The background of the entire image is a dense, textured field of gold coins, likely 1 Euro coins, viewed from a slightly elevated angle. The coins are scattered and overlapping, creating a shimmering, metallic effect.

# **Mercantilism & the Navigation Acts: Document Based Analysis**

# Mercantilism

EXPORT >  
IMPORT

**Historical Background:** Mercantilism is the idea that colonies existed for the benefit of the Mother Country (England). In order to increase a country's wealth, they needed to either explore and expand or conquer wealth through conquest. Colonizing America meant that Britain greatly increased its base of wealth. To keep profits, Britain tried to keep a greater number of exports than imports. The most important thing for Britain to do was keep its money and not trade with other countries to get necessary items.



Navigation Act

## Document 1:

"[...] From thence forward, no goods or commodities whatsoever shall be imported into or exported out of any lands [...] in any other [...] ships or [...] vessels whatsoever, but in such ships or vessels as do truly and without fraud belong only to the people of England [...] or are built of any belonging to any the lands [of English people] and whereof the master and three fourths of the mariners at least are English."

Navigation Act of 13 September 1660

1. If you were a merchant in the colonies in the 1660s, what is the only legal way to ship your goods by sea?

## Document 2:

"[...] That from and after [25 December 1733] there shall be [...] paid unto and for the use of His Majesty...upon all rum or spirits [...] the sum of nine pence, money of Great Britain [...] for every gallon thereof. [...] and upon all molasses or syrups of such foreign produce or manufacture [...]"



Harvesting Sugar Cane

Molasses Act, 1733

1. What are TWO items being taxed by the Molasses Act?
2. Why would New Englanders hate this law?
3. What would a British sugar plantation owner think of this law?



Smuggling

## Document 3:

"But in spite of all efforts the Navigation Acts could scarcely be enforced at all. It may be said that the whole people became lawbreakers, and often the customs officials and even the governor's connived at their practice. Smuggling was universal. It went on regardless of the admiralty courts established in most of the colonies. "Juries found their verdicts against the most undoubted facts." The Molasses Act was certainly an economic and political [mistake]; it not only made the people lawbreakers, it led them to hold Parliament in contempt, as not able to enforce its own laws."

History of the USA: The Navigation Acts. 03 Nov.. 2009

1. According to document 3, what was the main problem with the Navigation Acts?

Document 4:

'[...] no sugars, tobacco, cotton-wool, indigoes, ginger, fustic, or other dyeing wood, of the growth, production, or manufacture of any English plantations in America [...] shall be [...] transported from any of the said English plantations to any land [...] other than to such other English plantations as do belong to his Majesty [...] under penalty of the forfeiture of the said goods, or the full value thereof, as also of the ship, with all her guns, tackle apparel, ammunition, and furniture [...]"



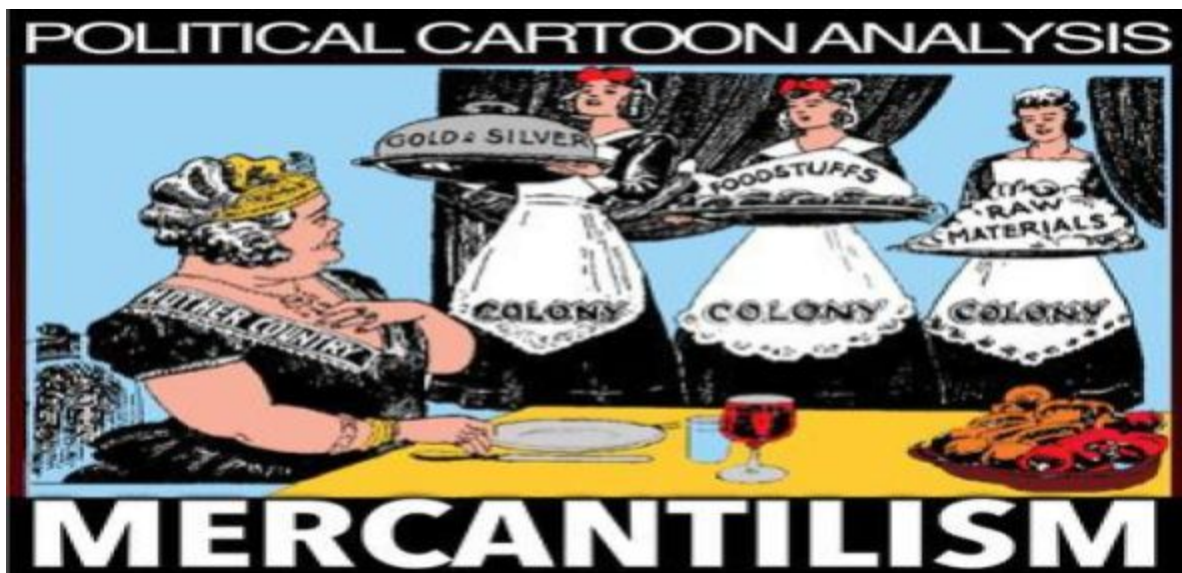
Royal Marines

Navigation Act of 13 September 1660

1. How does this portion of the Navigation Acts limit trade?
2. What is the penalty for smugglers?

# Mercantilism

POLITICAL  
CARTOON



1. Who does the figure on the left represent?
2. Who do the three figures in the middle represent?
  - a. What do they have in their hands?
  - b. Why did the illustrator (artist) draw them as maids?



1. Based on this political cartoon, what would be a colonial economic downfall of Mercantilism?