Chapter 3 Reading Response Questions

1. How does a random series or scattering of economic activities evolve into a system of trade? Does a series of events seem to occur on its own or does someone have to coordinate economic activities to make them into a system?

2. Using the example of mercantilism, examine the relationship between economic activity and political power. Why do they seem to develop parallel with each other?

3. How does economic development and growth affect the distribution of wealth and the social order?

4. This chapter explores how states or governments develop economic, social, or political policies that work. Drawing from the evidence of the British experience in establishing the first British Empire, what seems like the best way to develop an effective policy? Does one take an ideal of how something is supposed to work and impose it all at one time? Or does one start slow, see how things are going, and then proceed to fine tune the policy to fit the circumstances? What are the positive and negative aspects of both strategies? Did the British learn any lessons through 1750?

5. Using the evidence from the first British Empire, when, why, and under what circumstances do governments forgo foreign diplomacy to wage war?
THE POLITICS OF EMPIRE

1660-1713

The mercantilist policies gradually between 1660-1713 resulted in the development of the First British Empire. Based on mercantile trade & the African slave trade, the empire enriched Britain and elevated it to a major European power.

- 1660: King Charles II restored to British throne.
- 1660-1680s transformed the scattered group of colonies across the North Atlantic, into a formidable mercantilist empire.

The Restoration Colonies

- Charles II distributed title to lands in NY, DL, PA, NJ, & the Carolinas to a few English aristocrats. Proprietary
- NC: Founded on a manorial system but poor farmers refused the quitrents system. (Culpeppers & Lord Baltimore)
The Politics of Empire 1660-1713, contd.

FROM MERCANTILISM TO DOMINION

- **Charles II expanded mercantilism to encompass all trade routes of the British Atlantic world.** (Transatlantic)
- **Wars with the Dutch & Navigation Acts of 1651-1751 excluded foreigners from English trade & required English colonies to trade their goods England. Transformed disparate group of colonial economies into an integrated transatlantic trading system. Created Board of Trade**
- **American colonists resisted James II followed his predecessor’s economic policies & tightened royal control in the colonies**
The Politics of Empire 1660-1713, contd.

THE GLORIOUS REVOLUTION OF 1688

• **James II’s imposition of arbitrary power on the English people discontent.**

• **James’s Spanish wife, a Catholic, gave birth to a son, the prospect of a Catholic heir’s returning to the throne precipitated a bloodless coup known as the Glorious Revolution.**

• **James’ daughter Mary, and her Dutch husband William of Orange were placed on the throne. English Bill of Rights.**

• **Colonists in Maryland and the Dominion of New England rebelled against the governors appointed by James II. The further development of a mercantile-based empire.**

IMPERIAL WARS AND NATIVE PEOPLES

• **England’s recommitment to Protestantism**
The New Politics of Empire 1713-1750

- To facilitate the growth of trade, British officials decided less was more. *salutary* neglect
- Whigs gained control in England in 1688 colonial assemblies acquired more power.
- Assemblies were controlled by elite families
- Urban mobs, artisans, and yeomen farmers demanded assemblies that were responsive to their needs

Salutary Neglect

- Sir Robert Walpole, the leader of the Whig party in the House of Commons from 1720 through 1742, created a strong Court party by using an elaborate patronage system.
- Their belief in the assemblies that responded to popular needs, their lack of respect for colonial governors, and their fear of high taxes and standing armies, made Americans, in general, sympathetic to Radical, or Real, Whig criticisms of Walpole’s government.

Consolidating the Mercantilist System

- Safeguarding British planters and merchants was the main focus of British mercantilist policy during Walpole’s ministry.
- Created buffer between Spanish Florida and its Carolina colonies-Georgia and, British officials also began to crack down on pervasive American violations of the Navigation Acts.