Despite popular belief, buccaneers—or pirates of any kind—were not anarchistic rabble-rousers who would rebel against all forms of authority but were actually savvy businessmen. Pirate colonies were not dens of iniquity and disorder. Pirates, and by extension buccaneers, saw themselves as a society rather than individuals who all happened to sail on the same ship or live in the same place. For any society to work, they needed to work together rather than constantly clash with one another. 

Pirate life depended too much on group efforts to ensure that things ran smoothly. A pirate could not raid a ship alone, and neither could he hunt for food or maintain the ship alone. Pirates, just like any organized society, “had a strong incentive to secure social harmony without government.”¹ Resources were too easily destroyed in Pirate communities and conflict of any kind would easily bring the whole society to its knees. 

Leeson argued in his book The Invisible Hook that, in pirate society, “it was critical to prevent inter-pirate conflict if pirates were to cooperate for profit . . . successful pirate governance needed to regulate pirate behaviors that generated significant ‘negative externalities.’”² That is not to say that pirates were wholly peaceful and democratic people. They were, but only within themselves. When it came to actual plunder, the average pirate

² Ibid., 53.