Unlike today, when the word ‘foreigner’ refers primarily to the status of an individual who originated outside of the country they reside in, its early modern usage embraced three groups. The first group, similar to today’s ‘foreigner’, were outsiders, people entering England from abroad. The first usage cited by the Oxford English Dictionary from the early fifteenth century distinguishes a person as not being from the country they were resident in, ‘foreyners, nought of his propre peple’. However, in this usage ‘alien’ or ‘stranger’ was generally preferred. The second group can be defined as spiritual foreigners, people who through their faith were perceived to be biblically alienated from God and salvation. John Calvin used this often in his works to describe the gap in the relationship between God and the sinner, particularly Catholics: ‘I am here a foriner and stranger, as all my fathers were’. Perhaps least expected, the third – and most common – category referred to a domestic migrant, who, having moved from one parish or county to another, was considered a foreigner to the locality in which they settled. This wave of domestic migration in early modern England was the result of rapid population growth and the saturation of the agricultural job market. From parish to parish, county to county, English authorities became increasingly paranoid about the social effects of migration, and attempted to define and regulate those migrants. Those English men and women who migrated within England, leaving their rural homes for emerging towns and cities, were thus perceived to be foreigners by the authorities where they settled, as when local magistrates in Liverpool in 1565 passed an act in which ‘men of Bolton, Blackburne or any other places’ were to be given the status of ‘foreigner’.

Authorities in English commercial towns and cities legislated to protect their trade from domestic and international foreigners. Impelled by a

1 ‘Foreigner, n.’, Oxford English Dictionary; The Pylgremage of the Sowle, translated oute of Frensshe into Englysshe, ed. by Katherine Isabella Cust (London; P. M. Pickering, 1859), p. 64.
4 City of Liverpool: Selections from the Municipal Archives and Records, From the 13th to the 17th Century Inclusive, Vol. i, ed. by James A. Picton (Liverpool: Gilbert G. Walmsley, 1870), p. 75.
saturated agricultural job market, these individuals travelled to obtain work in the emerging industries of more commercial areas. Migrating merchants or artisans from within England who settled in cities like London and Norfolk were among those classified as foreigners by urban authorities. Popular culture often conflated the threats posed by ‘strangers and foreigners’. In the case of London, someone could be labelled a foreigner who had come ‘from somewhere within the country, but outside the city of London’ and was not a member of a guild, or a non-freeman of the city. Authorities often treated foreigners and aliens similarly, seeing them as a challenge to the commercial and social stability of the city. However, as Ian Archer has pointed out, the ‘foreigner’ or ‘English non-free’ did not face the same level of resentment as aliens, due to ‘xenophobia and the ease with which [the aliens] could be identified’. Similarly, Jacob Selwood has discussed both the shared legal status of foreigners and aliens and the apparent breakdown of regulation in favour of ‘English-born’ foreigners in the city’s livery companies. Likewise, Scots, Irish, and Welshmen, although at times seen as aliens or strangers, were, like the men and women of Bolton and Blackburn, ‘subsumed within the larger category of foreigner’. The identity of people from within the British Isles was further complicated during times of conflict. After the English civil wars, Scots were regarded as both ‘being forraigners and strangers’ who had invaded England.

This did not mean that ‘foreigner’ was not used to refer to people from abroad. In an age of rapid commercial and territorial expansion, the English interacted with numerous peoples of varying faiths and cultures. To early modern English men and women, these people and their customs were not only ‘strange’ or ‘alien’, but also markedly ‘foreign’. Like domestic migrants, they were categorised more by their cultural differences than their similarities, evident in the rising interest, for example, in printed accounts of travel encounters or in the fashion for ‘costume books’ depicting the different habits and customs of individuals ranging from Scottish widows to Turkish mercenaries.

7 Jacob Selwood, Diversity and Difference in Early Modern London (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p. 91.
8 Ibid., p. 20.
As mentioned above, the English conceptualised foreigners in temporal and spiritual terms, the former being an individual who was either locally or nationally an outsider, whilst the latter was someone who through faith and religious practice was made foreign to God. The spiritual foreigner was a popular motif throughout the early modern period, distinguishing between Christians and non-Christians but also between Catholics and Protestants. The Protestant doctrine that sin made all foreign to God, particularly espoused by Calvinists, led to the articulation that a spiritual ‘foreigner’ could only be naturalised through redemption and conversion. Ephesians 2:19, ‘[n]ow ye are no more strangers and foreigners: but citizens with the Saints, and of the household of God’, became a popular verse to illustrate both the status of a spiritual foreigners and their transition through conversion into citizens of God.10 The root of an individual’s foreignness in this instance was based on the concept of original sin, that man had in the ‘[s]eparation from the fellowship of God, as Adam was cast out of Paradise’ been ‘estranged from the life of God’ and as such were made ‘forainers [...] farre off from him’.11 At its most simple, this concept meant that sin ensured that ‘every man is a forreiner by birth, and a stranger by life’ to God, a problem only rectified through conversion.12 Conversion operated much like denization or naturalisation did for a temporal foreigner. It allowed spiritual foreigners to be naturalised into the ‘household’ or nation of God. Just as Francis Bacon would later point out that ‘[n]aturalization doth but take out the marks of a Forreiner’, conversion removed the mark of a spiritual foreigner.13 Further, the lines between the spiritual and the temporal were not easily drawn. For many in England, a spiritual foreigner was akin to a temporal foreigner. Whether Catholic, atheist, or Turk, multiple loyalties were at stake – not just loyalty to God, but to the monarch, who after the Reformation was head of both Church and state.

Fuelled by contemporary political and religious discourse, and anti-Catholic rhetoric, the merging of temporal and spiritual foreignness was

12 William Ford, A sermon preached at Constantinople in the Vines of Perah, at the funerall of the vertuous and admired Lady Anne Glover, sometime wife to the honourable Knight Sir Thomas Glover (London, 1616; STC 11176), p. 57.
13 Francis Bacon, A speech delivered by Sir Francis Bacon, in the lower House of Parliament quinto Jacobi, concerning the article of naturalization of the Scottish nation (London, 1641; Wing B326), p. 13.
commonplace for many Protestant authors. This complicated how Catholic English subjects identified themselves spiritually and politically. While relatively tolerant to Catholics after ascending the English throne in 1603, King James invoked the dangers of multiple allegiances in his Oath of Allegiance of 1606, composed in the aftermath of the Gunpowder Treason. All subjects were to renounce the authority of the pope and the power of ‘any foreign prince to invade or annoy’ the king.14 Their supposed allegiance to non-English leaders meant that many Catholics were treated with suspicion, frequently perceived as a threat to social stability and political order.15 The evangelical polemicist Thomas Bale described the threats as the ‘ravenous desires’ of ‘unnaturall forainers’ which had originally been brought into the country by ‘the sleights enticements or traiterous conspiracie, of popish prestes and their adherents’.16 Catholics like William Allen also described their position in the country as one of ‘forreiners’ who had ‘passed their long banishement in honest povertie; and some in worshipful calling and roomes in universities’.17 The government increasingly sought to legislate against Catholics, so that the ‘Romish hydra’ would be ‘by Gods mightie & mercifull hand bee cut off’, protecting themselves against an ‘invasion of forreiners’ that they thought to be instigated by English Catholics at home and abroad.18

In Robert Wilson’s play, The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London (printed 1590), a sequel to the popular Three Ladies of London (printed 1584), the lords identified as Policy, Pomp, and Pleasure have to claim their rights to the hands of the ladies of London in competition with two rival groups. The three Spanish ‘lords’ (Pride, Ambition, and Tyranny) and the three Lords of Lincoln (Desire, Delight, and Devotion) are shown to be equally unsuccessful competitors, with the reigning judge Nemo deciding that London’s ladies are best matched by ‘[t]heir countrimen, in London bred as they’.19 As numbers increased, the governing bodies in commercial

14 ‘An act for the better discovering and repressing of Popish recusants’, 1606, 3 & 4 Jac. I c. 4.
16 John Bale, An excellent and a right learned meditacion, compiled in two prayers most frutefull and necessary to be used and said of all ttre [sic] English men, in these daungerous daies of affliction (London, 1554; STC 17773), sig. Biv.
17 William Allen, A true, sincere and modest defence, of English Catholiques that suffer for their faith both at home and abrode (Rouen, 1584; STC 373), p. 46.
18 Laurence Humphrey, a view of the Romish hydra and monster, traison, against the Lords anointed (London, 1588; STC 13966).
19 Robert Wilson, The pleasant and stately morall, of the three lordes and three ladies of London (London, 1590; STC 25783), sig. D4v.
cities, paranoid at the presence of ‘foreigners’ but equally conscious of the wealth they generated through their industrial labour, sought to heavily regulate their lives, keeping them in check whilst benefiting from their skill. In 1604, the Lord Mayor of London ordered that Blackwell Hall be ‘appointed Market place and places, for all forreiners’, both domestic and international, ‘to sell every of the said severall cloth, clothes, wares and commodities’. In 1605, Thomas Heywood’s play, If you know not me, you know nobody (Part 2), would transpose such regulations abroad when one of its characters warns his runaway apprentice in France, ‘thou canst not keepe open shop here, because thou art a forrainer, by the lawes of the Realme’, and is reassured, ‘Not within the libertie: but I hope the suburbs tollerates any man or woman to occupie for themselves, they may doo’t in the Citie too, and they be naturaliz’d once’.

Authorities tried to restrict where certain foreigners could buy and sell their products, and sought to prevent foreign artisans from accessing trade secrets. Two years after foreign cloth merchants were given the right to trade in Blackwell Hall, ‘[b]asketmakers, Gold-wyerdrawers, and other forraines’ were banned from ‘using mysteries [trades] within the said Citie’. Courtiers and MPs like Francis Bacon expressed an awareness that commercial growth rested on encouraging foreign input, for it was ‘to be remembred, that for as much as the increase of any Estate, must be upon the Forrainer’. Nonetheless, Bacon’s views were not shared by all, and City and national authorities continued to have a conflicted relationship with foreign merchants throughout the seventeenth century. In 1615, legislation against ‘many Forreiners’ targeted bakers, whilst the clause in an 1628 oath for freemen prescribed that they were to ‘know no Forraigner to buy or sell any Merchandize, with any other forraigner within this City or franchise thereof’, ordering individuals to warn City officials if they did. At the same time as City legislation acted against foreign merchants and artisans, Parliament declared it was ‘very willing’ to have ‘[f]oreigners, and Strangers

20 By the Mayor Orders set downe for Blackewelhall (London, 1604; STC 16719).
21 Thomas Heywood, The second part of, If you know not me, you know no bodie (London, 1605; STC 13336) sig. G3v.
22 By the Mayor An act of Common Councell, prohibiting all strangers borne, and forrainers, to use any trades, or keepe any maner of shops in any sort within this citty, liberties and freedome thereof (London, 1606; STC 16722).
23 Francis Bacon, The essays or counsels, civill and morall (London, 1625; STC 1148), p. 84.
24 By the Major Whereas divers good acts and ordinances have heeretofore bene made, aswell by publique proclamations, as other waies; for the restraning the great abuses daily committed and used in brewing and uttering of extraordinary strong ale and beere (London, 1615; STC 16725.7); The Oath of every free-man of the citie of London (London, 1628; STC 16764.5).
receive all encouragement for Trade, and commerce with the City of London and other ports’, offering foreigners protection to trade and sell goods across England.\(^{25}\)

England’s commercial and industrial growth forced authorities to move to protect English merchants in the emerging global markets that were being created through English and European territorial expansion. From the late sixteenth century, the English government began to compete beyond the British Isles and Europe, in the Atlantic, Mediterranean, and Indian Oceans, obtaining new commodities that had previously been ‘fetcht from hence by forrainers’.\(^{26}\) This continued the uneasy relationship between City authorities and ‘foreigners’ and foreign commodities. To ensure commercial success, English authorities aggressively sought to protect their merchants and commercial outposts by regulating foreign involvement. This occasionally involved diplomacy and commercial treaties with foreign powers. In 1630, Charles I negotiated with Philip IV of Spain, ordering that Spanish merchants, though ‘forreiners’, were to be treated ‘equall and like herein unto naturall Subjects’.\(^{27}\) Charles reached the same agreement twelve years later in a treaty negotiated with João IV of Portugal.\(^{28}\) Yet more often than not, English protection against foreign merchants was obtained through protectionism and mercantilist policies, epitomised by the first Navigation Act in 1651.

In line with Parliament, English overseas companies implemented strict rules against foreign merchants from outside London and further afield. Merchants in the Muscovy Company were prevented from selling ‘[f]or- raigners goods’.\(^{29}\) Policies such as those adopted by the Muscovy Company were replicated on a national and international level through the Navigation Acts, which prevented England’s developing colonies from trading with other nations. This, according to one contemporary, was a ‘Forreign Trade driven with Forreign Navigation’, where the nation and ‘Commodities’ remained ‘at Home to such Forreigners as come thither to Buy and Export them’.\(^{30}\)

\(^{25}\) An ordinance of the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament declaring that it shall and may be lawfull for all foreigners and strangers in amity with this kingdome to have free trade and commerce to and from the city of London (London, 1644; E1833), pp. 3–5.
\(^{26}\) Samuel Purchas, Purchas his pilgrimes (London, 1625; STC 20509), p. 896.
\(^{27}\) England and Wales, Articles of peace, entercourse, and commerce concluded in the names of the most high and mighty kings, Charles by the grace of God King of Great Britaine, France and Ireland, defender of the faith (London, 1630; STC 9251.3), sig. D3r.
\(^{28}\) Articles of peace and commerce, between the high and mighty kings, Charles (London, 1642; Wing C2147).
\(^{29}\) Thomas Johnson, A plea for free-mens liberties (London, 1646; Wing J850), sig. A2.
Ensuring that English commodities remained within English jurisdictions would thereby enrich the ‘Nation with Treasure more or less, as the Commodities so sold are of greater or lesser quantity and value’.  

Although popular amongst those who sought to keep trade out of ‘the Forreigners Hands’ both at home and abroad, such views also had their detractors. The Navigation Acts were not always popular amongst colonists in Virginia and Maryland, or merchants who staked a claim in colonial affairs. John Bland, a merchant who trafficked goods between London and Jamestown and spent much of his time in Seville, believed the Navigation Act would ‘destroy so many thousands of Your Majesties Subjects’. Likewise, a contemporary of Bland bemoaned the imposition of the Navigation Act in Barbados, declaring that the English settlers that become nothing but ‘poor English Forrainers’. Bland further argued that despite people leaving from ‘all parts of England, to inhabit and cultivate this New Country’, they were now looked upon through the imposition of the Navigation Act as ‘[f]orrainers and Aliens’. Securing England’s commercial aims went hand in hand with regulating the involvement of foreigners in overseas trade. In doing so, however, English authorities increasingly alienated many people across the globe from its own commerce. This included the many go-betweens with specialised knowledge that made trade possible on the ground, and English travellers who felt that such acts and regulations made them foreign, or kept them isolated from the benefits of being English subjects.

Related keywords: alien/stranger, citizen, convert, exile, merchant

31 Ibid., p. 19.
32 East India Company, Reasons humbly offered by the Governour, Assistants fellowship of Eastland-Merchants against the giving of a general liberty to all persons whatsoever to export the English woollen-manufacture whither they please (London, 1689; Wing R532), p. 6.
33 John Bland, To the Kings Most Excellent Majesty the humble remonstrance of John Blande of London, merchant, on the behalf of the inhabitants and planters in Virginia and Mariland (London, 1661; Wing B3157).