

The Process of Sanctification: A Bourdieusian Approach to the Declension of Power in New England Puritan Clergy

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Abstract : This paper explains the declension of Puritan clerical power following the Great Migration up until when Massachusetts lost its charter in 1684. Historian Perry Miller argued that an overall declension in Puritan culture occurred during this period. However, that notion has been dispelled. There is a resurging field exploring declension in areas outside of Miller's scope of Puritan culture. I determine that colonial New England existed as a functional theocracy by using Pierre Bourdieu's theory of symbolic capital to explain clerical power through symbolic and religious misdirection and conversion. I explore civil and economic power struggles in colonial New England during the decades following the Great Migration to establish that Puritan culture did not largely decline. Instead, it was the Puritan clergy's power that waned during this period.

Keywords : Bourdieu, Historical Sociology, Symbolic Capital, Puritan

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