crown but from subject-superiors, that is landlords often gave land to lower landlords. Cases of inheritance in those instances were often dealt with locally between superiors and vassals; therefore, many of the land transactions between lairds will probably not occur in the Retours. By definition, these registers only contained heirs and hence give no information about any land that had changed hands through purchase. Also, inherited land could be sold so that matching of
property with persons could be very short-lived. Hence, the data give only a rough representation of changes in landownership.

Names between SSW, JP Record and this sample were matched on the basis of the name and the connection to estate. I have matched entries only where first name, last name and the designation of estate were equivalent. Names are given in Latin where the register was Latin (they are close enough not to necessitate a translation) and English for the limited time period in which records were kept in English.

Valuations of land – that is, the official annual value of the land - were given pound, shilling and penny separately for each piece of land. Sometimes valuation was given in merk. I added them up and transferred them into decimal numbers in pounds. I did not attempt to evaluate returns in kind. The few cases where this happened are marked with an asterisk.

The numbers are derived from the new extend – a valuation conducted centrally to assess the amount of taxation to each property. Comparing this data with the principal landowners of Callendar’s finding for the county of Ayr shows that the lairds in my sample probably make up the middle part of the hierarchy. In Ayr, the earls of Cassilis (whose land was valued at £1,000) held the highest land value, and another three families owned land worth between £800 and £1,000. Going down the hierarchy, eight more families owned between £200 - £800, and thirteen between £100 and £200 (cited in Brown 2004:31). In terms of ranked wealth, my sample starts in this lowest tier of the greatest landowners. This was to be expected: While lairds sometimes occurred at the very top of the land hierarchy, they still consisted by and large of less affluent landowners compared with the peerage (Brown 2004:32).
Following Sanderson, I have denoted Lairds as those who are designated as ‘of their estate’ 
(Sanderson 1973:118). Some ambiguities remain within the category of Lord. Brown shows that 
particularly greater lairds could be designated *dominus* in legal documents without being lords 
of parliament (Brown 2004:4). I have ascribed the title of Lord to all those who were designated as *dominus* and occurred in the 1663 sederunt roll\(^{111}\) or in the JP list as members of Parliament for the nobility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>JP?</th>
<th>WITCHES?</th>
<th>designation</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>sum in Pound</th>
<th>Inheritance in other counties?</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Joannes Dominus Balfour de Burghly)</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Lord</td>
<td>1664</td>
<td>£251.82</td>
<td>Kinross, Stirling</td>
<td>no. 974</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>K no. 19</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S no. 236</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robertus Dominus Colvill De Ogheltrie</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Lord</td>
<td>1662</td>
<td>£317.89</td>
<td></td>
<td>no. 928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joannes Lyndsay de Dowhill</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO?</td>
<td>Laird</td>
<td>1644</td>
<td>£266.67</td>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>no. 675</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>P no. 540</td>
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<tr>
<td>James Erle of Southesk</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Laird</td>
<td>1685</td>
<td>£214.33</td>
<td></td>
<td>no. 882</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robertus Weems de Unthank</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Laird</td>
<td>1661</td>
<td>£197.67</td>
<td></td>
<td>no. 892</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Georgius Heriot de Ramormie)</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>1678</td>
<td>£105.79</td>
<td></td>
<td>no. 1166</td>
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<tr>
<td>Johannes Prestoun de Airdrie</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Laird</td>
<td>1663</td>
<td>£183.69</td>
<td></td>
<td>no. 938</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Barclay of Cullerny</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Laird</td>
<td>1656</td>
<td>£168.93</td>
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<td>no. 860</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sir John Moncreiff of</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>PERTH</td>
<td>Laird</td>
<td>1653</td>
<td>£162.2</td>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>no. 808</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
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<th>that ilk</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>P no. 614</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dominus Thomas Hope de Craighall</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Laird (sir)</td>
<td>1662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir Robert Balfour of Kinneird</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Knight</td>
<td>1657</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sir Henrie Wardlaw of Pittravie</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Knight</td>
<td>1654</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joannes Hepburne de Wauchtoune</td>
<td>YES HADD</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Laird</td>
<td>1649</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joannes Gibsone de Durie</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Laird</td>
<td>1662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Skein of Halyairds</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Laird</td>
<td>1653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominus Patricius Myrtoun de Cambo</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Laird (sir)</td>
<td>1646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominus Jacobus Sandelands de Sanct Monance</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Laird (sir)</td>
<td>1645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominus Andreas Bruce de Earlishall</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Laird (sir)</td>
<td>1643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Willielmus Douglas de Kirkness)</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Laird</td>
<td>1666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgius Dominus Melvill de Monymaill</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Laird (sir)</td>
<td>1648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jannes Hamiltound de Kinkell</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Laird</td>
<td>1643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magister Thomas Rig de Athernie</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Laird</td>
<td>1644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Dominus Jacobus Arnott de Fernie)</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Laird (sir)</td>
<td>left behind in 1668</td>
</tr>
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<td>Name</td>
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<td>NO</td>
<td>Laird</td>
<td>1653</td>
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<td>Georg Moncreif of Reidie</td>
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<td>1635</td>
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<td>Johne Moreis of Coudounsbaithe</td>
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<td>Laird</td>
<td>1655</td>
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<td>1643</td>
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<td>NO</td>
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<td>NO</td>
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<td>1648</td>
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</table>

Source: (Thomson 1811)

*These Retours listed payment in kind in partial or total – no estimations were made

^Original was in "Stirling English" £ converted with currency exchange rate at Union 1707

? There is a Lindsay of Dowhill, commissioner to four witches, but no first name was given – so this case cannot be matched unambiguously

In Reference P refers to Perth, K to Kinross, S to Stirling. All others are in Fife

names in brackets are additions to the sample based on the JP list

Witch-hunters who became JPs are shaded in gray

APPENDIX E - Data Sources on Landownership for Further Study

**Valuation Rolls**

Valuation rolls are estimations of the worth of land holdings that were collected by the center for tax purposes. They give the owner and the tenant of a landholding. Unfortunately, before the
procedure was more formalized by legislation in 1855, there are only very few records at quite irregular time intervals, thus making a systematic study of them and their development through time difficult. There is some material for the end of the seventeenth century that gives the value and proprietor of land but not the tenants\textsuperscript{112}. Too late for the period studied in this dissertation but useful for questions that extend the time scope is Timperley’s (1976) directory of all landholders and their lands in 1770. From the eighteenth century onwards heritor records give landownership information, but they did not exist at an earlier date (Moody 2010). Even research for the eighteenth century has many limits as there was no standard procedure according to which the clerks noted the valuation and thus each roll gives different kinds of information. While the original purpose of the rolls – to define the tax share of the proprietor – demanded a rewriting of the rolls to keep them up to date, it was decided (probably in order to make things less work intensive) that the valuation of 1660 was to be used as the basis upon which to calculate tax shares. That means that from that date on we can by no means assume that the rolls were up-to-date (Whyte 1980).

**Register of Sasines**

Scotland has a very useful register, the Register of Sasines, which records every land transfer made and includes information on the previous and new owners and even witnesses. There is a complete run from 1617 to the present day and in theory one could gather from it almost complete information on any property in Scotland. These are of course handwritten Latin documents and oftentimes are extremely hard to read (As the National Archives of Scotland state on their website: it did not “help that for many years the clerks paid for the blank sasine

\textsuperscript{112} National Archives of Scotland – Exchequer Series E106
volumes out of their wages and so had a vested interest in cramming as much handwriting onto each page as possible”). To transform this document into a dataset usable for analysis, the researcher has to match any part of the land mentioned there with the parish it belonged to. Landownership, especially in this period, underwent frequent changes. Considering the extensive time frame that is covered by my study this would be an overwhelming quantity of information.

The register of the Great Seal records all grants made through the privy seal. That means that land only appears in that register when there is such a grant. Therefore, estates in the possession of families without any change would not appear there.

APPENDIX F: Missing Parish Information

The following two graphs show the number of accused witches whose place of residence was not indicated in the SSW by region as defined by Martin (2008). Alongside the results of Chapter 3, it is evident that the regions with the highest case loads are, except for the region Fife, also those with the highest number of cases missing parish information. Grampian is another exception. Here the number of accused was low but the missing cases high: 124 out of 184 cases have no parish information.