# The Moral Economy of the 1719-20 Calico Riots

by

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**Dissertation Abstract**

This thesis examines narratives created by middle rank writers during the English Calico riots of 1719-1720 and contrasts these legitimizing notions with those investigated by E. P. Thompson in his discussion of the moral economy of the English crowd. During the Calico riots, women who went abroad in urban areas in imported East India Company printed Indian calico cotton gowns risked being attacked by angry weavers who blamed cotton imports for the recent precipitant decline in demand for English wool and silk products. Building upon popular notions of female pride and moral corruptibility, including witchcraft imagery, anti-calico propagandists effectively served to legitimize violence against calico-clad women. Thompson identified legitimizing notions as being essential to the functioning of the moral economy of the English crowd. However, Thompson also argued that moral economy protesters normally avoided violence in order to ensure popular support for their actions. Using popular media from the time including plays, poems, songs, broadsides, newspapers, magazines and pamphlets, this thesis demonstrates that the anti-calico propaganda generated by the wool and silk industries was so effective in vilifying calico-clad women that protesters felt little need to moderate their behaviour to placate the sentiments of the wider public.

Anti-calico propaganda was not aimed only at the lower-ranks. The middling sorts represented an influential and rapidly growing segment of English society in the early 1700s. Calculated appeals to the perceived interests and values of this group proved very effective when it came to legitimizing violence against women dressed in printed fabrics. Associating calicos with low-ranked women, and particularly young maidservants, brought the issue of female agency and corruption into the homes of many middling level

families. Anti-calico propagandists asserted that the manhood of the middle ranks, and the nation as a whole, was in decline due to the feminizing effect of new luxuries and the increasing agency and independence of working women. The significant gender imbalance caused by the many men who had been killed in the recent War of Spanish Succession (1701-1714) added colour to these claims as, for the first time, large numbers of women were obliged to work at wage labour away from the constraints of traditional paternal and community controls. Anti-calico writers skillfully generated a climate of moral panic by implying that these women were undermining the ethical and economic integrity of the nation by preferring loose and showy imported printed Indian cotton fabrics over traditional plain woven English textiles.

England was a troubled land in the early 1700s. A looming debt crisis, a disputed royal succession, Jacobite threats, economic decline and rising crime and poor rates were concerning to many milling people. Given this climate of anxiety, the middling men who worked as parish authorities, sat on juries and acted as law enforcement officers had little incentive or inclination to protect what were widely portrayed as irresponsible and morally questionable female calico users. In the absence of a strong middle rank condemnation of their riotous actions, anti-calico protesters felt little need to temper their violence when it came to dealing with calico-clad women. The moderating traditions Thompson identified as being characteristic of eighteenth-century English food riots were consequently ineffective in preventing excessive female-focused violence during the anti-calico campaign. Moreover, the aggressive tactics of these protesters ultimately helped to secure a prohibition on the importation of printed Indian calicos in 1722.

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**The Calico Crisis: Timeline**

East Indian Company (EIC) Established by Royal Charter (1600)
Thirty Year's War (1618-1648) disrupts trade and EIC looks to alternative markets
Charles I (1625-1649)
Competition drives down spice prices (1630) EIC turns increasingly to Indian cottons
English Civil War (1642-1649)
Protectorate (1649-1660)
Navigation Acts passed to restrict trade to English colonies (1651 & 1660)
Oliver Cromwell renews EIC charter (1657)
First Anglo-Dutch War (1652-1654)
Stuart Restoration (1660)
Charles II (1660-1685) Receives annual payments from EIC
Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665-1667)
Third Anglo-Dutch War (1672-1674)
Calico printing established in England (1676)
Textiles become the principal import product of the EIC (1678)
Sir Josiah Child (1639-1699) created Governor of the EIC (1681-1699)
Widespread anti-calico petitioning (c.1680)
Louis XIV revokes Edict of Nantes (1685) French Protestant weavers flee to England
A series of increasingly heavy customs duties placed on calico imports (c.1685)
James II (1685-1688)
Glorious Revolution (1688)
France bans the domestic printing of cotton (1687)
France bans calico imports (1688)
William III (1689-1702) & Mary II (1689-1694)
Founding of the Bank of England (1694)
Nine Years War (1689-1697)
Bill introduced into Parliament to limit EIC cotton imports but not passed (1697)
Large scale protest of wool weavers at Westminster demanding government protection.
East India House attacked and shops selling calicos vandalized (January 1697)
'English Company Trading to the East Indies' established to rival EIC (1698)
Imports of Indian textiles increase markedly (1699)
Bill introduced to limit Indian cotton imports (1699)
Bill prohibits calico imports (1700) unprinted cottons still allowed.
Marked increase in English factories printing on linen and imported plain cotton (1700)
Act of Union Scotland and England (1707) Scottish linens flood English markets.
'English Company Trading to the East Indies' is merged with EIC & 'United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies' is formed (1708)
Anne (1702-1714)
War of Spanish Succession (1702 –1713)
Sacheverell Riots (1710)
Tories gain control of Parliament (1710)
Fall of Tory Government (1714)
Bill passed to suppress smuggling of calicos (1716)
George I (1714-1727)

Whigs gain control of Parliament (1714)
Failed Jacobite Invasions (1715) & (1718) put down
War with Spain declared (1718)
Weavers protest at Parliament (10 June 1719) Extensive attacks on women dressed in calicos begin at this time. EIC offices attacked, shops selling calicos ransacked and constables attacked. Rioters arrested and shot by troops. Numerous pamphlets published denouncing 'calico madams.'
Widespread anti-calico rioting in London (1719-1720)
Rioting spreads to major cities such as Norwich
Bill passed prohibiting most calico imports (March, 1721)
Bill suppressing calicos comes into effect (1722) Calico users face fines of £5-£20. Women continue to wear printed fabrics. Sporadic attacks by weavers continue for years. The use of printed British linens remains widespread
Manchester Act (1732) Blends of linen and cotton are permitted by law.

## Introduction

This thesis will provide the fullest examination to date of the operation of E. P. Thompson's theory of the moral economy in the context of the English anti-calico riots of 1719-1720. Thompson argues that English plebeian food rioters in the 1700s would often protest in a restrained and purposeful manner to express the legitimacy of their cause. As a consequence, their efforts to maintain fair access to food supplies at times received significant public support. While recent scholarship has revealed some discrepancies in Thompson's argument and sources, his theory of the moral economy remains a highly influential model for interpreting plebeian crowd actions. Anti-calico protesters invoked many of the rituals and narratives seen in moral economy style protests, yet these riots were noteworthy for their violence, which was primarily directed against low rank female calico wearers. Remarkably, despite these hostile actions, anti-calico protesters continued to enjoy public support. The purpose of this thesis is to answer the question: Why did the moderating traditions of the moral economy fail to operate in this context? Employing gender analysis, the extensive print literature from the time will be used to demonstrate that the vilifying of female calico wearers was a deliberate and sustained act on the part of the wool and silk industries. Building upon misogynist narratives already present in English culture, skilled anti-calico propagandists worked diligently to engender public anger against women who wore printed fabrics by styling them as selfish and immoral individuals who put their personal interests above those of the common good. So effective were these efforts that men of all ranks felt little inclination to defend those women assaulted by gangs of weavers for wearing printed gowns. In the absence of condemnation of their actions, protesters had no reason to moderate their behaviour.

**An Overview of E. P. Thompson's Moral Economy**

Edward Palmer Thompson is one of the most widely cited twentieth-century historians in the world, and is one of the 250 most frequently referenced authors of all time.[1] An English historian who fundamentally redefined the way popular protest has been investigated and interpreted, Thompson's works and theories have exerted a powerful influence over academic thought for over four decades.[2] Ranking among his most recognized and quoted publications, Thompson's 1971 article "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century" continues to serve as a significant interpretive methodology for understanding the behaviour of rioting crowds.[3]

In the "Moral Economy" Thompson argues that plebeian food rioters in eighteenth-century England often undertook serious and sustained efforts to prevent violence during subsistence protests.[4] As in the case of the Calico riots, the viability of such demonstrations was often based upon wider community sympathy and support for the plight of the protesters.[5] Generally speaking, avoiding aggressive and destructive acts helped food rioters to establish the legitimacy and morality of their actions in the minds of the viewing public. It was largely due to such efforts that protesters were accorded a measure of latitude by the community and authorities to compulsorily obtain quality

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[1] Eric Hobsbawm "E. P. Thompson" *Radical History Review* (58) (1994) p. 157.
[2] Nicholas Rogers. *Crowds, Culture, and Politics in Georgian Britain*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998. pp. 16-18. John Bohstedt. *The Politics of Provisions: Food Riots, Moral Economy, and Market Transition in England, c. 1550-1850*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010. pp. 7-15. David Eastwood "History, Politics and Reputation: E. P. Thompson Reconsidered" *The Historical Association* (85) (2000) p. 637. Peter King "Edward Thompson's Contribution to Eighteenth-Century Studies" *Social History* (21:2) (May, 1996) p. 216. Daniel Cole "The Unqualified Good: E. P. Thompson and the Rule of Law" *Journal of Law and Society* (28:2) (June, 2001) p. 177.
[3] Adrian Randall and Andrew Charlesworth (Eds.) *Moral Economy and Popular Protest: Crowds, Conflict and Authority*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000. pp. 1-26.
[4] E. P. Thompson "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century" *Past & Present* (50) (February, 1971) *Passim*.
[5] Robert Shoemaker. *The London Mob: Violence and Disorder in Eighteenth-Century England.* London: Hambeldon, 2004. pp. 133-137.

foodstuffs at a price the multitude deemed fair. Of course, not all English plebeian popular actions in the early 1700s were so peaceful.

Critics of the theory of the moral economy argue that while instances of restraint were in evidence on some occasions, moderate rioting in general was less common than Thompson represented.[6] An examination of the facts surrounding subsistence riots supports the conclusion that the choice to forgo violence should be seen less as an expression of an innate plebeian morality system and more as a rational assessment of risk. Essentially, protesters tended to conduct themselves in a restrained manner when it was in their best interests to do so. In circumstances where the dangers associated with riotous actions were less evident, protesters felt free to be more aggressive. As even Thompson was willing to concede, rank and file protesters were more than capable of "acts of darkness."[7] Killing and maiming livestock, destroying crops, sending threatening letters, and assaulting gamekeepers and other low rank persons were all activities which plebeian protesters routinely engaged in during the early years of the eighteenth century.[8] The mob *mentalités* which influenced such plebeian protests cannot be ignored in an examination of the legitimacy of the moral economy and the instances of the female focused violence which characterized the English Calico Crisis of 1719-1720.[9]

**An Overview of the Calico Crisis**

Though anti-calico sentiment found its greatest expression in the Calico riots of 1719-1720, the origins of the dispute went back much further. K. N. Chaudhuri notes that

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[6] John Bohstedt "The Moral Economy and the Discipline of the Historical Context" *Journal of Social History* (26:2) (Winter, 1992) p. 274.
[7] E. P. Thompson. *Customs in Common*. London: Merlin Press Ltd., 1991. p. 66.
[8] E. P. Thompson. *Whigs and Hunters: The Origin of the Black Act*. London: Allen Lane, 1975. *Passim*.
[9] Patrick Hutton "The History of Mentalities: The New Map of Cultural History" *History and Theory* (20:3) (October, 1981) p. 237. The word *mentalités* refers to the attitudes of ordinary people to everyday life.
Shoemaker

the importation of calicos, cotton fabrics printed in colourful and detailed Indian designs, had been an item of trade for the English East Indian Company (EIC) since at least the early seventeenth century.[10] Initially a minor trade item, by January of 1697 the volume of calico imports had become so great that a mass rally was held at Parliament to draw attention to the injurious effect this traffic was having on the manufacture of woolen goods, a major and iconic English industry. The historian and MP Narcissus Luttrell (1657-1732) describes a body of weavers from Spitalfields marching to parliament on January 21st 1697. This crowd "came in a body to the number of 5,000 including men, women and children, praying in rude manner that [the bill banning all calico imports] would passe."[11] Parakunnel Thomas makes the case that women appear to have been at the bottom of this uprising.[12] It is perhaps for that reason that, though shops selling calicos were ransacked, parliamentarians threatened and East India House attacked, female calico wearers were not singled out by rioting weavers at this time. Though female fashion choices were a topic of discussion, the wool and silk industries were focused on achieving legislative change at the state and not at the personnel level.

Beverly Lemire notes that the purchasing habits of women in general, and maidservants in particular, had come in for some attention in 1698. However, attempts to impose sumptuary legislation, which would have limited the apparel of such working women, had not come to much as most parliamentarians recognized the difficulties inherent in enforcing such regulations.[13] Female dress was not a significant issue at this

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[10] K. N. Chaudhuri. *The East India Company: The Study of an Early Joint-Stock Company, 1600-1640*. London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1965. p. 193.
[11] Narcissus Luttrell. *Brief Relation of the State of Affairs, 1678-1714.* (Vol. II) (London, 1714) p. 172.
[12] Parakunnel Thomas. *Mercantilism and the East India Trade.* London: Frank Cass (1926) 1963. p. 106.
[13] Beverly Lemire. *Fashion's Favourite: the Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain, 1660-1800.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991. p. 25.

time and the guilds appear to have made no particular effort to make it one. Moreover, in contrast with the hesitant stance taken in 1719 when it came to anti-calico violence, the Company of Weavers was quick to threaten its members with expulsion from the guild if they persisted in destructive riotous activities.[14] The absence of a strong anti-female narrative, and meaningful attempts by the guild to avoid compromising the legitimacy of the parliamentary process, did much to discourage aggressive actions. Of course, it is worth noting that the presence of trained bands in the vicinity of parliament, who were willing to use deadly force to suppress violent offenders, also likely contributed to the reluctance of the protesters to resort to further destructive acts.[15] For all this, the actions of the weavers still had something of the desired effect and a heavily amended bill was eventually approved to limit the importation and sale of Indian calicos in 1700.

Several influential members of the House of Lords were also significant stakeholders in the EIC and they were not eager to see their investments threatened.[16] Consequently, the trade in calicos was diminished but not prohibited. The act which was ultimately passed (11 & 12 Will. III c. 10) banned the importation of "all Calicoes painted, dyed, printed or stained" with the legislation taking effect on September 29, 1701. However, plain Indian cottons were still allowed and this omission contributed to the growth of England's nascent fabric printing industry as domestic printers were quick to begin copying Indian inspired designs onto undyed imported cottons.[17] While these

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[14] Max Beloff. *Public Order and Popular Disturbances: 1660-1714*. London: Frank Cass and Company Limited, 1963. pp. 82-87.
[15] *The Flying Post*. 23 January 1697. Narcissus Luttrell. *Brief Relation of the State of Affairs, 1678-1714.* (Vol. II) (London, 1714) pp. 167, 172, 198-200, 510. Thomas (1963) *Mercantilism & the EIC*. p. 111.
[16] Lemire (1991) *Fashion's Favourite*. p. 29.
[17] *House of Commons Journals*. Vol. XIV. 12 January 1703. *Report of the House of Lords*. MSS, 1702-1704, p. 71. Parakunnel Thomas "The Beginnings of Calico Printing in England" *English Historical Review* (39:154) (April, 1924) *Passim*.

legislative omissions would ultimately spell trouble for the wool and silk industries, the deficiencies in the original act were not to become fully evident for some time.

Threats to shipping during the War of Spanish Succession (1701-1714) had done much to diminish the EIC India trade and wool producers had enjoyed a brisk business servicing military contracts as the calico issue declined in importance. However, with the war winding down, EIC plain cotton imports resumed in force at the same time as British printers were increasingly copying Indian inspired prints on to the Scottish linens which were now available in large quantities following the 1707 union with England. Due to complaints from the wool and silk industries, a series of progressively heavy taxes were imposed on printed linens and cottons in 1712 and 1714.[18] However, this did little to diminish the public appetite for these new fashions and a brisk trade in calicos smuggled into the country from the continent further undermined the effectiveness of this legislation.[19] To many in the wool and silk industries it was clear that a significant struggle was coming in which new tactics were going to be required. Consequently, 1719 marked a decisive shift in the manner in which these manufacturers chose to address the growing challenge posed by foreign printed cottons and domestically produced linens, fabrics which were often collectively styled as calicos.[20]

**The 1719 Campaign and the Targeting of Female Calico Wearers**

While the petitioning of state and local governments and the lobbying of MPs continued as before, the anti-calico faction now instigated a sustained and vitriolic media crusade against calico clad women which effectively encouraged violent attacks upon

[18] Alfred Plummer. *The London Weaver's Company, 1600-1970*. London: Routledge, 1972. p. 295.
[19] Anon. *The Interest of England Considered*. (London, 1720) p. 229.
[20] Plummer (1972) *The London Weaver's Company*. pp. 292-311.

women who wore patterned textiles.[21] The success of this campaign was largely due to the extent to which anti-calico writers tapped into existing tropes of female corruptibility, and in particular the transgressions of maidservants. Depicted as traitors to the nation and amoral social climbers out to subvert the family from within, it was low ranked servant women who endured the brunt of anti-calico propaganda.[22] On the streets, women discovered abroad in printed fabrics were attacked and had their gowns torn from their bodies, were doused with acids, and in many other ways abused in a campaign of intimidation that eventually became nationwide.[23]

The first recorded instances of female focused anti-calico violence occurred on June 16th and 17th 1719.[24] A crowd estimated to be 4,000 strong moved from the weaving district of Spitalfields into the old City of London assaulting the calico-clad women they came across.[25] Observing this sudden rise in disorder, the Lord Mayor of London ordered that troops were to be called out to restore stability. Nevertheless, the next day the violence spread to the south side of the Thames river where several leaders among the protesters were arrested and a rioter was killed by the cavalry. On June 20th it was reported that troops had fired on protesters "dangerously wounding" some and arresting others.[26] While these events did not bring an end to anti-calico actions, they appear to have diminished the enthusiasm of the crowd for mass protests. In the wake of this initial firm official response, most anti-calico actions normally involved a dozen weavers

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[21] Lemire (1991) *Fashion's Favourite*. pp. 12-42.
[22] Chloe Wigston-Smith "Callico Madams: Servants, Consumption, and the Calico Crisis" *Eighteenth-Century Life* (31:2) (Spring, 2007) *Passim*.
[23] Beverly Lemire (Ed.) *The British Cotton Trade, 1660-1815.* (Vol. II) International Trade and the Politics of Consumption, 1690s-1730. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2010. Introduction.
[24] Robert Shoemaker "The London *Mob* in the Early Eighteenth Century" *Journal of British Studies* (26:3) (July, 1987) p. 281.
[25] *Weekly Journal or Saturday's Post.* 27 June 1719.
[26] *Old Weekly Journal*. 20 June 1719. Lemire (1991) *Fashion's Favourite*. pp. 36-37.

attacking a lone women and tended to occur most often in areas where the weavers could count on community support for their actions.[27]

Cripplegate, Whitechapel and Southwark had large populations of weavers and people in these London environs would have expressed strong sympathy for anti-calico protesters. In fact, one assault in Whitechapel left a young woman so severely injured that, despite the presence of a surgeon, "her life [was] despaired of."[28] During many of these attacks women were mercilessly treated and had their calico gowns torn from their bodies or had acid thrown on them by assailants who quickly fled the scene.[29] Some weavers were even so bold as to enter the homes of women they suspected of possessing calicos to search for the offending garments.[30] In the absence to a sustained official response to these actions, the tactic of 'calico chasing' quickly spread to other urban centers where the wool and silk industries were important to the local economy.

Once they perceived that their actions went largely unchecked, weavers in London, Norwich, Bristol, and other provincial centers speedily took up the practice of forcibly divesting women of their calicos.[31] Ultimately, a combination of petitioning, intimidation and public pressure brought an end to the crisis. In 1722 the Calico Act (7 Geo. I c. 7) forbade the use or wear of all printed, dyed and stained calicos in Great Britain and stiff monetary penalties, ranging from £5 to £20, were imposed upon those who wore or sold printed Indian cottons.[32] Significantly, the act did not apply to domestically produced and printed linens and the use of these products continued despite

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[27] *Original Weekly Journal*. 27 June 1719. Daniel Defoe. *The Just Complaint of the Weavers Truly Represented*. (London, 1719)
[28] *Original Weekly Journal*. 2 January 1720.
[29] *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer*. 1 August 1719.
[30] *Flying Post*. 8 August 1719.
[31] Lemire (2010) *The British Cotton Trade, 1660-1815*. (Vol. II) pp. XIV-XV.
[32] Lemire (1991) *Fashion's Favourite*. p. 41.

threats and violence against those who wore them. The women of England were not about to be bullied and they confidently continued to assert their legal right to wear printed linens.[33] Though the 1722 act did not have the effect the guilds had hoped for, in the short term Natalie Rothstein maintains that the 1719-1720 anti-calico campaign represented a great achievement for the wool and silk industries.[34] Lemire argues that part of the reason for this success lay in the manner in which anti-calico propaganda tapped into existing misogynist narratives.[35] These discourses found resonance with men of all social ranks, and were particularly influential among the middling peoples.

**The Middling Ranks and Misogynist Social Attitudes**

Susan Amussen argues that there existed a moral economy of violence in eighteenth-century England which had a particular focus on the punishment of women who were alleged to have violated conventional social norms.[36] Chloe Wigston-Smith points out that this mind-set had particularly harsh implications for maidservants who became the principal focus of the anti-calico propaganda and violence in 1719.[37] As the middle ranks increased in size and wealth, an ever greater demand for domestic labour led to a growing number of working girls entering middling homes. This change represented an important shift in female labour patterns as these women increasingly worked and disposed of their incomes beyond the control of traditional male authority. More than this, the clothing that some wore, brightly coloured and patterned printed cottons and linens, served as a bold public display of their autonomy. At a time when the

[33] Plummer (1972) *The London Weaver's Company*. pp. 305-311.
[34] Natalie Rothstein "The Calico Campaign of 1719-21" *East London Papers*, 10 (1964), pp. 3-21.
[35] Beverly Lemire. *Cotton*. Oxford: Berg, 2011. pp. 52-54.
[36] Susan Amussen "Being Stirred to Much Unquietness: Violence and Domestic Violence in Early Modern England" *Journal of Women's History* (6:2) (1994) p. 73.
[37] Wigston-Smith (2007) "Callico Madams" *Passim*.

nation was facing a number of serious problems, such challenges to the social and gender order assumed a disproportional importance in the consciousness of the middle ranks, a rapidly growing and increasingly influential segment of society.

Political infighting caused by the disputed Hanoverian succession, rising poor rates and a large national debt left over from the war, were topics of concern for the middling peoples. However, local issues were also important, and it was here that the agency of the middle rank was often most noticeable. In his work on the moral economy, Thompson gave limited attention to the role the middling sorts played in protest actions. However, subsequent research has shown this group to have been very powerful, particularly as it was they who often formed public opinion as writers and newspapermen and as agents of the law such as jury members, constables and militiamen.[38] In these capacities, middling men exerted significant influence over the manner in which the Calico Crisis played out. People from the middle ranks were more than willing to speak out, publish and petition when it came to issues that influenced their lives and property with rising crime and poor rates being of particular interest. However, the middling people also busied themselves with social reform and the appropriate education of the poor.[39] These expressions of concern for the proper ordering of society are particularly noteworthy when juxtaposed with the behaviour of the middling sort when it came to assaults upon calico-clad women. Rather than condemn the attacks upon working females dressed in calicos, middling men in the employ of the wool and silk industries did a great deal to vilify these women in the popular media of the day. This thesis will argue that it

[38] Peter Earle. *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660-1730.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989. *Passim*.
[39] H. R. French "The Search for the 'Middle People' in England" *The Historical Journal* (43:1) (March, 2000) p. 289.

was the attitudes and actions of this group that did a great deal to legitimize and perpetuate anti-calico violence, which was often focused on maidservants.

Middle level men and women, some of whom had only recently come up in the world, were understandably concerned to protect the status and property they had lately gained. Due to the intimate contact they had with middling households, maidservants appeared to some to present a significant risk to the domestic integrity of the middle station. Anti-calico writers exploited such fears by portraying female servants as scheming and amoral social climbers who were so degraded by their reckless pursuit of calico fashions that they were willing to resort to thievery, prostitution and the corruption of the middling families they served to obtain more calicos.[40]

**Academic Perspectives on the Calico Crisis**

A number of scholars have discussed the events of the Calico riots, though few have engaged with the issue at length. The first to undertake an extensive investigation of the topic was Parakunnel Thomas in his *Mercantilism and the East India Trade*, originally published in 1926. Primarily focused on economic issues, this work provides considerable insight into the manner in which the importation of Indian textiles was negotiated from the early 1600s to the mid 1730s. However, while the attacks upon women wearing calicos are noted, they are examined principally from the perspective of the financial and political narratives put forward by the wool and silk industries. The social conditions which made women acceptable targets for public assaults are not explored. On the other hand, Thomas does illustrate the tenacious attitude some women took towards their right to spend their money as they pleased and to dress as they

[40] Daniel Defoe. *Everybody's Business is Nobody's Business*. (London, 1725)

wished.[41] Though their imported Indian cottons were ultimately made illegal, British women continued to purchase and wear domestically produced and printed linens.

Originally published in 1932, *The Cotton Trade and Industrial Lancashire, 1600-1780* by Alfred Wadsworth & Julia de Lacy Mann, provides useful background information on the Calico Crisis, in particular with respect to the influx of skilled immigrant tradesmen and the proliferation of new weaving technologies and dyeing processes.[42] These communities brought with them their own unique values and expectations which often clashed with traditional English methods and institutions. However, the attacks on women who wore printed fabrics receive only a brief mention. Natalie Rothstein's "The Calico Campaign of 1719-21" (1964) takes a closer look at the violence perpetrated against women who wore printed cottons and linens by anti-calico mobs. Though she styles these events as acts of terrorism, Rothstein acknowledges the effective role such tactics played in capturing the attention of the general public.[43] Rothstein does briefly note that servant maids were singled out for attention in anti-calico propaganda, however she does not develop the issue further. In contrast, Alfred Plummer brings significant detail to his study of these predominantly low-rank female victims.

The strength of Plummer's *The London Weaver's Company, 1600-1970* (1972) lies in description as opposed to analysis. Newspaper accounts, ballads and broadsides as well as petitions and government records are all used to illustrate the defining features of the Calico riots. Like Thomas, Plummer explores the important role middle rank writers like Daniel Defoe played in creating and disseminating anti-calico propaganda.

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[41] Thomas (1963) *Mercantilism and the East India Trade*. pp. 158-165.
[42] Alfred Wadsworth & Julia de Lacy Mann. *The Cotton Trade and Industrial Lancashire, 1600-1780.* New York: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1968. pp. 129-139.
[43] Rothstein (1964) "The Calico Campaign of 1719-21" pp. 8-9.

Moreover, he provides insight into the manner in which immigrants, new technologies and guild infighting contributed to the problems faced by the traditional English textile industries and trades.[44] Though significant for its use of primary sources, the objective of Plummer's work is to lay out the broad history of the wool industry. Consequently, he does not delve overmuch into the manner in which the larger social, political and economic structures of the time fed into the events of the Calico Crisis. While Plummer provides detailed accounts of the attacks upon women dressed in printed fabrics, the female perspective on the violent actions of the weavers is only addressed in a few brief vignettes derived from newspaper sources.

Chandra Mukerji's 1983 work *From Graven Images: Patterns of Modern Materialism* provides a fuller account of the cultural impact of new fabrics, the force of fashion and the manner in which early eighteenth-century English society was coming to grips with the issue of plebeian consumerism. In particular, she notes the importance many at the time placed upon visually differentiating themselves from those they perceived as being of a lesser social rank. The history of sumptuary laws is discussed and the importance of calicos is examined. Calicos were brightly coloured and patterned in exotic designs hitherto largely unknown in England, they were lightweight and easy to wash and, above all, they were inexpensive. Consequently, fashion was increasingly coming within the reach of all social ranks.[45] While Mukerji provides useful insight into the challenges calico fashions brought to English society, and the weaving industry, her examination of the Calico riots themselves and the attacks on women are quite brief.

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[44] Plummer (1972) *The London Weaver's Company*. Chapter 14 "Daniels Defoe and the Calico Madams"
[45] Chandra Mukerji. *From Graven Images: Patterns of Modern Materialism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983. pp. 167-209.

In her 2007 article "Callico Madams: Servants, Consumption, and the Calico Crisis," Chloe Wigston-Smith explores the plight of servant girls who were vilified in anti-calico propaganda. Using references to contemporary documents, she illustrates the extent to which these women were styled as unscrupulous social climbers and depicted as embodying the loose and showy characteristics of the calico clothing they wore.[46] To anti-calico writers they were at best deluded consumers and at worst whores and thieves who stole from their employers as surely as they stole from the nation by willfully depriving wool and silk workers of their livelihoods. The author does provide some examples of the manner in which mobs of weavers assaulted women dressed in printed fabrics. However, as a literary scholar, the focus of her article is on narrative analysis.[47]

Robert Shoemaker examines the events of the Calico riots in two works: "The London 'Mob' in the Early Eighteenth Century" (1987) and *The London Mob: Violence and Disorder in Eighteenth-Century England* (2004). Shoemaker uses examples from the Calico riots to illustrate the strong rioting tradition which characterized London street life in the eighteenth century. While he supports Thompson's assertion that most rioters preferred to avoid violence, Shoemaker also notes that this was largely dependent on context.[48] Crowds could gather to enforce popular norms by physically punishing those, such as women dressed in calicos, who were perceived to be acting immorally.[49] The proliferation of anti-calico propaganda in 1719 did a great deal to legitimize such violence and Thompson emphasized the importance of legitimizing notions to crowd actions. As Shoemaker's studies show, these legitimizing notions could be artificially

[46] Wigston-Smith (2007) "Callico Madams" *Passim*.
[47] Wigston-Smith (2007) "Callico Madams" pp. 33-34.
[48] Shoemaker (1987) "London Mob" p. 275.
[49] Shoemaker (1987) "London Mob" pp. 288, 292.

created and given to protesters by well organized and funded elite interests such as politics organizations and the English wool and silk industries.[50]

The extent to which leaders in the wool and silk industries went to vilify women who chose to wear printed gowns is extensively documented in the works of Beverly Lemire. In *Fashion's Favourite: the Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain, 1660-1800* (1991), *The British Cotton Trade, 1660-1815* (Vol. II) (2010) and *Cotton* (2011). In *Fashion's Favourite* the topic of EIC cotton imports, and the effect these had on English society, receives its fullest examination since Thomas wrote on the subject in 1926. Lemire illustrates the importance consumer preferences and patterns of consumption had on the growth of the British Cotton industry and the hardships inflicted upon women who chose to wear printed fabrics are detailed. Ultimately, even the violent actions of the weavers, and the legal maneuverings of parliamentarians, were insufficient to stifle popular feminine desires and printed English linens rapidly took the place of Indian calicos.[51] While insightful, the focus of this work is on the role the fashion played in reshaping English society. A more detailed examination of the anti-calico riots is to be found in the second volume of edited documents in *The British Cotton Trade, 1660-1815*.

In *The British Cotton Trade* the important role propaganda played in engendering and legitimizing hostility towards women is extensively examined with reference to a wide range of primary sources. In this work, Lemire also addresses Thompson's theory of the moral economy and the manner in which shared social beliefs and expectations contributed to the scale of the Calico Crisis.[52] She also notes the extent to which local and national concerns influenced the attitudes expressed by anti-calico writers. These men

[50] Shoemaker (1987) "London Mob" pp. 301-303.
[51] Lemire (1991) *Fashion's Favourite*. pp. 12-42.
[52] Lemire (2010) *The British Cotton Trade, 1660-1815.* (Vol. II) pp. 277-279.

played on traditional prejudices, and economic and social fears, to engender negative public attitudes against women who wore calicos. The increasing numbers of women working in non-traditional roles and industries added credibility to these assertions.

In *Cotton*, Lemire emphasizes that fact that the anti-calico riots occurred within the context of global trade in cottons which had reached unprecedented levels by 1719. Competition from Indian imports was causing considerable problems for the poorly organized and overstaffed English wool and silk manufacturers. However, the reaction of guild authorities was not to look to the reorganization of their own industries, rather they shifted focus onto those who purchased and wore Indian goods. As cotton imports increased, female fashion choices were coming under considerable scrutiny. As growing numbers of women became employed in paid labor they were able to purchase more of the new material goods which were on offer. These included new semi-luxuries like tea and coffee, which appealed to both men and women, as well as Indian calicos, which were popularly equated with feminine sensibilities. This rise in female agency was distressing to those who maintained that these female fashion and consumer choices were at best recklessly indulgent and at worst treasonous. What is more, low rank women were conspicuous in those occupations related to the proliferation of new fashions. Women stitched inexpensive ready made clothes, they repaired, dyed and sold second hand (and stolen) linen and cotton gowns and worked as retailers.[53] The considerable gender imbalance caused by the many men who had been killed in the recent war meant that a notable number of women were obliged to make their way as independent wage labourers.[54] In a country where men were customarily the principal decision makers and

[53] Thomas (1924) "The Beginnings of Calico Printing in England" p. 211.
[54] Lemire (2011) *Cotton*. pp. 50-53.

income earners, this rise in female autonomy was disturbing to many at all levels of society. Fears surrounding this shift in gender roles notably contributed to the proliferation of misogynist attitudes which legitimized violent anti-calico actions.

Lemire notes that Thompson felt legitimizing notions were essential to the vast majority of eighteenth-century crowd actions. These were focused on the maintenance of traditional social norms and obligations and predicated upon customary forms of market conduct. Thompson chose to focus upon the operation of the moral economy in the food riot context. However, Lemire argues that concerns over wool and cotton use, and the conflicting pressures of tradition and fashion, were likewise indicative of the emotionally charged economic and cultural struggles Thompson described in his treatise on the moral economy of the English crowd.[55] However, the traditions of moderate protest which Thompson found to be integral to the successful functioning of the moral economy were conspicuously absent when weavers and their supporters took to the streets. While recent scholarship had proven that incidences of restrained crowd action were less common than Thompson had argued, the significant absence of moderation in this case is noteworthy. Part of the explanation for the tolerance the public and authorities displayed for the violent actions of these rioters was due to the misogynist narratives used by anti-calico writers. However, a thick description of these events must consider the violence associated with anti-calico actions as a symptom of a wider crisis plaguing the nation in general and men of the middle ranks in particular.

**Chapter Overview**

In Chapter 1 the threat posed by Indian calico imports will be shown to have been only part of the problems facing the English wool and silk industries. An influx of skilled

[55] Lemire (2011) *Cotton*. pp. 50-54.

foreign tradesmen, and the use of new weaving technologies meant that more labour was being done by fewer workers. This problem was aggravated by imprudent over investment in the textile trades during the prosperous war years. At this time, many English weavers and apprentices were encouraged by guild leaders and investors to enter the textile trades only to have their livelihoods threatened when government contracts for uniforms and blankets ended and EIC Indian cotton imports resumed in force.

Chapter 2 focuses on scholarly examinations of Thompson's work. Thompson had not intended that his theory of the moral economy should be applied outside of the context of the eighteenth-century English food riot.[56] However, others have found examples of moral economy *mentalités* active in a variety of protest situations. Manipulating popular opinion in favour of the protesters was vital to this process and skilled middling writers proved particularly efficient at influencing public discourses including the anti-calico crusade. The focus on the actions of female agents during the Calico riots will be examined and Thompson's opinions on the role women played in moral economy protests will be discussed. This chapter concludes with Thompson's examination of the manner in which the moral economy had been applied beyond the food riot context and his responses to some of his critics will be evaluated.

Chapter 3 explores the middle rank in detail. A definition of the middling sort will be established and the important role these men and women often played in early eighteenth-century English society will be discussed. Men from the middle ranks were often on the front lines of parish administration. They paid and assessed the poor rates, determined who received aid and acted as law enforcement officials by serving as constables, and as officers in the militia and military. Though strongly influenced by

[56] Thompson (1991) *Customs in Common*. p. 260.

Christian ideals and traditional notions of social order, the middling sorts were sensitive to the plight of the poor and often favoured negotiation over force when dealing with moral economy style food riots. This is not to say that all protests were conduced in such a controlled fashion. The female focused violence associated with the Calico riots reflects the difficulty large numbers of middling people had in reconciling the competing social and economic forces of the time. In periods of doubt, many took refuge in conservatism and in the enforcement of traditional social norms. A crisis of masculinity, where middling men struggled to find a balance between traditional robust assertions of masculinity and new forms of polite and restrained conduct, contributed to a hardening of attitudes against increasing evidence of female agency. Changes in fashion not only confused the sartorial line between the ranks, it also was seen to be causing a decline in masculinity as a new focus on style and refined manners appeared to be giving rise to an epidemic of foppish men. For a nation so often at war, and highly reliant upon non-professional civilian law enforcement in the form of militia and constables to maintain order, any decline in masculine authority and martial vigor was regarded with great concern. Efficient paternal leadership from the king, nobles and gentry down to the male head of household was seen as integral to the proper ordering and defense of the realm. Thompson recognized this fact when he emphasized the important role traditional paternalist leadership played in the functioning of the moral economy. The implications this crisis in masculinity had for women who wore calico are explored in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4 focuses upon the social, gender and hierarchical issues surrounding the Calico riots. As the middle ranks moved up in the world they were confronted with a range of new social expectations. Increasing levels of female autonomy, as seen in the

conduct of low rank women pursuing calico fashions in defiance of customary male authority and the manifest interests of the nation, was therefore an issue of considerable concern. Emulative competition, as the lower orders strove to equal the dress and manners of those higher up the socio-economic ladder also sowed confusion among the social orders. This confluence of anxieties meant that debates over dress assumed a disproportionate importance in the consciousness of the middle ranks. The latitude accorded anti-calico protesters to violently sanction working women dressed in printed cottons and linens was a largely attributable to the moral panic caused by these concerns.

In Chapter 5 the Calico Crisis will be situated within its broader historical context. Political infighting, inflation, unemployment, rising poor rates and lawlessness were all significant popular concerns in the early 1700s. Paid agitators, inflammatory rhetoric, bribes and alcoholic inducements were often used by elite interests to instigate and manipulate crowd actions at this time. Following in this practice, anti-calico writers exploited the common anxieties of the middling peoples to engender actions against low ranked women who dressed above their station and appeared to threaten the social order.

**Thesis Objectives**

The Calico riots were unique in British history. The nation-wide propaganda campaign against the importation of Indian printed cottons, and the levels of violence directed against female consumers who wore this material, were unprecedented events. Many people from all social ranks lacked the cultural resources necessary to develop measured responses to the challenges posed by new material goods and changing patterns of female employment and consumerism. Consequently, traditional misogynist attitudes and customary shame sanctions provided the intellectual framework within which the

calico issue was often negotiated in the public sphere. Approaching the issue of the moral panic caused by the use of printed fabrics from the perspective of gender analysis, this thesis will demonstrate that negative social attitudes substantially contributed to the levels of hostility evident in anti-calico riots. The actions and attitudes of middle rank men effectively validated these aggressive tactics by failing to suppress and punish those engaged in these protest actions. Using a wide range of primary documents, it will be shown that popular prejudices with respect to female agency were considerably exacerbated by the propaganda produced by those writing on behalf of the wool and silk industries to encourage violence against women. The prevailing social, economic and political conditions were such that appeals to maintain traditional markets and industries, gender hierarchies and the social order were well received. In the absence of elite and middling condemnation of their actions, low rank protesters, who were not used to dealing with female offenders in moral economy style protests, reverted to traditional rough music style sanctions to punish women dressed in calicos.[57]

[57] E. P. Thompson "Rough Music Reconsidered" *Folklore* (103:1) (1992) p. 3. "*Rough Music* is the term which has been generally used in England since the end of the seventeenth century to denote a rude cacophony, with or without elaborate ritual, which usually directed mockery or hostility against individuals who offended against certain community norms." For illustrations of the manner in which rough music was used to reinforce gender hierarchies see Martin Ingram "Ridings, Rough Music and the Reform of Popular Culture in Early Modern England" *Past & Present* (105) (November, 1984) *Passim*.

## Chapter 1

### The State Domestic Textile Manufacture in England c. 1715

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the underlying causes of the Calico Crisis. Global trade, Indian weavers, foreign workers in England, weaving machines and female consumers were all blamed for the diminished state of the wool and silk manufacture in the years leading up to the Calico riots. While the competition from printed fabrics added to the difficulties faced by the wool and silk industries, other factors also contributed to the challenges faced by theses manufactures. Over investment in the domestic textile industry during the prosperous war years, the deskilling of trades due to technological change, and an overabundance of workers were all factors in the rising levels of unemployment in the wool and silk trades at the time of the 1719-1720 Calico Crisis. Ultimately, the actions of self-serving guild masters, and unscrupulous clothiers, did a great deal to add to the sufferings of ordinary English weavers.[58] The conditions which allowed this type of activity to thrive must be understood in the context of the ambiguity surrounding Indian trade, and the role the state was expected to play in developing and protecting the economy of the realm.

### The East India Company: Mercantilism vs. Foreign Trade

> The *East-India* Trade…I take to be Mischievous to the Kingdom.[59]
>
> John Cary (fl. 1699)

[58] Beverly Lemire. *Dress, Culture and Commerce: The English Clothing Trade before the Factory, 1660-1800*. London: Macmillan, 1997. p. 180. Lemire describes the word 'clothier' as ambiguous as it was applied to suppliers of military clothing as well as wool manufacturers. The word 'clothier' is used in this thesis to denote those in a position to sub-contract out work, or otherwise employ, numerous workers, either through the 'putting-out' system, or in factories. These workers often performed specialized tasks, such as spinning or weaving, using equipment and material supplied by their employer. This was wage labour or piece work, and those involved had no control over the means of production.

[59] John Cary. *A Discourse Concerning the East-India Trade*. (London, 1699)

The first substantive examination of issues surrounding the Calico riots was undertaken by the East-Indian Oxford scholar Parakunnel Thomas. Published in 1926, *Mercantilism and the East India Trade* focuses primarily on the time period between 1680s-1720s. At the heart of this work are the competing economic ideas of protectionism vs. unrestricted trade, and the manner in which proponents of these schools of thought sought to influence the parliamentary decisions that determined the growth of the East India Company, and by extension the English cotton trade.[60]

In essence, mercantilist theory held that the power of a nation depended upon calculable wealth, that is the amount of precious metals and stones, contained within the country.[61] The state amassed these stockpiles by ensuring a favourable balance of trade, by exporting as many manufactured products as possible, while at the same time limiting imports from other nations.[62] Mercantilists shared in the assumption that the trade of the world was finite. Where one nation gained, it was held, another invariably lost.[63] Existing markets and industries had to be carefully guarded and beneficial trade links ambitiously pursued.[64] Within this model, colonies, and dependencies like Ireland, were meant to supply the mother nation with natural resources and receive finished goods in return.[65]

A number of legal devices were employed to advance English interests at the expense of other regions in the British Isles. For example, the Wool Act of 1699 (11 Will.

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[60] Parakunnel Thomas. *Mercantilism and the East India Trade*. London: Frank Cass, 1963. Preface.
[61] Joyce Appleby "Ideology and Theory: The Tension Between Political and Economic Liberalism in Seventeenth-Century England" *American Historical Review* (81:3) (June, 1976) p. 507.
[62] Robert Duplessis. *Transitions to Capitalism in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. pp. 202-203.
[63] Chandra Mukerji. *From Graven Images: Patterns of Modern Materialism.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1983. pp. 197-205.
[64] Patrick O'Brien & Trevor Griffiths & Philip Hunt "Political Components of the Industrial Revolution: Parliament and the English Cotton Textile Industry, 1660-1774" *Economic History Review* (44:3) (August, 1991) *Passim.* Keith Wrightson. *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000. pp. 251-255.
[65] H. F. Kearney "The Political Background to English Mercantilism, 1695-1700" *Economic History Review* (11:3) (1959) *Passim*.

III c. 12) required that Irish wool only be sold in English markets. In the case of Ireland, and later Scotland, such policies had the consequence of suppressing regional growth. Such English legal restrictions naturally led to resentment in Ireland and Scotland as these nations already had well developed wool and linen industries which they wished to preserve and encourage.[66] In contrast, the North American settlements were excellent sources of raw materials and constituted a virtual captive market for finished English goods due to the Navigation Acts which prohibited foreign trading with these colonies.[67] With a limited capacity to produce consumer products of their own, the new world settlements were expected to be wholly dependent upon the products of European manufacturers. Conditions were otherwise in India. An ancient and commercially sophisticated civilization with centuries old craft and trade systems, and an international demand for its products, India was a market that had to be carefully developed.

The India subcontinent was not a British colony in the early eighteenth century. The British could not dictate terms in the same manner they did with the Scots and Irish nor could they restrict trade, as in North America.[68] Consequently, complaints that calico imports depleted the bullion reserves of the nation were not without some foundation as

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[66] Francina Irwin "Scottish Eighteenth-Century Chintz and Its Design" *The Burlington Magazine* (107:750) (September, 1965) p. 452. Ralph Davis "English Foreign Trade, 1700-1774" *Economic History Review* (15:2) (1962) pp. 290-291. Francis G. James "The Irish Lobby in the Early Eighteenth Century" *The English Historical Review* (81:320) (July, 1966) *Passim*. E. Lipson. *A Short History of Wool and its Manufacture*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953. pp. 101-102.

[67] Jonathan Eacott "Making an Imperial Compromise: The Calico Acts, the Atlantic Colonies, and the Structure of the British Empire" *William and Mary Quarterly* (69:4) (October, 2012) p. 733 Mark Kishlansky. *A Monarchy Transformed, Britain, 1603-1714*. London: Penguin, 1996. p. 23. Wrightson (2000) *Earthly Necessities*. pp. 252-253. Davis (1962) "English Foreign Trade" p. 296.

[68] Bob Harris "Parliamentary Legislation, Lobbying and the Press in Eighteenth-Century Scotland" *Parliamentary History* (26:1) (2007) *Passim*. Kearney (1959) "The Political Background to English Mercantilism" *Passim*.

Indian goods were normally purchased with precious metals.[69] Opponents of the traffic in calicos were quick to draw attention to this situation.

> GREAT quantities of Bullion, and amongst it our own Coin melted down, are Yearly exported by the *East-India* Company, with part of which, Callicoes are purchased, which drains the Nation of its Silver.[70]

The problem essentially came down to the manner in which the EIC was obliged to trade. Unlike the merchants of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) who managed their business so effectively that the gold and silver obtained from traffic with the markets of China and Japan could be used to finance the India trade, EIC merchants were heavily reliant on bullion.[71] As demand for Indian products grew, increasing amounts of silver, gold, precious stones and copper were needed to service the EIC trade.[72] In 1663, parliament even went so far as to authorize the export of minted gold and silver coins for this purpose.[73] The conditions of the India trade were such that accommodations had to be made to ensure the uninterrupted flow of EIC goods.

Unlike the frontier colonies of the Americas, India already had a well established system of craft production which boasted highly skilled tradesmen, and elaborate commercial networks. Consequently, most Indian consumers had little need for imported European goods and woollen products, England's principal export, were unsuited to hot

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[69] K. N. Chaudhuri "Treasure and Trade Balances: The East India Company's Export Trade, 1660-1720" *Economic History Review* (21:3) (December, 1968) *Passim*. Max Beloff. *Public Order and Popular Disturbances, 1660-1714*. London: Frank Cass and Co., Ltd., 1963. pp. 84-85. Natalie Rothstein "The Calico Campaign of 1719-1720" *East London Papers* (7:64) (July, 1964) pp. 5-6.

[70] Anonymous. *Some Considerations relating to the Desired Prohibition of Wearing Printed Callicoes, by a Person wholly Disinterested otherwise, then for the Good of his Country*. (London, 1720)

[71] Fujita Kayoko "Japan Indianized: The Material Culture of Imported Textiles in Japan, 1550-1850" in Giorgio Riello & Prasannan Parthasarathi (Eds.) *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1200-1850*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. pp. 181-188. Thomas (1963) *Mercantilism and the East India Trade*. pp. 9-10.

[72] Santhi Hejeebu "Contract Enforcement in the English East India Company" *Journal of Economic History* (65:2) (June, 2005) p. 503.

[73] Arnold Sherman "Pressure from Leadenhall: The East India Company Lobby, 1660-1678" *Business History Review* (50:3) (Autumn, 1976) p. 335.

climates.[74] Alfred Wadsworth and Julia De Lacy Mann argue that these circumstances effectively forced England to export bullion despite official mercantilist policies.[75] Patrick O'Brien, Trevor Griffiths and Philip Hunt point out that concerns over these bullion reserves became acute as England's debt mounted during the 1689-1713 period when the nation was expending great amounts on wars with France.[76] This state of affairs was vexing to informed observers and by the 1690s serious calls were being made to limit the importation of Indian goods.[77] Like many mercantilists of the day, John Cary was particularly concerned with the proliferation in Indian printed cottons.

> Calicoes and wrought Silks are the things I chiefly aim at, and hope to make it plainly appear that those two Commodities do us more prejudice in our Manufacturers than all the Advantage they bring either to private Purses, or to the Nation in general, and it were to be wisht the Wisdom of our Parliament would prohibit their been worn in England, else like the ill-favoured lean Kine they will destroy the use of our Manufactures.[78]

Beverly Lemire makes the case that a disdain for this trade in foreign novelties was shared by many mercantilists who equated the popular consumption of calicos with a corruption of England's moral and economic values.[79] Neil Mckendrick argues that it was a widely held notion among the elites, and many in the middle ranks, that Indian imports represented a challenge not only to the existing financial structure of the country but also

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[74] Eacott (2012) "Calico Acts" pp. 752-753. Mukerji (1983) *Graven Images.* p. 186, 205. Davis (1962) "English Foreign Trade" pp. 286, 293-294. Chaudhuri (1965) *East India Company*. p. 13.
[75] Alfred Wadsworth & Julia De Lacy Mann. *The Cotton Trade in Industrial Lancashire, 1600-1780*. New York: Augustus M. Kelly, 1968. pp. 116-117.
[76] O'Brien, Griffiths and Hunt (1991) "Political Components of the Industrial Revolution:" p. 417.
[77] William III. *An Act for the More Effectual Imploying the Poor by Encouraging the Manufactures of the Kingdom.* (London, 1699)
[78] John Cary quoted in George Baker "East Indian Hand-Painted Calicoes of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, and their Influence on the Tinctorial Arts of Europe" *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* (64) (May, 1916) p. 487.
[79] Beverly Lemire. *Fashion's Favourite: the Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain,1660-1800.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991. p. 4.

to its social fabric.[80] The poor had to be kept in their place and foreign popular luxuries encouraged working men and women towards frivolous spending by attempting to live above their station. Previously, sumptuary laws had existed to restrain these impulses. However, these rules had proved very difficult to enforce. Consequently, unlike many of their continental neighbours, the English had repealed their sumptuary laws in 1604.[81]

Though some fears were expressed that sumptuary laws would be reintroduced into England this scenario was unlikely.[82] Contemporary commentators felt compelled to point out that sumptuary laws, where they existed, were designed to restrain spending. As calicos were often cheaper than comparable woolens, the arguments in favour of new legislation were transparently facile as they appeared likely to have the consequence of forcing the poor to pay more for clothing.[83] Recognizing this logical inconsistency in the sumptuary debate, some endeavored to sidestep this argument by making the case that the larger public good consisted in maintaining traditional manufacturers.[84] The country was divided on the issues of sumptuary laws, and imported goods, and powerful trading interests endeavored to exploit this breach to make the case for Indian textiles.

On the other side of the debate over Indian cottons were the managers and stakeholders of the EIC. Arguments extolling the virtues of foreign trade were not new. Thomas Mun (1571-1641), an influential figure within the EIC, was campaigning on behalf of the India trade over eighty years before calico became an issue of pressing

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[80] Neil Mckendrick "Chapter I: Commercialization and the Economy" in Neil Mckendrick, John Brewer & J. H. Plumb. *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England.* London: Hutchinson, 1982. pp. 13-14.
[81] Marcia Pointon "Jewellery in Eighteenth-Century England" in Maxine Berg & Helen Clifford (Eds.) *Consumers and Luxury in Europe, 1650-1850*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999. p. 125.
[82] Thomas Baston. *Thoughts on Trade and the Public Spirit*. (London, 1728) p. 2.
[83] Anon. *Some Considerations Relating to the Desired Prohibition of Wearing Printed Callicoes by a Person Wholly Disinterested otherwise, than for the Good of His Country*. (London, 1720)
[84] Wigston-Smith (2007) "Callico Madams" *Passim*.

national concern.[85] Edward Misseldon (1608-1654), a fellow advocate of unrestricted trade and member of the EIC, shared with Mun the idea that exchange with India was beneficial to England.[86] International commerce increased the size and strength of England's merchant marine fleet, they argued, a vital consideration when it came to the defense of the realm. Expanding global trade routs also extended the authority of the crown and helped to develop new and potentially valuable markets. Though some domestic industries might suffer, the profit to the nation more than offset such considerations.[87] Sir Josiah Child (1630-1699), Governor of the EIC from 1681 until 1699, naturally took a comparable view of the traffic in Indian goods and in particular to the importation of finished Indian textiles.[88] Expanding on the points raised by Misseldon and Mun, Sir Josiah brought in the example of the Netherlands. As a trading nation and major shipping power, the Dutch did very well out of the traffic in Indian goods. Should not the English attempt to emulate their extraordinary success?[89]

The VOC and the EIC had both been founded in the early years of the 1600s.[90] As international trade routes became ever more valuable, disputes between these growing sailing nations became inevitable.[91] A series of conflicts between 1652 and 1674, collectively known as the Anglo-Dutch wars, witnessed the emergence of the Dutch as

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[85] Beverly Lemire (Ed.) *The British Cotton Trade, 1660-1815*. (Vol. I) "The Early Years of Trade and the British Response to Indian Cottons to the late 1600s" London: Pickering & Chatto, 2010. p. 67. Thomas (1963) *Mercantilism and the East India Trade*. pp. 10-14.
[86] Edward Misseldon. *Circle of Commerce*. (London, 1623)
[87] Thomas Mun. *England's Treasure by Foreign Trade*. (London, 1664)
[88] Beverly Lemire. *Cotton*. Oxford: Berg, 2011. p. 49.
[89] O'Brien, Griffiths & Hunt (1991) "Political Components of the Industrial Revolution:" pp. 402-404.
[90] Om Prakash "The English East Indian Company and India" in H. V. Bowen, Margarette Lincoln & Nigel Rigby (Eds.) *The Worlds of the East India Company*. Leicester: University of Leicester, 2002. pp. 1-3.
[91] Douglas Irwin "Mercantilism as a Strategic Trade Policy: The Anglo-Dutch Rivalry for the East India Trade" *Journal of Political Economy* (99:6) (December, 1991) *Passim*. Femme Gaastra "War, Competition and Collaboration: Relations between the English and the Dutch East India Company in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries" in H. V. Bowen, Margarette Lincoln & Nigel Rigby (Eds.) *The Worlds of the East India Company*. Leicester: University of Leicester, 2002. *Passim*.

the foremost naval power of the seventeenth century.[92] A small country compared to the major seagoing nations of England, France, Spain and Portugal, the Netherlands was able to exert a significant global presence due to the excellence of its shipwrights, mariners and navigators.[93] So great was the efficiency of the Dutch shipbuilders that a trade vessel constructed in England in 1669 for £1,300 could be made in the Netherlands for £800. By sub-contracting out various aspects of ship manufacture to specialists, the Dutch greatly enhanced their fleet while dramatically reducing construction time and production costs.[94] Many of the enterprising and intelligent men who supervised and financed this work had acquired their wealth and skills by servicing the needs of the nation's vast naval and merchant fleets.[95] Anglo-Dutch rivalry over foreign trade had played a significant role in encouraging naval innovations and maritime aggression. However, as the seventeenth century moved towards its close, political necessity led to a growing *rapprochement* between England and the Netherlands.[96]

Dutch naval skill had played a prominent role in the Glorious Revolution of 1688, which brought the Dutch William of Orange, and his Stuart wife, Queen Mary to the throne of England. Moreover, the two nations joined forces against the French king Louis XIV (r. 1643-1715) in two wars between 1689 and 1714.[97] However, competition between the EIC and the VOC remained fierce with both sides constantly seeking new

[92] Kishlansky (1996) *A Monarchy Transformed*. pp. 237-239.
[93] Mukerji (1983) *Graven Images*. pp. 111-116.
[94] Duplessis (1997) *Transitions to Capitalism*. pp. 118-119.
[95] Sherwin (1976) "EIC Lobby" p. 329.
[96] Gaastra (2002) "War, Competition and Collaboration" pp. 49-57.
[97] Ralph Davis "English Foreign Trade, 1700-1774" *Economic History Review* (15:2) (1962) p. 285. Clyde Grose "The Anglo-Dutch Alliance of 1678" *English Historical Review* (39:155) (July, 1924) *Passim*.

lands to exploit.[98] The success of Dutch merchants in such ventures led many to question rules which limited the ability of the EIC to develop new trade routes and markets.[99]

Thomas notes that the Dutch had not achieved their preeminent place in ship building and trade by pursuing narrow-minded protectionist policies. Rather, the country used international commerce as a means of generating great personal and national wealth.[100] The Dutch, for example, were the one European nation that never attempted to restrict the highly profitable trade in Asian textiles.[101] Writing in 1693, Sir Josiah Child remarked on the benefits the VOC India trade brought to the Dutch Republic with the powerful assertion that:

> The *Dutch* with good reason esteem the trade of the *East-Indies* more profitable to them than are the Mines of Gold and Silver in *America* to the *King of Spain*.[102]

In 1719, the anti-calico polemicist Daniel Defoe (1660-1731) felt the need to address the issue of Dutch trading prowess, while at the same time making the case for protectionism.

> The *Dutch*, who we are told are a wise People, and yet do not prohibit any Foreign Manufactures, / tho' they have great Manufactures of their own;…but differing Circumstances make all Nations walk by different Rules; the Manufactures of the *Dutch* are small and trifling compar'd to ours; their principal Dependence is upon their being the general Mart of *Europe*, for all Foreign Goods.

Defoe then went on to make the case for protectionism arguing that,

> [England's] Dependence is upon our Woollen Manufacture for the Subsistence and Employment of our Poor, as well as for the Encouragement of our Navigation and Foreign Commerce. [103]

Over twenty years earlier Sir Josiah had addressed similar arguments.

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[98] Femme Gaastra "The Dutch East India Company: A Reluctant Discoverer" *The Great Circle* (19:2) (1997) *Passim*.
[99] Appleby (1976) "Ideology and Theory" pp. 504-509.
[100] Thomas (1963) *Mercantilism and the East India Trade*. pp. 85-88.
[101] O'Brien, Griffiths & Hunt (1991) "Political Components of the Industrial Revolution" pp. 397-403.
[102] Josiah Child. *A New Discourse of Trade.* (London, 1693) pp. 143-144.
[103] Daniel Defoe. *The Just Complaint of the Poor Weavers Truly Represented*. (London, 1719)

Child was willing to concede that "the wearing of so many printed calicoes had been a prejudice to [the producers of light woolens and silks]."[104] However, he also maintained that EIC trade had the potential to benefit the kingdom by bringing new regions under English control, enhancing naval power and navigation skill, and providing import duties for the state. In short, properly managed trade had the promise to produce wealth for the nation while, at the same time, enhancing the lives of ordinary people. While doubtless some English workers were to be inconvenienced by the decline of their industries, as foreign goods displaced traditionally made domestic products, there existed in such trade the prospect of a greater benefit for the country as a whole.[105] Work which could be done better and more cheaply elsewhere lowered the price of goods for all, and freed up hands for other works.[106] One contemporary observer went so far as to note,

> The *East-India* Trade by procuring things with less, and consequently cheaper labour, is a very likely way of forcing Men upon invention of Arts and Engines, by which other things may be done with less and Cheaper labour, and therefore may abate the price of Manufactures, Tho' the Wages of Men should not be abated.[107]

Charles Davenant (1656-1714), politician, pamphleteer and EIC supporter echoed this view when he observed the benefits trade could bring to ordinary people. Should not the goods they required be provided to them at the lowest cost?[108]

> The true and principal Riches, whether of private Persons, or of whole Nations, are Meat, and Bread, and Cloaths, and Houses, the Conveniences as well as Necessaries of Life.[109]

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[104] Sir Josiah Child quoted in Thomas (1963) *Mercantilism and the East India Trade*. p. 51.
[105] J. Roberts. *The Advantages of the East-India Trade to England Considered*. (London, 1720) *Passim*.
[106] Thomas (1963) *Mercantilism and the East India Trade*. pp. 76-82.
[107] J. Roberts. *Considerations Upon the East India Trade* (London, 1701) p. 42
[108] Lemire (1991) *Fashion's Favourite*. pp. 27-28.
[109] Charles Davenant. *Considerations on the East India Trade*. (London, 1701) p. 10.

Even Defoe was forced to concede that certain aspects of the EIC trade brought some benefit, though he also emphasized the importance of protecting English industries.

> I own the *East-India* Trade to be very useful to *England* and cannot joy'n in all the Clamours against it, that have been made publick; yet I must say at the same time, no single Trade, much less the *East-India* Trade, is of Consequence enough to ban our making Goods at Home.[110]

Others were less diplomatic in their condemnation of EIC imports and bemoaned the hardships which accrued from such unscrupulous foreign trading. The newspaper, the *Weekly Review*, was unequivocal in its condemnation of the traffic in printed cottons over a decade before the Calico riots became a national concern. Writing in 1708, the editors declared "above half of the [woollen] manufacture was entirely lost, half the people scattered and ruined, and all this by the intercourse of the East Indian Trade."[111] Not a few claimed that the harsh conditions under which Indian weavers laboured accounted for the price differential between cottons and woollens.

**Conditions of Work and Wages for Indian Weavers**

> *Indians*…are a numerous and Laborious People, and can and do live, without Fire or Clothing and with a Trivial Expense for Food.[112]
>
> *An English Winding Sheet*, 1700.

Though concerns over rising unemployment among English weavers became the mainstay of anti-calico propaganda during the Calico Crisis such issues were not new in 1719. Decades before the Calico riots English fan makers, japanners (who produced lacquered ware in imitation of Japanese goods), joiners and cabinet makers all had occasion to complain that EIC imports were a detriment to their respective trades. It is noteworthy that, even at this point, the wool workers were by far the most numerous and

[110] Daniel Defoe. *The Review*. March, 1706.
[111] *Weekly Review*. 31 January 1708.
[112] Anonymous. *An English Winding Sheet for the East-India Manufactors*. (London, 1700)

the most strident in their protests.[113] The alleged cost of Indian labour was one significant factor in the success of EIC cotton imports, and the novelty and utility of these such goods was another. However, the dexterity and imagination evident in India craftsmanship was also important in winning over English shoppers.[114]

Indian weavers were respected for their skill in producing a wide range of designs in a exotic array of colours and patterns.[115] EIC officials were keenly aware of the importance of such quality and innovation in consumer goods. They specifically instructed their managers in India to ensure that, in calico production, superiority in workmanship should take precedence over the quantity of goods shipped.[116] Despite assertions by anti-calico propagandists that Indian workers were ignorant savages working in horrendous conditions for meager wages, the excellence and creativeness evident in countless Indian woven and printed fabrics supports the conclusion that many Indian weavers were in fact respected and skilled craftsmen.

In his examination of the Calico Crisis, Thomas provides unique insight into the lives of ordinary Indian weavers at a time when investigations of the agency of non-European working peoples was unusual in Western historiography. Thomas notes the respect EIC officials often displayed for the skill and creativity of Indian cotton weavers and printers. An official EIC missive from 1683 directed their English managers in Bombay to leave the Indian craftsmen, as much as possible, to their own devices.

> Let your weavers take out such flowers most convenient and agreeable to their own fancies which will take better here than any strict imitation

[113] E. T. Joy "The Overseas Trade in Furniture in the Eighteenth Century" *Furniture History* (1) (1965) p. 2. Thomas (1963) *Mercantilism and the East India Trade*. pp. 102-103.
[114] Lemire (1991) *Fashion's Favourite*. pp. 13-15. Amelia Peck (Ed.) *Interwoven Globe: The Worldwide Textile Trade, 1500-1800*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013.
[115] Lemire (2011) *Cotton*. p. 2.
[116] Audrey Douglas "Cotton Textiles in England: The East Indian Company's Attempt to Exploit Developments in Fashion, 1660-1721" *Journal of British Studies* (8:2) (May, 1969) pp. 38-39.

which is made in Europe.[117]

Indian cottons were highly valued for their quality and design, though it was a common European trope when discussing Asian production and products to claim that the craftsmen who made these goods lived in conditions of proximate slavery.

Thomas notes that the price differential between Indian cottons and English woolens was, at the time of the Calico riots, largely attributed to the low wages paid to Indian workers. The strident anti-calico propagandist Claudius Rey (fl.1720) was in little doubt as to the source of the problems of the English weavers. He characterized Indian weavers as a "Parcel of *Heathens* and *Pagans*, that…work for a Half-Penny a Day."[118] Another, more sympathetic, observer lamented the condition of Indian labourers. "People in India are such slaves, as to work for less than a Penny a Day; whereas ours here will not work for under a Shilling."[119] Writing in 1701, a critic of the EIC claimed that labour which normally cost a shilling in England could be had for two pence in India. Daniel Defoe had little use for Indian fabrics, and displayed little respect for the people who made them. However, he was at times somewhat inconsistent in his antipathy.[120] In one pamphlet he claimed English shoppers who purchased calicos were "Madly sending their Money to *India*…to feed and support Heathens and Savages."[121] However, in another work he evocatively described the harsh conditions in which Indian weavers laboured.

> The People who make all these fine Works are to the least Degree miserable, their Labour of no Value, their Wages would fright us to talk of it, and their way of Living raise a Horror in us to think of it.[122]

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[117] Unnamed EIC official quoted in Thomas (1963) *Mercantilism and the East India Trade*. pp. 40-41.
[118] Claudius Rey. *The Female Manufacturers Complaints.* (London, 1720)
[119] Anonymous. *A Collection of Papers Relating to the East India Trade*. (London, 1730) p. 81.
[120] Eacott (2012) "Calico Acts" pp. 752-745.
[121] Daniel Defoe. *A Brief State of the Question*. (London, 1719)
[122] Daniel Defoe. *A Plan of the English Commerce*. (London, 1728)

Prasannan Parthasathi argues that similar opinions were common among those who traveled to Indian and observed conditions first hand.[123]

European visitors naturally regarded the simple homes and food of ordinary Indians as being examples of poverty and oppression. While instances of famine did occur from time to time, as they did in England, Indians weavers were used to a frugal life and most survived as least as well as their European counterparts.[124] Despite the quality of Indian craftsmanship, it was a common notion that Indians laboured under harsh conditions for menial wages. Such beliefs lent creditability to the widely held conclusion that English products could never compete with Indian goods on the basis of cost alone.[125] Skilled workers in Britain did earn as much as five times as much as their Indian counterparts.[126] However, these wage differences must be understood in the context of the living conditions which prevailed in England and in India. Most English workers in the wool and silk industries were not well paid at the best of times.[127] Thus it was natural that those writing against the EIC trade should make the case that Indian workers laboured under even worse conditions than their English counterparts. While acknowledging the fact that such wages disparities existed, Thomas argues that pay rates alone did not provide an accurate picture of working conditions in India. The low costs

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[123] Prasannan Parthasathi "Rethinking Wages and Competitiveness in the Eighteenth Century: Britain and South India" *Past & Present* (158) (February, 1998) pp. 79-81.
[124] Thomas (1963) *Mercantilism and the East India Trade*. pp. 35-36.
[125] J. R. McCulloch. *Early English Tracts on Commerce*. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1954. p. 549
[126] Stephen Bondberry and Bishnupriya Gupta "Lancashire, Indian, and the Shifting Competitive Advantage in Cotton Textiles, 1700-1850: The Neglected Role of Factor Prices" *Economic History Review* (62:2) (2009) pp. 280-281. Parakunnel Thomas "The Beginnings of Calico Printing in England" *English Historical Review* (39:154) (April, 1924) p. 206.
[127] M. Dorothy George. *London Life in the Eighteenth Century*. London: Penguin, 1965. pp. 180-182.

associated with Indian products were largely attributable to the favourable productive environment of the Indian subcontinent.[128]

With a warm climate and a year around growing season, Indian craftsmen could provide for the necessities of life with wages a fraction of those wool and silk weavers required in a cold northern country like England. The purchase of warm clothing, the need for extra calories to survive in cold weather, and the expense of renting and heating poorly insulated hovels and garrets were all seasonal costs that consumed a significant portion of an English weaver's wages.[129] Moreover, recent scholarship supports the conclusion that ordinary Indian cotton workers and printers worked in conditions preferable to many English weavers. In comparison with the conflict-ridden English guilds, which increasingly operated under the control of a few wealthy masters, Indian artisans often participated in a cooperative spirit of industry. In India a person's occupation was deeply bound up in their caste identity. This meant that knowledge was often passed down through successive generations and within extended kinship groups.[130] Moreover, Thomas argues, the quality of the goods produced by a caste were often a matter of honour for the entire community.[131] These social and craft factors meant the Indian cotton industry was already well developed when European traders first arrived.[132]

Om Parakesh describes the production of textiles in the early eighteenth century as the foremost industry of the subcontinent. Moreover, Indian fabrics were popular

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[128] Parthasathi (1998) "Rethinking Wages and Competitiveness" *Passim*. Thomas (1963) *Mercantilism and the East India Trade*. pp. 34-36.
[129] George (1965) *London Life*. See Chapter 2 "Housing and Growth in London"
[130] Mukerji (1983) *Graven Images*. p. 212. David White "From Crisis to Community Definition: The Dynamics of Eighteenth-Century Parsi Philanthropy" *Modern Asian Studies* (25:2) (May, 1991) *Passim*. Edward Baines. *The History of the Cotton Manufacture in Great Britain*. London: H. Fisher, R. Fisher, and P. Jackson. 1835. pp. 74-75.
[131] Thomas (1963) *Mercantilism and the East India Trade*. pp. 34-36.
[132] Parthasathi (1998) "Rethinking Wages" pp. 95-96. Gupta (2009) "Lancashire, India" p. 286.

exports long before the arrival of the EIC and the VOC with printed cottons dating to the 5th century A.D. having been discovered as far away as Egypt.[133] Extensive trade networks existed which linked India to China, the Middle East and Africa centuries before Portuguese travelers first discovered the qualities of the cottons of the subcontinent.[134] The durability and utility of Indian cottons worked strongly in their favour, though style ultimately played the most important role in their proliferation. Giorgio Riello attributes the early success of Indian calico makers to their use of popular colourfast dyes and fashionable intricate printing processes, technologies which were then unknown in Europe.[135] High Western demand for calicos in the early 1700s meant that Indian merchants and master craftsmen were often in a favourable position when it came to negotiating with foreign traders.

Not unexpectedly, the proceeds obtained from the European trade principally benefited Indian merchants who often presented a united front when dealing with foreign buyers.[136] However, Parthasathi argues that Indian labourers in the cotton industry also profited thanks to the trade in printed fabrics. Unlike the marginalized English wool and silk workers, the skills of those employed in the Indian cotton trades remained in high demand and this fact afforded them greater leeway when it came time to negotiating contracts and fees.[137] In the end, attempts by anti-calico propagandists to incite popular

[133] Om Parakesh "From Negotiation to Coercion: Textile Manufacturing in India in the Eighteenth Century" *Modern Asian Studies* (41:6) (November, 2007) pp. 1331-1333.
[134] Lemire (2011) *Cotton*. pp. 21-26.
[135] Giorgio Riello "Asian Knowledge and the Development of Calico Printing in Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries" *Journal of Global History* (5) (2010) *Passim*.
[136] Rila Mukherjee "The Story of Kasimbazar: Silk Merchants and Commerce in Eighteenth-Century India" *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* (17:4) (Fall, 1995) pp. 519-522.
[137] Parthasathi (1998) "Rethinking Wages" pp. 92-93. Thomas (1963) *Mercantilism and the East India Trade*. pp. 38-41.

anger against Indian workers did not come to much. Foreigners, and those of foreign origin, working in the English wool, silk and linen industries were another matter.

**Foreign Weavers Working in England**

> An Alien-Artificer should not dwell or exercise any Handicraft in this land, unless as Servant to a Subject of the Same Art, on Pain to forfeit all his goods.[138]

The English weaving industry had a complex relationship with the foreign tradesmen who arrived in the kingdom. Though numerous objections were proffered against immigration, it was generally acknowledged that skilled migrant labour was of great benefit to the nation.[139] At various times waves of Dutch, French, Flemish and German weavers, fleeing war and religious prosecution in their homelands, had settled in England.[140] These "Alien Strangers," who had served an apprenticeship as weavers in their own countries, were allowed by law (15 Car. II. c. 15) to take up their trade in their adopted land for the "Improvement of the Manufacture of Weaving" through the use of "Ingenious" foreign techniques.[141] Early evidence for the practice of encouraging skilled immigrants to settle in England can be traced as far back as the reign of Edward III (r. 1327-1377). However, even from the start there were conflicts over foreign weavers not respecting guild regulations and undercutting English tradesmen.

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[138] Anonymous. *The Complaint of Diverse Liege-Master-Weavers, Against the Irregular Proceedings of the Bayliffs, Wardens and Assistants of the said Weavers-Company, in their Government of said Society.* (London, 1690).
[139] Daniel Statt "The City of London and the Controversy over Immigration, 1660-1722" *Historical Journal* (33:1) (March, 1990) *Passim*.
[140] Joan Thirsk "The Fantastical Folly of Fashion: The English Stocking Knitting Industry, 1500-1700" in N. B. Harte and K. G. Ponting (Eds.) *Textile History and Economic History: Essays in Honour of Miss Julia de Lacy Mann*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1973. p. 70. Jeffery Hankins "Crown, Country and Corporation in Early Seventeenth-Century Essex" *The Sixteenth Century Journal* (38:1) (Spring, 2007) pp. 31-32.
[141] Alfred Plummer. *The London Weavers' Company, 1660-1970*. London: Routledge, 1972. pp. 56-57, 297.

Complaints against the activities of refugees reappeared with each significant wave of immigration.[142] An influx of Huguenot refugees from France, estimated at between 40,000-50,000, came to England after Louis XIV repealed the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Denied the religious protection they had enjoyed for almost a hundred years, many skilled French Protestants chose to leave their native land rather than convert to Catholicism. Lien Bich Luu argues that these immigrants brought with them significant new skills and techniques which did much to enhance the English silk weaving industry.[143] However, Wadsworth and Mann also make the case that these same immigrants were instrumental in establishing the calico printing industry in England which did so much to disrupt the demand for English woollens.[144] The fact that French Huguenots brought with them the skills with dyes and mordents (colour fixing agents), that enabled them to engage successfully in the printing of Indian cotton, and Irish and Scottish linen contributed to the rise and extremity of anti-foreigner sentiment.[145]

Printed Scots and Irish linens, which shared many of the fashionable and utilitarian qualities of Indian calicos, became ever more popular as legislation to limit EIC cotton imports began to have a noticeable effect on the availability of Asian textiles.[146] This situation presented an unforeseen and troubling challenge to English silk and woolen producers. Despite a flood of petitions demanding the curtailing of the

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[142] W. J. Ashley "The Early History of the English Woollen Industry" *Publications of the American Economic Association* (2:4) (September, 1887) pp. 40, 49-53
[143] Lien Bich Luu. *Immigrants and the Industries of London, 1500-1700*. Albershot: Ashgate, 2005. Chapter 6. L. D. Schwarz. *London in the Age of Industrialization: Entrepreneurs, Labour Force and Living Conditions, 1700-1850*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. pp. 35-36. Gerald Hertz "The English Silk Industry in the Eighteenth Century" *English Historical Review* (24:96) (October, 1909) p. 710. Baker (1916) "East Indian Hand-Painted Calicoes" p. 487.
[144] Wadsworth and Mann (1968) *The Cotton Trade*. p. 130. Mukerji (1983) *Graven Images*. p. 212.
[145] Thomas (1963) *Mercantilism and the East India Trade*. pp. 121-128.
[146] Anonymous. *The Case of the Printers of Callicoes and Linens*. (London, 1720)

printing of linens the government proved disinclined to stifle this growing industry.[147] Though there were sound practical reasons for protecting Scottish manufacturers, corruption also played a large part in government decision making at this time.[148]

The 1707 Act of Union (6 Anne c.11) was passed largely due the influence of wealthy Scottish investors eager to obtain unrestricted access to English markets.[149] Though the production of linen goods was a major industry in Scotland, many ordinary Scots felt that their political masters had betrayed the national interest for personal gain.[150] As in many other instances, decisions in favour of the linen industry would not have occurred if wealthy and influential men had not preferred such outcomes.

On balance, the evidence supports the conclusion that the power brokers within the British textile industry valued foreign talents and technologies and were inclined to encourage them despite the effect such policies would have on rank and file weavers.[151] Some guild masters even went so far as to lobby the government to prevent skilled workers leaving the country.[152] The expertise of accomplished artisans was of great advantage to guild masters and wealthy clothiers in the production of wools, silks and linens. However, it must be acknowledged that not all 'alien' labour was skilled labour.

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[147] Beverly Lemire "Transforming Consumer Custom: Linen, Cotton, and the English Market, 1660-1800" in Brenda Collins & Phillip Ollerenshaw (Eds.) *The European Linen Industry in Historical Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. pp. 194-197.
[148] James Bohun "Protecting Prerogative: William III and the East India Trade Debate, 1689-1698" *Past Imperfect* (2) (1993) pp. 70-78. Henry Horwitz "The East India Trade. the Politicians, and the Constitution: 1689-1702" *Journal of British Studies* (17:2) (Spring, 1978) *Passim*. Plummer (1972) *London Weavers*. p. 137. John Phillips "Popular Politics in Unreformed England" *Journal of Modern History* (52:4) (December, 1980) p. 622. Peter Linebaugh. *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. p. 46.
[149] Ralph Davis "English Foreign Trade, 1700-1774" *Economic History Review* (15:2) (1962) pp. 287-288. Linda Colley. *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*. London: Yale University Press, 1992. pp. 11-47.
[150] C. Gulvin "The Union and the Scottish Woollen Industry, 1707-1760" *The Scottish Historical Review* (50:150) (October, 1971) pp. 121-122.
[151] Plummer (1972) *London Weavers.* p. 147.
[152] William Ashworth "Quality and the Roots of Manufacturing Expertise in Eighteenth-Century Britain" *Osiris* (25:1) (2010) p. 236. Lipson (1953) *History of Wool*. p. 98. Maxine Berg. *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. p. 189.

Based on the number of complaints, some foreign weavers were not as accomplished as they claimed to be and many more were not respectful of guild rules and regulations.[153]

Instances of immigrants working below approved rates, taking on too many apprentices, or claiming guild rights while not actually being certified weavers in their home countries were widely alleged.[154] The difficulty came in detecting and preventing illegal acts. Work undertaken outside of the limits of incorporated cities was legally beyond the purview of guild authority and guilds did not function in unincorporated cities.[155] Guild authorities did not have the authority to search these areas, they could not seize illegal goods nor could they assess the number of apprentices employed.[156] This did not mean the guilds were powerless. There were extra judicial means for guild authorities to exert control in such circumstances. Masked men smashing forbidden looms in the homes of immigrants, and riots against foreign weavers were not uncommon events.[157] Guild authorities could exert considerable force at need and were not adverse to doing so.

Lipson argues that English wool and silk workers were often vigorous in the defense of their trade and would even deal harshly with their own people when they broke the rules.[158] Given this state of affairs, the proliferation of looms and mills which benefited guild masters and influential investors suggests that those at the top of the wool and silk industries were looking out for their own interests. Foreigners and their new weaving technologies would not have prospered for long in the textile trades if important

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[153] Luu (2005) *Immigrants and the Industries*. pp. 55-57, 147, 159-160, 204-207. Lipson (1953) *History of Wool*. pp. 59. Plummer (1972) *London Weavers*. pp. 144-159.
[154] William Stubbs "Weavers' Guild" *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* (9:1) (June, 1919) p. 79.
[155] George Unwin. *The Guilds and Companies of London*. London: Frank Cass, 1963. pp. 346-348.
[156] Lemire (2011) *Cotton*. p. 77.
[157] Beloff (1963) *Public Order and Popular Disturbances*. pp. 81-83. Wadsworth & Mann (1968) *The Cotton Trade*. pp. 101-102.
[158] Jack Lindsay. *The Monster City: Defoe's London, 1688-1730*. London: Granada, 1978. pp. 80-81. Lipson (1953) *History of Wool*. pp. 114-115.

English men had not profited by them. Evidence to support the conclusion that guilds were not making a serious effort to control foreign workers and their new equipment may be found in the constant stream of petitions demanding state protection for the wool and silk trades which came from ordinary weavers.[159] To properly understand petitioning, it is important to briefly discuss the *mentalités* which underlay this time-honoured practice.

Under English law, all subjects had the right to petition their state and local leaders directly.[160] For those who lacked the qualifications necessary to vote, protesting and petitioning were the principal means by which they could hope to affect legislative change. For others facing harsh punishment for crimes and misdemeanors petitions to justices, and even the sovereign, were a routine means of appealing for clemency.[161] For many, petitions served the useful purpose of directing a tide of dangerous emotions and strongly held convictions into stabilizing legal channels. Of course, ordinary folk would not have engaged in petitioning if such actions did not at times yield beneficial results and Thompson points out that petitioning often did much to mitigate public anger and head off riots by addressing popular concerns in a legitimate public fashion.[162]

The knowledge that they had a lawful means at their disposal by which to appeal their cause tended to encourage disgruntled plebeians to look first to legal remedies for

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[159] Julia de Lacy Mann. *The Cloth Industry in the West of England from 1640 to 1880*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971. pp. 17-18, 21-24, 33-36. Rothstein (1964) "The Calico Campaign of 1719-1720" *Passim*. Lipson (1953) *History of Wool*. pp. 25, 51, 160. Wadsworth & Mann (1968) *The Cotton Trade*. pp. 132-135. O'Brien, Griffiths and Hunt (1991) "Political Components" pp. 398, 402-403, 406, 409-410. Muriel Clayton & Alma Oakes "Early Calico Printers around London" *The Burlington Magazine* (96:614) (May, 1954) *Passim*.

[160] David Zaret "Petitions and the Invention of Public Opinion in the English Revolution" *American Journal of Sociology* (101:6) (May, 1996) p. 1511. David Nicholls "Addressing God as Ruler: Prayer and Petition" *British Journal of Sociology* (44:1) (March, 1993) pp. 130-131.

[161] Kenneth Morgan "Petitions against Convict Transportation" *English Historical Review* (104:410) (January, 1989) pp. 110-112.

[162] E. P. Thompson "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century" *Past & Present* (50) (February, 1971) p. 85. E. P. Thompson "Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture" *Journal of Social History* (7:4) (1974) p. 405.

their complaints. Moreover, magistrates had a clear interest in encouraging ordinary people to bring their cases forward in a respectful and lawful manner. They were careful to appear to take such appeals seriously and occasionally even acted on these requests. However, the information in many of these missives has to be taken with a grain of salt, especially when the poverty and sufferings of the supplicants are discussed. Petitions and appeals were often set forth in the highly stylized language of the time, and hyperbole and emotion often stood in for reasoned arguments.[163] The strident anti-calico writer, Claudius Rey, was particularly remarkable for presenting the case of the suffering weavers in highly evocative terms.

> THEY WANT! yes, THEY WANT, EVEN COMMON BREAD! (which is the Staff of Life) as much as if we were in the midst of Famine and Confusion…Starving and perishing.[164]

Even Defoe, the foremost voice in the anti-calico camp, openly commented on the absurdity of believing everything contained in such documents.[165] There is no reason to suspect that all those named as parties to a petition had agreed to sign on to it nor is there always evidence that they had ever even seen the petition put forward in their name. A voluminous collection of primary documents related to the Calico Crisis is held at the Guildhall Library in London.[166] Many of the petitions related to calico imports are set in identical form and text with only the name of the town, and a few minor details, changed. These appeals appear to have been composed by the same printer, at the same time, and are even numbered sequentially. An undertaking such as this would have been very

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[163] Elizabeth Read Foster "Petitions and the Petition of Right" *Journal of British Studies* (14:1) (November, 1974) *Passim.*
[164] Claudius Rey. *The Weavers True Case*. (London, 1719)
[165] Mann (1971) *The Cloth Industry in the West of England*. p. 18.
[166] *Worshipful Company of Weavers of London*. Guildhall Library, London "Calico Papers" A.1.3, no. 64.

expensive and far beyond the means of ordinary people.[167] The textile industries, given their relative size and wealth, instigated and funded a significant number of such applications.[168] However, it is worthwhile noting that rank and file weavers also petitioned. Many of these documents feature complaints over the decline in their trade due to outsiders violating and evading guild regulations.[169]

A document published in 1690 by disgruntled English textile workers lists fourteen grievances against "Alien-Artificers" and calls upon guild authorities to effect a series of proposed remedies. These complaints include immigrant craftsmen taking on "Alien-Apprentices," not paying mandatory guild fees, and avoiding fines for violating guild rules. The statement concludes that these incomers should not be allowed to meddle in the trade of true-born English weavers, rather they should be forced,

> To go to Plow and Cart, and to follow Laborious Callings, on which many Thousands of *English* Protestants maintain themselves and Families [or] to work as Servants unto Handicrafts men, by which many Thousands of *English* Protestants get to themselves a Livelihood.[170]

Concerns over these Protestant weavers became acute in the early 1700s when large numbers of German refugees, an estimated 12,000-13,000, among them many linen weavers, arrived in London in 1709 fleeing war on the continent.[171] Alongside increases in Scottish and Irish linen production, these skilled foreign linen weavers and dyers were coming into direct competition with established English wool and silk manufacturers.

As stated, accomplished foreign workmen were valued by guild masters. Skilled Protestant Walloon and Flemish weavers had brought the knowledge of how to produce

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[167] Nicholls (1993) "Addressing God as Ruler: Prayer and Petition" p. 131.
[168] Unwin (1963) *The Guilds and Companies of London*. pp. 346-348.
[169] Thomas (1924) "The Beginnings of Calico Printing in England" pp. 211, 214-215.
[170] Anonymous. *The Complaint of Diverse Liege-Master-Weavers, Against the Irregular Proceedings of the Bayliffs, Wardens and Assistants of the said Weavers-Company.* (London, 1690).
[171] Eacott (2012) "Calico Acts" pp. 745-746.

popular lightweight new draperies, fustians, bays, says and the like, to England in the early seventeenth century.[172] Some later waves of immigrants had been specifically recruited and imported to aid in the development of the Irish linen industry in the late seventeenth century.[173] The Irish and Scottish benefited greatly from such expertise, and even the English printing industry grew rapidly after 1700 as new foreign dyes and techniques came into common use.[174] As these technical issues were overcome, consumers commented on the increasing excellence and quantity of printed goods.

> The [fabrics] now printed in England are so very cheap and so much the fashion that persons of all qualities and degrees clothe themselves and furnish their houses in great measure with them.[175]

Not surprisingly, much of the blame for the proliferation of printed textile was laid at the door of immigrants, though not a few native born workers also came in for condemnation.[176] Defoe commented on the absurdity of banning calico imports from abroad while, at the same time, allowing and encouraging their imitation at home.

> No sooner were the East India Chintzes and painted calicoes prohibited from abroad but some of Britain's unnatural children… set their arts to work to mimick the more ingenious Indians and to legitimate their grievances by making it a manufacture.[177]

The fact that immigrant groups appeared complicit in the use of new machines and technologies which threatened English trades further added to anti-foreigner sentiment.

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[172] Wadsworth & Mann (1968) *The Cotton Trade*. pp. 98-99.
[173] Trevor Griffiths, Philip Hunt & Patrick O'Brien, "Scottish, Irish and Imperial Connections: Parliament, the Three Kingdoms, and the Mechanization of Cotton Spinning in Eighteenth-Century Britain" *Economic History Review* (61:3) (August, 2008) pp. 629-630.
[174] Douglas (1969) "Cotton Textiles in England" pp. 35-37. Thomas (1924) "The Beginnings of Calico Printing in England" pp. 208-212. S. D. Chapman. *The Cotton Industry in the Industrial Revolution*. London: Macmillan, 1972. p. 12. Pamela Ulrich "From Fustian to Merino: The Rise of Textiles Using Cotton before and after the Gin" *Agricultural History* (68:2) (Spring, 1994) pp. 224-225. Riello (2010) "Asian Knowledge" *Passim.*
[175] "Report of the Commissioners of Trade and Plantations to the House of Lords" (1707) quoted in Wadsworth & Mann (1968) *The Cotton Trade*. p. 133.
[176] Thomas (1963) *Mercantilism and the East India Trade*. pp. 122-127.
[177] Daniel Defoe. *The Just Complaints of the Poor Weavers Truly Represented*. (London, 1719)

However, it would be inaccurate to ascribe the spread of weaving devices and printing processes entirely to external influences.

By the dawn of the eighteenth century it was a common practice for English merchant clothiers to arrange to service large contracts for cloth and clothing. These clothiers would then subcontract the work required to independent operators who specialized in various parts of the weaving process, from the intake of raw wool to the production of finished cloth.[178] This was known as the 'putting out' system. The increasingly large-scale use of this type of proto-industrial production marked a significant shift in the weaving and the preparation of fabric in England.[179]

The concept of putting out work was not new in the early eighteenth century. Keith Wrightson identifies instances of this type of production in England going back to the 1500s.[180] However, Douglas Hay, Nicholas Rogers and Robert Shoemaker all argue that this means of manufacture was being increasingly used by urban contractors who wanted to keep the costs of production down.[181] The evidence supports the conclusion that not a few influential and ambitious men were eager to exploit innovative systems and production techniques, irrespective of the consequences these actions might have.[182]

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[178] Adrian Randall "Work, Culture and Resistance to Machinery in the West of England Woollen Industry" in Pat Hudson (Ed.) *Regions and Industries: A Perspective on the Industrial Revolution in Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980. pp. 179-181

[179] Pat Hudson "Proto-Industrialisation: The Case of the West Riding Wool Textile Industry in the 18th and Early 19th Centuries" *History Workshop Journal* (12) (Autumn, 1981) *Passim*. Duplessis (1997) *Transitions to Capitalism*. pp. 118-119, 206.

[180] Wrightson (2000) *Earthly Necessities*. pp. 39-40.

[181] Douglas Hay & Nicholas Rogers. *Eighteenth-Century English Society: Shuttles and Swords*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. pp. 3, 116-117, 195. Robert Shoemaker. *Gender in English Society, 1650-1850*. London: Longman, 1998. pp. 160-161.

[182] Pat Hudson. *The Industrial Revolution*. London: Edward Arnold, 1992. pp. 116-117. D. C. Coleman "Textile Growth" in N. B. Harte & K. G. Ponting (Eds.) *Textile History and Economic History: Essays in Honour of Miss Julia de Lacy Mann*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1973. pp. 3-5. Carole Shammas "The Decline of Textile Prices in England and British America Prior to Industrialization" *Economic History Review* (47:3) (August, 1994) pp. 492-501. S. R. Epstein "Craft Guilds, Apprenticeship,

**The Proliferation of Weaving Machines**

> I conclude all our Laws limiting the number of Looms [to be] prejudicial to the cloathing of the Kingdom in general.[183]
>
> Sir Josiah Child

In their investigations of the history of the English weaving industry, Wadsworth and Mann identify the increasing use of weaving machines by guild masters as being an issue of growing and considerable concern for many ordinary weavers.[184] Engine looms, and other weaving and knitting devices, ranged from the comparatively simple and inexpensive to the costly and complicated.[185] Simpler devices, improved looms and knitting frames, augmented rather than replaced the skills of the traditional weaver, yet even these were often significant advances over traditional systems.[186] Knitting frames, for example, could out produce a traditional hand knitter by ten to one.[187] Similarly, engine looms allowed one ribbon maker to do the work of seven.[188] More elaborate machines, like the Dutch loom, had been employed and refined in the low countries well before the technology was introduced in Manchester in the mid-1600s.[189] The increasing use of such equipment represented a profound threat to traditional production systems.

Unlike other early labour saving devices, Dutch looms were comparatively complicated and expensive. While these devices were still run by hand, they allowed the

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and Technological Change in Pre-industrial Europe" *Journal of Economic History* (58:3) (1998) *Passim*. Lipson (1953) *History of Wool*. pp. 69-80. Duplessis (1997) *Transitions to Capitalism.* p. 215.

[183] Sir Josiah Child. *A New Discourse of Trade*. (London, 1693)

[184] Wadsworth & Mann (1968) *The Cotton Trade*. pp. 71, 98-106.

[185] Peter Earle. *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660-1730.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989. p. 28.

[186] Mukerji (1983) *Graven Images*. p. 217.

[187] Felix Goizueta-Mimo "Industrial Development: European Textiles During the Modern Era" *Social Science* (44:3) (June, 1969) p. 156. Plummer (1972) *London Weavers*. pp. 198-215, 235.

[188] Richard Dunn "The London Weavers' Riot of 1675" *Guildhall Studies in London History* (Vol. I) (October 1973 - April 1975)

[189] Eric Kerridge. *Textile Manufactures in Early Modern England*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985. p. 172. Geoffrey Holmes and Daniel Szechi. *The Age of Oligarchy: Pre-Industrial Britain, 1722-1783*. London: Longman, 1993. p. 388.

operator to significantly out produce a weaver using traditional methods.[190] Moreover, the cost of such equipment was usually well beyond the means of an ordinary weaver. Wadsworth and Mann argue that the widespread use of these looms effectively led to the creation of the first weaving shops, where groups of weavers worked in a central location, using the material and equipment supplied by the shop owner to produce finished goods.[191] Technological innovation in the weaving industry was still in its infancy, and some areas developed much faster than others. However, it was clear to many that a significant shift was underway in the way English textiles were produced.

Maxine Berg notes that the spread of weaving and spinning machines was not uniform across the country. Silk, with its long fibers, was more easily turned into thread than shorter fibered cotton, wool or linen. For this reason, silk became a natural focus for those seeking to speed up the weaving process, and the first patent for a silk winding machine was taken out in England in 1678.[192] In 1718 a silk mill was set up in the town of Derby in the East Midlands by John Lombe (1693-1722), the son of a worsted weaver.[193] Lombe brought in skilled Italian silk workers, who had extensive experience with throwing and twisting silk, to run his operation. After John died in 1722 his brother Thomas ran the mill until 1739. At the time of his death, Thomas left a fortune estimated at £120,000.[194] Such entrepreneurial successes were not confined to the silk industry

Patent applications for mechanical processes for preparing hemp and flax were filed in 1721 and improvements in carding, weaving and spinning wool followed in close

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[190] Chapman (1972) *The Cotton Industry.* p. 12.
[191] Wadsworth & Mann (1968) *The Cotton Trade*. pp. 105-106.
[192] Goizueta-Mimo (1969) "Industrial Development" p. 159.
[193] Lemire (2011) *Cotton*. p. 76.
[194] S. R. H. Jones "Technology, Transaction Costs, and the Transition to Factory Production in the British Silk Industry, 1700-1870" *Journal of Economic History* (47:1) (March, 1987) pp. 75-77. Henry Wood "Industrial England in 1754" *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* (55:2996) (April, 1910) pp. 551, 554-555.

order.[195] Such inventions were often the cause of other innovations. As the speed at which weavers could produce fabric increased there was concomitant rise in demand for thread, which spurred the demand of ever more efficient spinning machines. John Smail argues that these new technologies were adapted and improved upon by countless workers and masters who were willing to adjust to changing conditions.[196] However, not all new technologies were applicable to all sections of the weaving industry.[197]

In the early eighteenth century some luxury fabrics were still being created with great care for discerning clients by extremely accomplished weavers using only the best materials and traditional methods. The knowledge necessary to fashion such high quality items often took years to acquire and this craftsmanship was not easily replicated by new machines.[198] However, most woven goods were not produced to such exacting standards. The wool and silk weavers most threatened by the importation and use of printed fabrics were those who produced lightweight, middling to low quality textiles for the general consumer in Britain and the colonies.[199] These woven goods were destined for a market where fashion, price and quality were of the greatest concern, and the movement towards low-skilled mass production was the order of the day.[200]

As has been shown, new technologies not only increased the rate at which textiles could be produced, they also reduced the skill levels required in cloth production. This appears to have been something of a common perception among contemporary observers.

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[195] Goizueta-Mimo (1969) "Industrial Development" p. 160.
[196] John Smail "Manufacturer or Artisan? The Relationship between Economic and Cultural Change in the Early Stages of the Eighteenth-Century Industrialization" *Journal of Social History* (25:4) (Summer, 1992) pp. 792-793.
[197] David Rollison. *The Local Origins of Modern Society: Gloucestershire, 1500-1800*. London: Routledge, 1992. p. 22.
[198] Plummer (1972) *London Weavers*. p. 55.
[199] O'Brien, Griffiths and Hunt (1991) "Political Components of the Industrial Revolution" p. 417.
[200] Mukerji (1983) *Graven Images*. pp. 233-234.

One commentator on early factory operations concluded that "a boy of common capacity would learn weaving, including dressing the warp and fixing it in the loom, in six months."[201] Another noted that cloth dressing, a comparatively skilled discipline within the weaving trades, "could be learned in a little over twelve months, there was not the least occasion for seven years training."[202] Others complained at the number of boys who were acting effectively as journeymen long before the normal age limit of twenty-four years.[203] Added to this were the numerous grievances against foreigners. It was widely alleged that substantial numbers of immigrants, who were not properly apprenticed in their home countries, were working as weavers. Finally, J. M. Beattie points out that returning soldiers were allowed to set themselves up in trade even if they had never completed an apprenticeship.[204] With limited skills and resources, these ex-servicemen would have naturally taken to simpler trades like weaving. These facts all support the conclusion that the skill required to produce ordinary textiles was quite low, and easily acquired. This was particularly the case when it came to producing printed fabrics. Those who complained at the competition presented by calicos were also often appalled at the speed and ease at which such items could be manufactured by a small number of people.

> Printers…with the assistance of one Boy, can Print 150 and 200 Yards of Linnen Cloth in one Day…[more] than a Hundred Weavers of the *Wooll Manufacture* can make in the same time from the Yarn ready Spun from their Hands.

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[201] Ephraim Lipson. *The History of the Woollen and Worsted Industries*. London: Frank Cass, 1965 p. 60.
[202] H. Heaton. *The Yorkshire and Worsted Industries from the Earliest Times up to the Industrial Revolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965. pp. 310-311.
[203] George (1965) *London Life.* p. 221. Plummer (1971) *London Weavers*. pp. 90-91.
[204] J. M. Beattie. *Policing and Punishment in London, 1660-1750: Urban Crime and the Limits of Terror.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. p. 47.

On the basis of this, the writer concluded "one Man and a Boy can do [great] Mischief …to the Peace of England."[205] The prevalence of complaints pertaining to women and children performing tasks hitherto done by journeymen supports the conclusion that many aspects of the weaving trades were undergoing a process of deskilling.[206]

Katrina Honeyman and Jordan Goodman argue that deskilling was causing considerable consternation among male craftsmen who feared both the decreasing status of their trade, and the decline of their traditional patriarchal prerogatives as women took on their roles.[207] Conflicts over the use of new machines were not entirely between employers and tradesmen and there was more than one source of anti-female sentiment in early 1700s England.[208] While the division of labour in factories based upon gender was only beginning to become apparent in the early decades of the eighteenth century, it was clear that great technological changes were coming to the English textile industries.[209]

From the perspective of factory owners and guild masters, technological innovations had the potential to solve problems apart from the cost of labour. Quality control for finished woven products was a significant issue for the wool and silk industries.[210] Nicholas Rogers points out that in 1715 troops under the British general John Churchill (1650-1722) demonstrated in the streets of London over the poor quality

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[205] Anonymous. *The Case of Several Thousand Poor of the Wooll Manufacture, Ruined by the Printing, Staining and Dying of Linnens in England*. (London, 1701) Sections IV-V.
[206] Duplessis (1997) *Transitions to Capitalism.* p. 282. Kerridge (1985) *Textile Manufactures in Early Modern England*. pp. 169-173. Wadsworth & Mann (1968) *The Cotton Trade*. pp. 405-408.
[207] Katrina Honeyman & Jordan Goodman "Women's Work, Gender Conflict, and Labour Markets in Europe, 1500-1900" *Economic History Review* (44:4) (November, 1991) *Passim*.
[208] Lemire (1997) *Dress, Culture and Commerce.* pp. 53-54, 99
[209] Katrina Honeyman. *Women, Gender and Industrialization in England, 1700-1870*. London: Macmillan Press, Ltd., 2000. pp. 57-58.
[210] S. R. Epstein "Craft Guilds in the Pre-Modern Economy: A Discussion" *Economic History Review* (61:1) (February, 2008) pp. 158-160.

of their uniforms, a serious issue going back at least three years.[211] A major justification for the existence of guilds was that they maintained quality control and such failures carried serious consequences.[212] The buying public craved assurances that their money was being well spent, and the wool and silk industries had a vested interest in maintaining their image. Lemire points out that the chief issues faced by manufacturers of ordinary finished goods were regularity and consistency in production. Mechanized weaving and spinning devices, used in a central location by well supervised staff, helped to ensure that the clothing was made of quality thread, and woven to acceptable standards.[213] The extent to which weaving machines could be used to improve production was not lost on industry investors and Eric Kerridge argues that new weaving devices had been making inroads into the English weaving industry since at least the mid 1600s.

Despite the fact that Charles I (r. 1625-1649) had banned improved weaving devices in 1638, ongoing demonstrations against foreign looms by English weavers support the conclusion that these legislative efforts were largely ineffective.[214] Rather than fight what appeared to be an inevitable trend, an appeal from the mid-1620s to guild authorities suggests that some English weavers were reconciling themselves to the inevitability of the increasing use of improved weaving devices.

> If your Worships do conceive the said Engine to be beneficial for the Common Wealth because one man may do as much work as ten can upon single looms, then we humbly entreat [you to] order that none may use the said Engine but only such as are Weavers by trade; for they which use them are [mostly not] Weavers by trade.[215]

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[211] Nicholas Rogers "Popular Protest in Early Hanoverian London" *Past & Present* (79) (1978) pp. 93-94.
[212] Sheilagh Ogilvie "Guilds, Efficiency, and Social Capital: Evidence from German Proto Industry" *Economic History Review* (57:2) (May, 2004) pp. 292-293.
[213] Lemire (1997) *Dress, Culture and Commerce.* p. 69. Lemire (2011) *Cotton*. pp. 76-77.
[214] Kerridge (1985) *Textile Manufactures in Early Modern England*. pp. 169-175.
[215] *Ordinance and Record Book, 1577-1641*. in Plummer (1972) *London Weavers.* p. 164.

Other weavers were steadfast in the defense of their traditional practices and took to the streets on numerous occasions to protest the use of forbidden technologies.

Though riots against foreigners and new looms usually coincided with periods of high unemployment, violence flared many times over the seventeenth century and well into the eighteenth.[216] Rumors that immigrant groups were using engine looms in 1675 had led to extensive rioting and attacks on alien workers.[217] During the course of these events, "Whole looms and Instruments of Trade [were forcibly] took away…and burned" by large crowds of weavers.[218] In 1725, hundreds of injuries were reported during riots against the use of engine looms in Taunton, Somerset and in 1729 seven Bristol weavers were killed when the home of an English clothier was attacked.[219] In the 1736 there were riots against unskilled Irish immigrants in London, who were allegedly using weaving machines to undercut the wages demanded by English weavers.[220] The problems of rank and file weavers were compounded by the fact that some guild leaders were actively complicit in the introduction and proliferation of labour-saving technologies.

Engine looms would not have flourished in the manner that they did if influential and wealthy men had not found them to be of value, and exploited them for their own ends. As control over the English wool and silk industries became concentrated in fewer hands, significant masters and clothiers were increasingly concerning themselves with obtaining the maximum returns possible on their investments.[221] A few were very

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[216] John Stevenson. *Popular Disturbances in England, 1700-1832*. London: Longman, 1991. pp. 144-153.
[217] Robert Shoemaker "The London *Mob* in the Early Eighteenth Century" *Journal of British Studies* (26:3) (July, 1987) pp. 279-281, 298. J. M. Beattie "The Pattern of Crime in England, 1660-1800" *Past & Present* (62) (February, 1974) p. 64. Wadsworth & Mann (1968) *The Cotton Trade* pp. 98-106.
[218] Anonymous. *A True Narrative of all Proceedings Against the Weavers*. (London, 1675)
[219] Holmes and Szechi (1993) *The Age of Oligarchy*. p. 173.
[220] George (1966) *London Life*. pp. 180-183.
[221] L. D. Schwartz. *London in the Age of Industrialization: Entrepreneurs, Labour Force and Living Conditions, 1700-1850*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. pp. 212-213.

successful. Writing in 1756, a knowledgeable observer in Manchester noted the great prosperity which some in the textile industry had obtained by way of the use of "engine or Dutch looms." Employing such devices had provided prudent investors with "such large and opulent fortunes as hath enabled them to vie with the best gentlemen of the country."[222] Defoe echoed these comments when he observed the significant wealth which had been accumulated by clothiers living at Bradford on Avon in Wiltshire.

> It was no extraordinary thing to have clothiers in that country worth from ten thousand to forty thousand pounds a man, and many of the great families who now pass for gentry in those counties have been originally raised from and built by this truly noble manufacture.

These important men might have up to 200 weavers working directly for them, in addition to those working in those trades which kept the weavers well supplied with wool thread. The full total of shepherds, shearmen, fullers, carders and spinners serving under one employer might thus run to 800 or more.[223] Of course, most weavers were not so fortunate. Many were aware that significant fortunes were being made by guild elites, and well-connected investors, while the rank and file were being left behind. Defoe recounts details of an organized protest in the west of England where workers, knowing "that the Masters had pressing Orders for Goods," struck for higher wages.

> The Workmen, particularly the Weavers, form'd a Combination among themselves, not to Work for Clothiers, unless they rais'd their Wages, to such a certain Rate, as they had also agreed among themselves: They Carried this Combination to such a height, as to gather together in a tumultuous manner to bring all the rest of the Workmen to join with them.

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[222] Quoted in Stanley Chapman. *The Lancashire Cotton Industry*. Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1904. pp. 19-20.
[223] Daniel Defoe quoted in Lipson (1953) *History of Wool*. pp. 78-79.

Eventually troops were brought in "to reduce these mad Fellows by Force" and the uprising was put down.[224] Rogers argues that this period in English history marked the beginning of the decline in traditional guild authority.[225] As they lost control over the means of production, young journeymen saw their opportunity to rise to the level of an independent master taken from them.[226] By the time of the Calico riots, the battle to prevent the proliferation of weaving devices was largely lost. Leaders in the wool and silk industries had increasingly come to rely on the use of weaving technologies to boost production and revenue, and reduce the power of troublesome rank and file weavers.[227] In such instances, the law consistently backed the interests of clothiers and masters.

Douglas Hay makes the case that laws regulating the employer– worker relationship were heavily weighted in favour of the former. While workers in breech of their contracts were often treated as criminals by the courts, masters were never defined as such. Workers convicted of not fulfilling their obligations, of leaving work unfinished, or even of not doing their tasks to the satisfaction of their supervisor, could be whipped and jailed whereas employers who broke employment contracts could only be fined. Ordinary weavers knew that to protest low wages, long hours, or the introduction of new looms was to risk severe sanctions and the use of state forces.[228] The law was on the side masters and clothiers, and this fact became increasingly evident in the early 1700s.

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[224] Daniel Defoe. *The Great Law of Subordination Consider'd*. (London, 1724) pp. 113-115.
[225] Nicholas Rogers "Carnal Knowledge: Illegitimacy in Eighteenth-Century Westminster" *Journal of Social History* (23:2) (Winter, 1989) p. 365.
[226] Shoemaker (1987) "The London Mob" pp. 279-280.
[227] Craig Becker "Property in the Workplace: Labour, Capital and Crime in the Eighteenth-Century British Woollen and Worsted Industry" *Virginia Law Review* (69:8) (November, 1983). pp. 1488-1491. Plummer (1972) *London Weavers*. pp. 162-171.
[228] Douglas Hay "Patronage, Paternalism, and Welfare: Masters, Workers, and Magistrates in Eighteenth-Century England" *International Labour and Working Class History* (53) (Spring, 1998) pp. 28-34.

Legislation passed in the wake of the Calico riots clearly reflects a judicial trend which favoured powerful interests within the textile industry. A tailors' strike in London in 1720 led to the first combination act (7 Geo. I. c. 13) of 1721, which made it a criminal offense for tailors to protest against low wages and long hours, or leave work uncompleted.[229] Legislation passed in 1726 (12 Geo. I. c. 34) extended these laws to those in the wool trade.[230] It is in the light of such legislation that the motives and ethics of guild masters and powerful clothiers must be assessed when it came to the introduction and dissemination of new technologies and labour systems. However, it must also be acknowledged that significant numbers of ordinary English weavers also displayed few scruples when it came to evading guild regulations. Though many of these offences were comparatively minor, the cumulative effect was an overall decline in the power of the guild. Thus, the failure of guild leaders to effectively assert authority over the wool and silk industries at all levels magnified the danger presented by calico imports.

**Over Investment and Guild Mismanagement in the Wool and Silk Industries**

> TRADE must certainly decay, if we will run it up to such a Length, as to make more Goods than the World can consume.[231]
>
> Daniel Defoe

The influx of skilled continental immigrants, the importation of foreign printed cottons and linens and the use of new weaving technologies threatened the jobs of ordinary wool and silk workers. While serious, these were not the only problems the weavers faced. Over investment in wool production and manufacture, payment in truck,

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[229] Adrian Randall. *Riotous Assemblies: Popular Protest in Hanoverian England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. pp. 122-126. John Rule. *The Labouring Classes in Early Industrial England, 1750-1850*. London: Longman, 1986, pp. 257-259.
[230] John Rule "Industrial Disputes, Wage Bargaining and the Moral Economy" in Adrian Randall & Andrew Charlesworth (Eds.) *Moral Economy and Popular Protest: Crowds, Conflict and Authority*. London: Macmillan, 2000. pp. 177-179. John Orth "English Combination Acts of the Eighteenth Century" *Law and History Review* (5:1) (Spring, 1987) pp. 181-187.
[231] Daniel Defoe. *A Plan of the English Commerce.* (London, 1730) p. 258.

weavers cutting corners in fabrication, and taking on too many apprentices were all issues which left the wool and silk industries vulnerable to the challenge from printed textiles.

Lemire points out that a rush to capitalize on the demand for woven goods during the War of Spanish Succession had lead to a series of foreseeable troubles for the guilds.[232] Military orders for coats, breeches and blankets could be quite lucrative and shrewd clothiers could accumulate tidy sums.[233] However, the prospect of such easy profits tempted many into becoming involved in the business of servicing military contacts and supply invariably outstripped demand. Though a defender of the wool industry, Defoe complained at the imprudence of those who had rushed to cash in on government orders only to find themselves overburdened with stock.

> Upon some sudden Accident in Trade there comes a great unusual Demand for Goods, the Merchants from Abroad have sudden and unusual Commissions, and the Call for Goods [increases] the Country Manufacturer looks out sharp and hires more Looms, gets more Spinners, gives more Wages, and animated by the advanc'd Price… gluts the Market with Goods. The Accident in Trade…being over, those Demands are also over, and the Trade returns to its usual Channel; but the Manufacturer in the Country, who has run to an unusual Excess in his Business…having not stop't his Hand as his Orders stop't, falls into the Mire; his Goods lye on Hand…then they cry our Trade is decay'd, the Manufacturers are lost, Foreigners encroach upon us, the Poor are starv'd and the like.[234]

Observing the hardships which attended this change in circumstances, Defoe commented upon the consequences these imprudent actions of the great had for ordinary people.

> The Demand exceedingly lessn'd,…how should the Weavers have a full Employ, when the Goods they sell have not a full Consumption, but [lie] upon Hand unsold?[235]

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[232] Lemire (1991) *Fashion's Favourite*. p. 34.
[233] Lemire (1997) *Dress, Culture and Commerce.* pp. 27-30.
[234] Daniel Defoe. *A Plan of the English Commerce.* (London, 1730) p. 257.
[235] Daniel Defoe. *The Just Complaint of the Poor Weavers.* (London, 1719)

The troubles of masters and investors were nothing when compared to the legions of ordinary workers, those tempted into joining the once busy wool and silk trades, who now found their skills to be of little consequence in a hard world.

In substantial part, the traditional role of the guilds lay in controlling the number of persons employed in the industry, both as a means of ensuing the quality of English goods, and of regulating the value of skilled labour.[236] However, such efforts were seriously undermined by the unethical employment practices undertaken by some guild masters and clothiers who set up outside of guild controlled areas, used forbidden technologies, and engaged in corrupt business practices. Payment in truck, compensating workers with finished merchandise or trade tokens in lieu of money wages, was widely practiced and universally despised by those forced to take these goods. Truck payments meant that many weavers often had few financial resources to fall back on during hard times, a situation which had the potential to bring harm to the entire community through increases to the poor rates and general disorder.[237]

Payment in truck had been outlawed under a number of different statutes dating back to the reign of Queen Anne. Fines were set at 20 shillings (10 Anne c. 16) in 1712, and increased to 40 shillings (1 Geo. I. c. 15) in 1715. However, these penalties were paltry to wealthy employers and did little to dissuade violators. If it were not for the fact that the activities of wealthy clothiers and guild masters adversely affected influential middling and elite men, it is unlikely that anything would have been done to redress this

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[236] J. P. Cooper "Economic Regulation and the Cloth Industry in Seventeenth-Century England" *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (20) (1970) p. 75. Giorgio Riello. *A Foot in the Past: Consumers, Producers and Footwear in the Long Eighteenth Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. pp. 130-135. Unwin (1963) *The Guilds and Companies of London*. pp. 264-264.
[237] Hudson (1992) *The Industrial Revolution*. p. 48.

situation.[238] Truck payments pushed up the poor rates for tax payers, and occasionally lead to dangerous rioting and the destruction of private property when disgruntled weavers took to the streets in protest. It is likely for this reason that governments were inclined to be sympathetic when it came to the concerns of weavers, and some efforts were made to curb truck payments.[239]

Legislation enacted in 1726 (12 Geo. I. c. 34) increased fines for paying in truck to a more substantial £10, and offenders could be sent to jail for six months if they could not pay. However, enforcement of these laws was notoriously lax. Masters and clothiers had their own means of exerting influence at court, and in government, and it took the persistent efforts of generations of weavers to improve their working conditions.[240] Though payment in truck was proscribed in 1831 (1 & 2 Will. IV. cc. 36 & 37), Lemire argues that the practice persisted well into the nineteenth century.[241] The system of payment in truck, along with other deceitful devices and stratagems, were regularly being used by clothiers to cheat their workers in the early 1700s.[242]

Supplying deficient raw materials, paying a reduced price for finished goods they deemed substandard, delaying wage payments and charging workers excessive rates for the use of the master's equipment were all methods employers used to defraud labourers in the putting out system.[243] Such abuses understandably did little to inspire loyalty among those employed in this type of manufacture. Many of these workers took every

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[238] Orth "English Combination Acts" pp. 186-188.
[239] J. A. Sharpe. *Crime in Early Modern England, 1550-1750.* London: Longman, 1999. pp. 195-197. Randall (2006) *Riotous Assemblies.* pp. 136-143.
[240] Stevenson (1991) *Popular Disturbances in England.* pp. 146-148.
[241] Beverly Lemire. *The Business of Everyday Life: Gender, Practice and Social Politics in England, c. 1600-1900*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005. pp. 96-97.
[242] Wadsworth & Mann (1968) *The Cotton Trade*. pp. 399-401. Duplessis (1997) *Transitions to Capitalism.* p. 278.
[243] Peter Earle (1989) *The Making of the English Middle Class*. pp. 28-29. Mann (1971) *The Cloth Industry in the West of England*. pp. 98-99.

opportunity to cut corners, embezzle materials, or in other ways do whatever they could to survive.[244] Of course, not all working relationships were characterized by such behaviour. However, with few effective laws in place to prevent exploitative practices, those who employed men, women and children had every incentive to work these people as hard as possible and to cheat them whenever they could. This was particularly the case when it came to the system of putting-out / home production.

Ephraim Lipson reminds us that days for most weavers and their families were frequently very long. Fourteen hour shifts were not uncommon and this number could rise to sixteen hours during times of high demand.[245] Yet even this amount of labour was not always sufficient to ensure timely delivery of orders and quality control was disturbingly uneven.[246] Exhausted workers, among them many children, simply could not uphold high standards. As early as 1697, the MP John Pollexfen (1636-1715) expressed his concern at the declining levels of English manufacture.

> Some Traders have made great Gains by diminishing the Length, Breadth, or Goodness, of some of our staple commodities, which Cannot be gotten by any such contrivance without the Nation, because its probable the expense of such Goods will decline upon detection of such Abuses.[247]

Even Defoe, a staunch defender of the wool industry, could not refrain from commenting on the systemic difficulties which affected the livelihoods of ordinary English weavers.

> The Trade of these poor men is taken from them, and they are reduced to a miserable Condition. I will not say it is all owing to the wearing of calicoes; neither will I doubt but the Weavers know

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[244] John Styles "Embezzlement, Industry and Law in England, 1500-1800" in M. Berg, P. Hudson & M. Sonenscher (Eds.) *Manufacture in Town and Country Before the Factory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983. John Rule. *The Vital Century: England's Developing Economy, 1714-1815*. London: Longman, 1992. pp. 180-182. Maxine Berg. *The Age of Manufactures: Industry, Innovation and Work in Britain, 1700-1820*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985. pp. 84-85.
[245] Lipson (1953) *History of Wool*. pp. 88-89.
[246] Plummer (1972) *London Weavers*. pp. 39-40.
[247] John Pollexfen. *Discourse of Trade, Coyn, and Paper Credit*. (London, 1697) p. 149.

> as well as you and I, that there are other Causes of the present Damp upon their Trade.[248]

The mistreatment of workers in the putting out system was caused by corrupt masters and clothiers. However, this was not the only major problem facing the wool and silk industries. Put simply, there were too many workers competing for too few jobs.

**An Overabundance of Weavers**

> The weavers themselves know very well that if there were but a regulation made amongst them so as to restrain the unqualified journeymen and limit the taking of apprentices, they could not have any occasion to complain for want of work.[249]
>
> *A Further Examination of the Weavers' Prentices*.

As has been demonstrated, many components of wool and silk manufacture were comparatively easy to master and this fact accounted for the great increase in unskilled workers being brought into the weaving industry. The large numbers of people employed in the wool and silk trades was often commented on and cited as the main cause of the workers' distress.[250] An advocate for the cotton and linen industries, the MP John Asgill (1650-1738) argued that the remedy for unemployment lay in the hands of woolworkers.

> Wherefore, if after all this Wooll thus manufactur'd, there doth remain a Surplus Number of Hands unemploy'd; there is no other Remedy for that Inequity, than by Regulation of the Numbers; Which is in the Power of the Complainants to do among themselves, by restraining their unlimited License of taking Apprentices.[251]

On the other side of the argument, Defoe made the case that such claims were overstated.

> This is a full Charge against the *Weavers*, and would have some Weight in it, *if true*, tho' not enough *even then* to support the Malice of it. But this, like the / rest, stands upon a rotten Foundation; for in a word, this whole Charge is utterly false, as any Thing can be, for in the first place, few Masters take any Apprentices at all, and when they

[248] Daniel Defoe "Weavers' Riots against Calicoes" *Mist's Journal*, 27 June 1719
[249] Anonymous. *A Further Examination of the Weavers' Prentices*. (London, 1719)
[250] Jack Lindsay (1978) *The Monster City*. p. 8.
[251] John Asgill. *A Brief Answer to the Brief State of the Question*. (London, 1720)

do, it is very seldom more than one, perhaps…a Son or near Relation.[252]

The anti-calico writer Claudius Rey went further in insisting that no such abundance of apprentices actually existed and that allegations of over-stocking the trade were better leveled against immigrants who were stealing "the Bread out of [the] Mouths" of English weavers. According to Rey, "French Refugees [are] as bad an Evil, as the Wearing of printed Callicoes, or worse."[253] As has been established, there was some truth in the contention that an influx of foreign weavers, and other illegal workers, contributed to the increasing unemployment rate in the wool and silk industries.[254] However, there was also an undoubted increase in the number of English wool and silk workers during this time.

The degree to which calico imports actually harmed persons who were fully paid up and qualified members of the guilds was a subject of considerable debate. In his examination of the British cotton industry, the MP Sir Edward Baines (1800-1890) concluded that Defoe's claims of the harm done by EIC imports to the legitimate wool industry were "exaggerated and absurd."[255] Thomas maintains that the official statistics collected by the state support the claim that greater numbers of apprentices were entering the trade after 1716.[256] Moreover, these figures only represent the number of registered apprentices, and the number of illegal apprentices would have likely have greatly exceeded these figures. These findings support the conclusion that many who participated in the training of apprentices must have been evading guild rules for some time without

[252] Daniel Defoe. *The Just Complaint of the Poor Weavers*. (London, 1719)
[253] Claudius Rey. *The Weavers True Case*. (London, 1719) Objection XII.
[254] Stubbs (1919) "Weavers' Guild" p. 79.
[255] Baines (1835) *The History of the Cotton Manufacture in Great Britain*. p. 79.
[256] Thomas (1963) *Mercantilism and the East India Trade*. pp. 151-152.

fear of persecution.[257] When discussing the role the guilds played in regulating such activity it is important to note that guild influence was weakening in many areas.

Lemire argues that many guilds were suffering from an erosion in their customary authority in the early eighteenth century.[258] Keith Wrightson supports this position, maintaining that the influence of the guilds was in clear decline by the early 1700s.[259] As stated, guilds operated only within incorporated towns, and not all large urban areas were incorporated. Manchester, a major cotton manufacturing center in the eighteenth century, did not receive city status until 1853. Manufacturers were aware of this fact and, as urban areas grew, weaving operations were increasingly being conducted on the fringes of cities like London where guilds had no legal authority.[260] This situation was made more complicated by a labyrinthine patchwork of municipal and state regulations, court rulings and guild bylaws.[261] The Great Fire of London (1666) had destroyed records and changed some traditional boundaries as the city was rebuilt. Consequently, guild officers were at times unsure of exactly what their powers were making them reluctant to bring offenders before the courts.[262] This issue was becoming acute in the early 1700s as many guild members appear to have been keen to avoid whatever regulations they could. The moral economy of the weavers did not require that ordinary workers should rigidly adhere to the rules and guild negligence did little to encourage loyalty among rank and file weavers.

Though membership in the guild was mandatory for wool weavers, in guild controlled regions, the Company of Weavers often had trouble even collecting ordinary

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[257] Beloff (1963) *Public Order and Popular Disturbances*. pp. 84, 87.
[258] Lemire (1997) *Dress, Culture and Commerce*. pp. 52-53.
[259] Wrightson (2000) *Earthly Necessities*. p. 326.
[260] Lemire (2011) *Cotton*. p. 77.
[261] Cooper (1970) "Economic Regulation and the Cloth Industry" *Passim.*
[262] J. R. Kellett "The Breakdown of Guild and Corporation Control over the Handicraft and Retail Trade in London" *Economic History Review* (10:3) (1958) *Passim.*

membership dues and frequently had to fine weavers who broke guild rules. When some did not pay, the guild had to have its own membership imprisoned for debt.[263] The attitude of many of these recalcitrant weavers is largely attributable to the unequal nature of command authority within the guild itself. L. D. Schwarz argues that for many ordinary weavers, and even some small masters, guild associations often had limited appeal. Membership dues added to their financial burdens and guild regulations limited their activities while producing few tangible benefits in return. Meanwhile, those at the top used their wealth and power to avoid the restrictions placed on lesser individuals and generally subordinate those below.[264] On the other hand, rank and file weavers also had their own ways of asserting agency.

John Rule points out that weavers in the early eighteenth century often assaulted strikebreakers, and others within the trade, who refused to fully support riotous actions or work stoppages.[265] However, many weavers also proved more than willing to take what steps they could to improve their own conditions by evading guild regulations. The issue of the number of apprentices working in the industry was always contentious, and became ever more so when work ran short. It was a common practice among London guilds to limit guild masters to two apprentices at any one time, while journeymen were only entitled to employ one.[266] In a properly administered and supervised system this practice ensured a sustainable number of well-trained workers. However, enforcement was problematic and the temptation to break the rules proved too much for some as

[263] Plummer (1972) *London Weavers*. pp. 120-125.
[264] Schwartz (1992) *London in the Age of Industrialization*. pp. 211-213.
[265] Rule (1986) *The Labouring Classes*. pp. 257-259.
[266] Llana Krausman Ben-Amos "Failure to Become Freemen: Urban Apprentices in Early Modern England" *Social History* (16:2) (May, 1991) p. 168.

masters were normally paid a fee, either by the parents of a child, or by the parish in the case of orphans, to take on and train apprentices.[267]

**An Oversupply of Apprentices**

Apprenticeship fees varied considerably between occupations. To be apprenticed to a Levant merchant in 1680 could cost between £100 and £860. A woollen-draper might command between £100 and £120 while a cooper might expect to receive a more modest £10-£35.[268] Given the fact that a reasonable middle rank income in 1700 might be reckoned at £50 a year, these sums represented a substantial investment for the parents, and a significant source of extra cash for the tradesman. While far from perfect, the apprenticeship system normally worked well enough for those with the family connections and the resources necessary to secure a place with a respectable master in a promising trade.[269] Not all were so fortunate. The lower a boy was placed in the hierarchy of apprenticeship the worse his prospects and treatment usually were.

Weaving was not a trade to which many aspired. The wages were poor, the hours long, the work was mind numbingly repetitive and workplace abuses were commonplace. Consequently, apprentice fees for weavers were low, £5 being a common figure, and the trade was a popular place for parish authorities to dump orphans.[270] This practice was scarcely a secret and was openly criticized by early social reformers.

> Parish officers…to save expense, are apt to ruin children by putting them out as early as they can to any sorry master that will take them, without concern for their educations and welfare, on account of the little money that is given them.[271]

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[267] Patrick Wallis "Apprenticeship and Training in Pre-modern England" *Journal of Economic History* (68:3) (September, 2008) p. 835.
[268] Earle (1989) *The Making of the English Middle Class*. pp. 94-95.
[269] Robert Shoemaker. *Prosecution and Punishment: Petty Crime and the Law in London and Rural Middlesex, c. 1660-1725*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. pp. 174-175.
[270] George (1965) *London Life.* p. 223.
[271] Anonymous. *Account of Several Workhouses*. (Second Edition). (London, 1732) p. IX.

For poor weavers, there was an understandable temptation to take on additional apprentices and the number of complaints raised against this practice suggest it was rather more common than not. However, it is important to note that apprentices were not always with their masters for long as many sought to escape violent or neglectful employers who only wanted them for the fees they brought.[272]

In early eighteenth-century England, the abuse of young workers was commonplace, though not to say ubiquitous.[273] Apprentices were often set to menial labour, which had little to nothing to do with learning a trade, or otherwise were so badly used by their employer that they ran away. With older apprentices, a master could arrange to have them press ganged so he could pocket their fees or he could ply them with liquor and thereby tempt them into committing an indiscretion which caused them to be jailed, transported or even hanged.[274] Less cunning employers would assault them so badly that they fled of their own accord. Moreover, it was not unknown for apprentices simply to disappear, or die, for no apparent reason.[275] Of course, not all low-rank apprenticeships were characterized by such excesses, but such cases were not unusual either.[276] The extent to which the developmental circumstances of young weavers contributed to the violence which attended the anti-calico riots presents an interesting topic for further study of the Calico Crisis. Such behaviour can be at least partially attributed to the conditions under which the character of many poor apprentices were formed. Other explanations for excessive violence may be found in the menial circumstances of the weavers themselves.

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[272] Ben-Amos (1991) "Failure to Become Freemen" p. 167. Wallis (2008) "Apprenticeship and Training" pp. 843-844.
[273] Jennine Hurl-Eamon "Domestic Violence Prosecuted: Women Binding over their Husbands for Assault at Westminster Quarter Sessions, 1685-1720" *Journal of Family History* (26:4) (October, 2001) *Passim*.
[274] Wallis (2008) "Apprenticeship and Training in Pre-modern England" pp. 843-844.
[275] George (1965) *London Life.* pp. 223-234.
[276] Rule (1991) *The Vital Century*. pp. 201-202.

Low pay, hard intermittent work, and a job with a limited future were the best many could hope for. Such circumstances naturally fostered anger and resentment, and many apprentices were obliged to serve for long years even to obtain this pitiable prospect.

According the Statute of Artifices (5 Eliz. c. 4) of 1562, apprentices were required to serve a term of seven years before being considered for journeyman status.[277] In light of the fact that some boys began their training as young as age eight, the seven year stipulation appears to have been designed to allow them to mature physically and mentally before setting out on their own. However, most were also required to remain as apprentices until they were twenty four.[278] Given the low skill level required to perform many of the simpler trades, this limit on individual labour cannot be justified on the basis of knowledge acquisition alone. Highly skilled modern day trades are usually completed in four years, and these include both in-class course work and supervised field training. Anger over the number of apprentices employed in the weaving trades supports the conclusion that the skill actually required to do most common work was limited, and this fact only became more evident as weaving technologies improved.[279] The extent to which numerous aspects of the weaving trades could be augmented, or replaced, by early eighteenth-century technology testifies to the fact that many of these occupations had a low skill component which was easily replicated. A parish orphan, who was apprenticed to a weaver, was being placed in one of the most marginal of England's trades.

**Conclusion**

[277] Wallis (2008) "Apprenticeship and Training in Pre-modern England" p. 834.
[278] Pamela Sharpe "Poor Children as Apprentices in Cloyton, 1598-1830" *Continuity and Change* (6:2) (August, 1991) pp. 245, 255.
[279] Ogilvie (2004) "Guilds, Efficiency, and Social Capital" p. 303.

Wool and silk workers in England were suffering at the time of the 1719-1720 Calico riots because their industry was in decline and their occupations were overpopulated. The reasons for this situation can be found in a number of factors which are largely attributable to the avarice and corruption of guild masters and powerful investors. Over investment in foreign labour and new technologies did a great deal to diminish the skills of English weavers while the use of the putting-out system, and proto-factories, increasingly denied workers control over the means of production. Moreover, the failure of guild authorities to curtail these abuses further diminished the value of the tradecraft of English weavers. To a degree, these problems were aggravated by the activities of ordinary weavers, however, they had little control over the overall decline of their trade. Attempts by wool and silk manufacturers to blame Indian calico imports and foreign workers for the decline in these industries and their associated trades did not amount to much. Indian workers were too remote a target and skilled immigrant communities were too valuable an asset to alienate. However, as will be demonstrated, instigating attacks on English women who wore printed textiles was a much more effective tactic when it came to discouraging the importation and use of such products.

## Chapter 2

### Academic Perspectives on E. P. Thompson's Moral Economy

> The 'moral economy' leads us not into a single argument but into a concourse of arguments.[280] E. P. Thompson

The purpose of this chapter are fivefold. First, to examine scholarly opinions on E. P. Thompson's theory of the moral economy as they pertain to incidences of rioting in early eighteenth-century England. Second, to reveal some circumstances where academics have identified Thompson's moral economy mindset operating outside of the traditional food riot context. Third, to determine the extent to which the principles of the moral economy were represented in the Calico riots. Fourth, to examine Thompson's view of female participation in moral economy events. Finally, to review Thompson's responses to his critics. In 1991 Thompson addressed many of the issues brought up by the historians reviewed in this chapter. Thompson's comments are useful for the insight they give into his thoughts on plebeian agency and the ongoing evolution of the theory of the moral economy of the English crowd.

Thompson's theory of the moral economy has proven to be highly significant to the study of social history and has given rise to a remarkable range of academic debate over the last forty years.[281] John Stevenson, Nicholas Rogers, Adrian Randall, John Bohstedt and Robert Shoemaker have written extensively on the subject of protests in early eighteenth-century England. They have all expressed a qualified respect for Thompson's theory of the moral economy, acknowledging its utility as an interpretive model for describing crowd actions. However, forty plus years of scholarship have

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[280] E. P. Thompson. *Customs in Common.* London: Merlin Press, 1991. p. 259.
[281] Adrian Randall & Andrew Charlesworth (Eds.) *Moral Economy and Popular Protest: Crowds, Conflict and Authority*. London: Macmillan, 2000. *Passim*.

brought to light issues with Thompson's findings and methodologies which cast doubt over the prevalence of restrained rioting and the social conditions which helped to sustain and legitimize such actions.[282] Research undertaken since the publication of "The Moral Economy" has tended to differ from Thompson's conclusions with respect to four points. First, instances of restrained rioting appear to have been much less common than Thompson represented. Second, examples of moral economy *mentalités* were to be found in a number of protest actions not linked to food issues. Third, Thompson tended to minimize the role of the middle rank, instead choosing to focus on the patrician-plebeian dynamic.[283] In contrast, recent historians have placed a much greater emphasis upon the role of the middling sort as peacekeepers, moderators and agitators.[284] Finally, historians like Anna Clark and Joan Wallach Scott have commented on the relative lack of attention Thompson gave to the role of female agents in moral economy style events.[285]

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[282] John Bohstedt "The Moral Economy and the Discipline of the Historical Context" *Journal of Social History* (26:2) (Winter, 1992) p. 279. Peter King "Edward Thompson's Contribution to Eighteenth-Century Studies. The Patrician: Plebeian Model Re-Examined" *Social History* (21:2) (May, 1996) *Passim.* Nicholas Rogers. *Crowds, Culture and Politics in Georgian Britain*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998. pp. 16-18, 82. Dale Williams "Morals, Markets and the English Crowd in 1766" *Past & Present* (104) (August, 1984) pp. 71-72. John Bohstedt. *The Politics of Provisions: Food Riots, Moral Economy, and Market Transition in England, c. 1550-1850*. Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Pub. Co., 2010. pp. 7-15. Adrian Randall. *Riotous Assemblies: Popular Protest in Hanoverian England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. pp. 4-7 and Chapter 9 "The Repudiation of the Moral Economy"

[283] Susan Brown "A Just and Profitable Commerce: Moral Economy and the Middle Classes in Eighteenth-Century London" *Journal of British Studies* (32:4) (October, 1993) pp. 325-326. John Stevenson "Customs in Common by E. P. Thompson" *English Historical Review* (108:427) (April, 1993) p. 409.

[284] Randall (2006) *Riotous Assemblies*. p. 310. Robert Shoemaker. *The London Mob: Violence and Disorder in Eighteenth-Century England.* London: Hambeldon, 2004. pp. 18-19. Peter Earle. *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660-1730.* Berkley: University of California Press, 1989. pp. 242-243, 261-262. Bohstedt (2010) *Politics of Provisions*. pp. 1-15. Simon Renton "The Moral Economy of the English Middling Sort in the Eighteenth Century: The case of Norwich in 1766 and 1767" in Adrian Randall & Andrew Charlesworth (Eds.) *Markets, Market Culture and Popular Protest in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland.* Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996.

[285] Anna Clark. *Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995. Introduction. Joan Wallach Scott. *Gender and the Politics of History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988. Chapter 4.

**John Stevenson**

John Stevenson acknowledges the fact that the concept of the moral economy has become an integral feature of the intellectual landscape of social history, serving as an important interpretive methodology for deconstructing crowd actions. Building upon the studies undertaken by historians such as George Rudé and E. J. Hobsbawm, Thompson fundamentally redefined the conventional image of eighteenth-century English food rioters.[286] Where many historians had seen only an unruly low rank mob, Thompson found the actions of a disciplined and purposeful plebeian crowd. However, Stevenson also notes that the concepts of the 'crowd' and the 'moral economy' have the potential to obscure as much as they reveal.[287] He takes the position that applying too rigid a definition of the 'moral economy' to protest actions disguises complex motives which, not infrequently, had little relation to the price and quality of essential foodstuffs. Stevenson concludes that the moral economy events described by Thompson were often more violent than he described and not always confined to the food riot context. While acknowledging the existence of restrained protests of the type Thompson described, Stevenson argues "if anything like the 'moral economy' can ever be said to have existed, it was remarkably flexible and adaptive to change."[288]

Stevenson acknowledges the fact that food rioters appear to have killed no one deliberately. However, he also makes the case that many such protest actions often had a strong punitive component and at times protesters appear to have been principally focused on punishing those who violated local customs and ignored normative economic

[286] John Stevenson "The 'Moral Economy' of the English Crowd: Myth and Reality" pp. 218-219. in Anthony Fletcher & John Stevenson (Eds.) *Order and Disorder in Early Modern Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. pp. 218-222. Rogers (1998) *Crowds, Culture*. p. 2.
[287] John Stevenson. *Popular Disturbances in England, 1700-1832*. London: Longman, 1991. pp. 316-317.
[288] Stevenson (1985) "The 'Moral Economy' of the English Crowd" p. 238.

behaviours. Though violence against persons was comparatively rare during food riots, the destruction of food and private property occurred more frequently than Thompson had maintained and incensed protesters were known to travel significant distances to punish offenders.[289] Poor people destroying food, including healthy crops growing in the fields, reveals the complexity of the *mentalités* which at times animated the moral economy. The destruction of private property in the form of mills, dams and buildings was also not unknown and protesters occasionally resorted to the tactic of maiming and blinding the livestock of those who displeased them.[290] Given the limited protection available from law enforcement officials, those who engendered the anger of the crowd had good reason to fear for their safety.[291] Even Thompson readily conceded that the man who tugged his forelock in the presence of a squire by day could as easily turn to robbery and violence in the dark of night.[292] The sense of community outrage which animated the moral economy of the English crowd had the potential to tacitly legitimize a great deal of aggression even when such actions were not expressly endorsed.[293] As Thompson's own studies show, the plebeian crowd was not adverse to inflicting harsh sanctions when they felt that customary markets and traditional social norms were under threat.

For his part, Thompson appears to have to looked upon the punishment of those who violated collective principles as a manifestation of a tenacious defense of natural rights and time-honoured values. In his detailed study of rough music traditions in England, Thompson provided information on the various crimes and punishments to

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[289] Stevenson (1991) *Popular Disturbances*. p. 318.
[290] Andrew Charlesworth (Ed.) *An Atlas of Rural Protest in Britain, 1548-1900*. London: Croon Helm, 1982, pp. 56-60. E. P. Thompson. *Whigs and Hunters: The Origin of the Black Act*. London: Allen Lane, 1975. p. 22. Steve Hindle "Power, Poor Relief, and Social Relations in Holland Fen, c.1600-1800" *The Historical Journal* (41:1) (March, 1998) p. 78.
[291] Stevenson (1985) "The 'Moral Economy' of the English Crowd" pp. 234-235.
[292] E. P. Thompson. *Customs in Common*. London: Merlin Press, 1991. p. 66.
[293] Thompson (1971) "Moral Economy" p. 114.

which those who offended community standards could be subjected. Though food rioters usually stopped short of inflicting permanent bodily damage, other community sanctions could be psychologically damaging, physically painful and potentially deadly.[294] Low-rank women in particular were commonly singled for such treatment.[295]

Ducking stools were used by communities for centuries to immerse intemperate females in water while scold's bridles were employed to still their tongues. These rituals involved the use of elaborate equipment prepared for the purpose well in advance.[296] Working women could be whipped for fornication or forcibly searched by female parish officials to prove pregnancy or virginity.[297] Such punishments were often employed, "not only [that] the woman which offended might be shamed for her misdemeanor…but other women also by her shame might be admonished [not] to offend in like sort."[298] Even Thompson conceded that women were disproportionally targeted for such collective punishments.[299] This was particularly true when it came to allegations of witchcraft. Though witchcraft traditions constituted an important part of plebeian society in the early 1700s Thompson spent surprisingly little time addressing the topic.[300] This is an odd omission for Thompson for it was during witch hunts that the attitude of the plebeian mob was revealed in its most irrational and malicious form. The *mentalités* of anti-calico protesters were at times very similar to those who persecuted suspected witches. The use

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[294] Thompson (1991) *Customs in Common*. p. 487.
[295] Martin Ingram "Ridings, Rough Music and the 'Reform of Popular Culture' in Early Modern England" *Past & Present* (105) (November, 1984) pp. 92-93.
[296] Sarah Mendelson & Patricia Crawford. *Women in Early Modern England, 1550-1720*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998. pp. 69-71. Martin Ingram "Scolding Women Cucked or Washed: A Crisis in Gender Relations in Early Modern England" in J. Kermonde & G. Walker (Eds.) *Women, Crime and the Courts in Early Modern England*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994. pp. 48-80.
[297] Laura Gowing. *Common Bodies: Women, Touch and Power in Seventieth-Century England*. London: Yale University Press, 2003. p. 6.
[298] Account of a riding at Haughley and Wetherden (Suffolk) in 1604 quoted in Ingram (1984) "Reform of Popular Culture" pp. 92-93.
[299] E. P. Thompson "Rough Music Reconsidered" *Folklore* (103:1) (1992) pp. 4-6, 10-12.
[300] Thompson (1991) *Customs in Common*. pp. 503-504.

of witchcraft imagery will be explored more fully in Chapter 5. For the present it is important to note that plebeian protest actions often had a strong punitive component.

**The Use of Violence During Plebeian Protest Actions**

In his study of the circumstances attending the creation of the Waltham Black Act of 1724 (9 Geo. I. c. 22) Thompson explores the implications of the occasionally pernicious plebeian mindset.[301] Those who violently asserted their right to access the resources of Waltham wood in Hampshire routinely resorted to robbing poor farmers, assaulting game keepers and maiming and killing animals.[302] These practices stand in sharp contrast with Thompson's theory of the moral economy which was predicated upon the idea that food rioters often made conscious and conspicuous efforts to avoid violence. Reconciling these contradictory positions proved problematic for Thompson and he conspicuously made no reference to his 1971 theory of the moral economy in his 1975 book *Whigs and Hunters: The Origin of the Black Act*. Instead, he sought to minimize the significance of destructive and aggressive protest actions carried out in Waltham wood by contrasting such events with ordinary government practice at the time. He correctly points out that the violent punishment and execution of offenders by agents of the state set a harsh example for ordinary people to follow.[303] However, justifying the violent actions of plebeian rioters based upon extant cultural values and exigent circumstances would prove challenging for Thompson.

Thompson did acknowledge the fact that violence and the destruction of private property occasionally accompanied food riots. However, he preferred to characterize such violent punishing events as a rational next step, once all non-violent means of protest had

[301] Thompson (1974) *Whigs and Hunters. Passim.*
[302] A. Moore. *The History of the Blacks of Waltham in Hampshire*. (London, 1723) p. 3.
[303] E. P. Thompson "Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture" *Journal of Social History* (7:4) (1974) p. 393.

been exhausted. Thompson laid himself open to several logical criticisms when he attempted to explain away such riotous actions with the terse comment "the poor knew the one way to make the rich yield was to twist their arms."[304] Firstly, Thompson was apparently reticent to acknowledge the fact that the punishment of an offender might have been the most important or even sole purpose of the crowed. Secondly, small farmers and village bakers, often the principal victims of food riots, were not "rich" by any definition. Stevenson argues that men in these positions, far from being the cause of local hardship, were in fact often helpless scapegoats during times of distress.[305] What is more, contemporary observers noted that seizing grain during food riots often operated to the detriment of protesters by frightening away otherwise honest traders.

> [The forcible seizure of grain by protesters] so intimidated the Farmers, that two Waggon Loads of [grain] coming to the same Place [turned] back. The Effects of such unlawful Proceedings, it is feared, instead of relieving the Poor, often distressed them the more, by deterring those who have [grain], and are well-meaning, from bringing it to Market.[306]

Not a few aspects of moral economy culture could prove counterproductive.

Thirdly, Thompson never adequately described how destroying food helped the protesters, let alone the truly destitute who were always present in every eighteenth-century English community. His brief statement explaining that food rioters knew that the farmers and merchants had more provisions stashed away does not satisfy. It is difficult to imagine that "men and women near to starvation," as Thompson puts it, would waste energy attacking "mills and granaries, not to steal the food, but to punish the proprietors."[307] This was particularly the case when one considers the fact that once

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[304] Thompson (1971) "Moral Economy" p. 115.
[305] Stevenson (1985) "The 'Moral Economy' of the English Crowd" p. 223.
[306] *Reading Mercury*. 27 June 1757.
[307] Thompson (1971) "Moral Economy" pp. 114-115.

authorities were notified, and forces summoned, the protesters might not get a chance to secure badly needed food supplies. With due respect to Thompson, the destruction of food, in the context he describes, was not the act of a "starving" people.[308] Given the fact that the primary legitimizing notion used by food rioters was the claim that they were starving, this seems an odd omission for Thompson, as evidence from the time tends to suggest that the destruction of food during subsistence protests was hardly a rare event.[309] It appears Thompson, like some eighteenth-century paternalist authorities, was willing to turn a blind eye to the occasional excesses of food rioters.

Stevenson is willing to concede, as Thompson argues, that most food riots did follow accepted patterns and rituals, and that they tended to be restrained in nature.[310] These moderate protests would not have continued for long if demonstrators and authorities had not recognized the fact that negotiation was generally preferable to confrontation. However, Stevenson is not as ready as Thompson to read into such events a more or less stable system of plebeian beliefs respecting the proper means by which food should be distributed and sold.[311] Moreover, he is also less willing to accept the importance of the idea of the customary price in legitimizing such actions. Ordinary protesters were influenced by tradition; they were not bound by it. Rioters were more than willing to adapt their methods and objectives to suit changing conditions.[312] Prices, for example, needed to be 'fair,' not static, and most protesters recognized the fact that natural fluctuations in the cost of basic commodities were an inevitable part of life. It was

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[308] Randall (2006) *Riotous Assemblies*. p. 98.
[309] *Gloucester Journal*, 11 August 1766. Also see *Gentlemen's Magazine,* XXXVI (1766) p. 388. and the *Norwich Mercury*, 4 October 1766. Dale Williams "Midland Hunger Riots in 1766" Midland History (III) (1975-1976) pp. 271, 275. Randall & Charlesworth (1996) *Market Culture.* p. 15. The editors make the case that in some food riots, food was only symbolically destroyed.
[310] Stevenson (1991) *Popular Disturbances*. pp. 318-320.
[311] Stevenson (1993) "Customs in Common by E. P. Thompson" pp. 408-409.
[312] Stevenson (1985) "The 'Moral Economy' of the English Crowd" pp. 237-238.

the unnatural increases caused by price-gougers and profiteering middlemen that truly offended protesters.[313] The defense of what were seen as the natural rights of ordinary people constituted the animating spirit of the moral economy and such notions were not confined to traditional disputes over fair access to necessary foodstuffs.

Stevenson argues that the *mentalités* which animated the moral economy often served to legitimize crowd actions outside of the food riot context. For example, attempts by the government to force men into the army and navy were particularly upsetting to ordinary people and a common cause of fierce protests. Stevenson cites violent resistance to Royal Navy press gangs, a common feature of the eighteenth-century English landscape, and the extensive disorders caused by the introduction of the Militia Act (30 Geo. II. c. 25) in 1757, as examples of rioting inspired by moral economy concerns which were not linked to food issues.[314] In both cases, ordinary men could have their liberty, and potentially their lives and the livelihoods of their families, arbitrarily taken away as surely as if they had been starved to death. Ordinary people were not passive participants in society, and at times they took an active role in influencing the outcome of important events and decisions which effected their lives. This agency was attributable to the complex relationships which governed life at all levels of society.

**Nicholas Rogers**

Like Stevenson, Rogers acknowledges the significant contributions Thompson made to the study of popular history, particularly in emphasizing the agency of ordinary people when it came endorsing the Jacobite cause.[315] Nevertheless, he shares Stevenson's

[313] Randall (2006) *Riotous Assemblies*. p. 99.
[314] Stevenson (1991) *Popular Disturbances.* pp. 317-325.
[315] Nicholas Rogers. *Whigs and Cities: Popular Politics in the Age of Walpole and Pitt*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989. p. 3.

view that popular forms of political, economic and social participation in the early eighteenth century were often more complicated than Thompson proposed, involving a range of economic and political interests and social ranks. This was particularly evident during extensive riots in favor of the Stuart claimant which occurred in 1714.

In his studies of London political riots at the time of the 1714 Hanoverian Succession, Rogers finds evidence of protesters representing a broad social spectrum of society and a diversity of interests. Consequently, despite the concerted efforts by high ranked Whigs and Tories to influence crowds and turn popular media to their own ends, the English public proved difficult to predictably manipulate. The issue of the Jacobite cause was especially contentious as protests in favour of the Stuarts could be redirected to advance a variety of unassociated interests.[316] The first major crowd action associated with the Calico riots occurred in June of 1719. Parakunnel Thomas argues that these demonstrations appear to have been purposefully contrived to coincide with the birthday of the Stuart pretender in order to build upon generalized disaffection with the recently installed Whig government and the parvenu Hanoverian king George I.[317] Whatever the truth of the matter, the demonstration quickly turned violent resulting in damages to persons and property.[318] As will be demonstrated in Chapter 5, political leaders, the nobility and even the clergy were not above exciting the plebeian mind to riotous actions, though this occasionally proved to be a dangerous practice. Crowd disorders could, and did, have unpredictable and undesirable outcomes. However, with a rival royal claimant lurking just across the English Channel some were clearly willing to take the chance.

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[316] Rogers (1998) *Crowds, Culture*. pp. 21-57.
[317] P. J. Thomas. *Mercantilism and the East India Trade*. London: Frank Cass & Co., 1963. pp. 140-142.
[318] George Rudé. *Hanoverian London, 1714-1808*. London: Secker and Warberg, 1971. pp. 185-187.

Sensing a dangerous shift in the public mood, the Riot Act was passed by the Whig government to better direct officially sanctioned responses to riotous actions.[319] The tendency towards the introduction of ever harsher legislation at this time reflected a pronounced shift in elite perceptions of popular protest actions, and the need to control those middling rank agents who were effectively legitimizing some riotous assemblies. Riots tended to flourish when, as Thompson argued, popular opinion ran in favour of the protesters. This was particularly the case when middling level actors, in the form of constables, militia and juries, thwarted the will of authorities by failing to arrest offenders and refusing to convict those who came to trial.[320] However, it must also be noted that there were frequently many factors at play in riots which had the potential to concern all social ranks. This meant that protests were often more complex than they appeared.[321]

Like Thompson, Rogers finds that the collective memory of the forms and limits of the rioting tradition were usually carefully reckoned by lower rank crowds when it came to assessing the risk-to-gain ratio of public protest. Custom and plebeian self-interest played a prominent role in shaping cultural expectations when it came to protesting, and provided a recognized customary basis from which to push for elite intervention in the distribution of essential foodstuffs.[322] Where Rogers finds dispute with Thompson is in his tendency to cast the rioting tradition largely as a patrician - plebeian construct.[323] The middling people were not the puppets of the aristocracy, though some undoubtedly shared interests and ambitions in common with the upper ranks.

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[319] Rogers (1989) *Whigs and Cities*. pp. 29-30.
[320] Nicholas Rogers "Popular Protest in Early Hanoverian London" *Past & Present* (79) (1978) pp. 73-75.
[321] Douglas Hay & Nicholas Rogers. *Eighteenth-Century English Society: Shuttles and Swords*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. Chapter 2 "Hierarchy"
[322] Rogers (1998) *Crowds, Culture*. pp. 275-277.
[323] Rogers (1998) *Crowds, Culture*. pp. 16-17.

Men of the middling station often acted as important agents in national and local governments and in charitable agencies, and were significant figures both in the creation and consumption of newspapers and periodicals. The middling sort used these venues to advance their own interests and often acted to a degree as a form of counterbalance to elite authority.[324] Thompson's bipolar plebeian-patrician field-of-force conception of the rioting power dynamic left little room for the middling agent.[325] However, as Rogers argues, these middle people functioned as active and influential agents in forming economic, political and social policy the early 1700s.

**Adrian Randall**

Adrian Randall has explored the implications of Thompson's moral economy in great detail and has expressed respect for Thompson's comprehension of the complex relationships between authorities and the people in the 1700s.[326] However, Randall also identifies a number of situations where Thompson's theory of the moral economy does not stand up to rigorous examination. In his *Moral Economy and Popular Protest* (2000), a collection of essays dedicated to Thompson he co-edited with Andrew Charlesworth, prominent historians from a range of disciplines discuss the moral economy, assessing its implications and limitations in a variety of global contexts. What sets this work apart from previous investigations of the moral economy is the greater emphasis the contributors placed on the less restrained and moderate features of Thompson's moral economy. John Bohstedt in particular makes the case that the few examples Thompson used to illustrate traditions of moderation need to be contrasted with multiple occasions

[324] Nicholas Rogers "Introduction" *Journal of British Studies* (32:4) *Making the English Middle Class, c. 1700-1850* (October, 1993) pp. 299-300.
[325] Thompson (1991) *Customs in Common*. pp. 89-90.
[326] Randal (2006) *Riotous Assemblies.* p. IX.

where protesters demonstrated little restraint.[327] While Thompson was willing to concede that some crowds pushed the limit of the moral economy he insisted that such behaviour was due to aggravating circumstances, and a failure of leadership on the part of local elites and law enforcement officials.[328] Thompson's conclusions in this respect are limited by his focus on the traditional plebeian-patrician protest relationship.

Writing in 2006, Randall took issue with Thompson's concept of a "bi-polar field of force" that existed between food rioters and authorities. Randall maintains that this perspective overlooks the role of the middle rank and the wide range influences which could come into play during food riots. Instead Randall emphasizes the complex plurality of community interests which were often at play in rural protest situations.[329] Paternalist nobility and gentry disapproved of those who artificially increased food prices and caused local unrest. However, these same landowners also had an interest in maximizing the returns from their own properties by obtaining the best price for their produce. Middling peoples often took a dim view of plebeian assaults on persons and property. However, the middle ranks were no more eager than their low ranked counterparts to pay the inflated prices of middlemen and were quick to condemn those who created food shortages for personal gain.[330] The middle and lower orders shared a common concern over the price of produce and experience taught them that it was important for the community to stand

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[327] John Bohstedt "The Pragmatic Economy, the Politics of Provisions and the 'Invention' of the Food Riot Tradition in 1740" in Adrian Randall & Andrew Charlesworth (Eds.) *Moral Economy and Popular Protest: Crowds, Conflict and Authority*. Basingstoke: McMillan, 2000. p. 55.
[328] Thompson (1971) "Moral Economy" p. 113.
[329] Randal (2006) *Riotous Assemblies.* pp. 96-97. Rogers (1998) *Crowds, Culture*. pp. 16-17, 67-74, 80-82.
[330] Simon Renton "The Moral Economy of the English Middling Sort in the Eighteenth Century: The case of Norwich in 1766 and 1767" in Adrian Randall & Andrew Charlesworth (Eds.) *Markets, Market Culture and Popular Protest in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996. pp. 115-136.

together. On the other hand, there often existed a range of opinion as to when a protest should occur and what tactics should be used.

In seeking to emphasize the agency of lower rank protesters, Thompson maintained that crowds engaged in public actions were often held together by necessity and a sense of moral indignation at the actions of those who ignored the common good. In his estimation, appeals to collective needs and values and outrage at the activities of transgressors, constituted the principal animating feature of crowd actions. However, evidence presented by other historians suggests the situation was more complicated than Thompson acknowledged.[331] Though there were instances where the outrage of the community against the activities of irresponsible individuals generated spontaneous displays of public anger, it would be illogical to assume that all members of a protesting crowd shared an equivalent commitment to the cause.[332] This makes discussions of the size of protesting crowds problematic for historians.

There were many practical reasons why protesters would want as many people as possible to join their demonstration. As will be demonstrated in the case of the Calico riots, the power of the anti-calico mobs relied in large part both on their strength in numbers and the relative immunity individuals enjoyed in being members of a group. Ordinary people knew very well that large numbers of protesters imparted a greater sense of legitimacy to mass actions by signifying the solidarity of the community. Moreover, big crowds had the added benefit of spreading the blame for the actions of protesters widely.[333] Low ranked protesters were also aware of the fact that strikes and riots were

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[331] Bohstedt (2010) *Politics of Provisions*. pp. 1-20.
[332] Gwenda Morgan & Peter Rushton. *Rouges, Thieves and the Rule of Law: The Problem of Law Enforcement in North-East England, 1718-1800*. London: UCL Press, 1998. pp. 194-199.
[333] Thompson (1971) "Moral Economy" p. 111.

usually only effective when a critical mass of the population was involved, and riot leaders were not above effectively forcibly recruiting men to augment their ranks.

Protesters would have been aware of who in the community supported their mass actions, and those who refused to participate could face a number of community sanctions once the riots were over. Moreover, even Thompson was forced to concede that protesters would occasionally use the cover of riot to settle old scores, and demonstrators were not above preferring the punishment of offenders over the acquisition of provisions. Though some food rioters were cautious of compromising the legitimacy of their protest by taking things too far, even Thompson had to acknowledge the fact that moral economy could encompass violence and destruction.[334] Fears of what might happen if a protest action got out of control were shared by all levels of society and most authorities usually preferred to resort to force only when necessary.[335] The cultural nuances of eighteenth-century riot and negotiation are extensively documented by John Bohstedt.

**John Bohstedt**

Bohstedt has made an especial study of Thompson's moral economy and the two engaged in a series of lively academic exchanges until Thompson's death in 1993.[336] While he does not subscribe to the notion that a transcendent moral economy existed in the plebeian consciousness, Bohstedt finds that a sense of plebeian moral outrage was commonly present in food riots. However, exorbitant prices and artificial shortages also

[334] Randall (2000) *Moral Economy and Popular Protest*. pp. 7-8.
[335] Walter Shelton "The Role of Local Authorities in the Provincial Hunger Riots of 1766" *Albion* (5:1) (Spring, 1973) pp. 51-53. Douglas Hay "Patronage, Paternalism, and Welfare: Masters, Workers, and Magistrates in Eighteenth-Century England. *International Labour and Working Class History* (53) (Spring, 1998) pp. 34-35. Hay & Rogers (1997) *Shuttles and Swords*. pp. 32-34.
[336] Bohstedt (2010) *The Politics of Provisions.* pp. 1-15. For Thompson's comments on Bohstedt's work see Thompson (1991) *Customs in Common*. pp. 306-315.

could prove problematic for the entire community.[337] As will be shown in subsequent chapters, notions of collective responsibility and religious duty appealed to a broad cross section of society.[338] Therefore, moderate and purposeful protest was often tolerated for the useful social function that it served. The key to such successful action lay in the ability of the crowd to convince the general public of the legitimacy of their cause.

Both Bohstedt and Thompson found many instances of rioters performing rituals in public prior to undertaking a forced redistribution of food. By chanting, carrying banners or ringing bells, protesters endeavored to make it clear to the wider community that their intentions were corrective and lawful and not self-interested theft.[339] Some anti-calico rioters consciously mirrored such actions by making the public aware of their sufferings and marching in good order past the doors of magistrates with calicos on poles to demonstrate the legality of their actions.[340] It was especially in the interest of the rioters that this distinction should be obvious to middling and elite observers for the safety of protesters often depended upon the forbearance of authorities. However, it must be noted that persons of all ranks generally appreciated the benefits of restrained action.

Nobles, gentry and their middle rank representatives had good reason to fear the crowd, and the latitude granted protesters was often a reflection of the limits of the power of these groups.[341] In his 2010 book, Bohstedt agreed with Thompson's conclusion that

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[337] Laurence Braddon. *A Humble Proposal for Relieving, Reforming and Employing the Poor*. (London, 1720). Introduction.
[338] John Bohstedt. "The Moral Economy and the Discipline of the Historical Context" *Journal of Social History* (26:2) (Winter, 1992), pp. 265-270.
[339] Adrian Randall "The Industrial Moral Economy of the Gloucestershire Weavers" in John Rule (Ed.) *British Trade Unionism, 1750-1850: The Formative Years*. London: Longman, 1988. pp. 35-36.
[340] Edith Standen "English Washing Furnitures" *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin, New Series* (23:3) (November, 1964) p. 109. Thomas (1963) *Mercantilism and the East India Trade*. p. 145.
[341] Henry French & Jonathan Barry (Eds.) *Identity and Agency in England, 1500-1800*. New York: Pelgrave McMillan, 2004. pp. 4-5. John Rule. *Albion's People: English Society, 1714-1815*. London: Longman, 1992. pp. 196-201.

paternalism played a role in rioting events by providing both the authorities and the protesters with a face saving means of avoiding armed conflicts.[342] Ritually calling upon paternalist leaders to act as the defenders of the poor reaffirmed the traditional social contract ordinary people had with their patrician overlords and helped to limit conflicts. However, it would be unwise to read too much into such performative events.[343] Paternalist forms of governance were on the decline in the early 1700s and the numbers of absentee landowners were increasing every year. On the other hand, elites were still aware of the power a timely display of paternalist care carried with the common folk and many would continue to perform *pro forma* acts of charity as needed.

With limited means at their disposal to deal with disgruntled crowds, governing authorities were frequently forced to engage in the theatre of protest.[344] In this context, the performative rituals of paternalist authority perpetuated the illusion that patricians and plebeians existed in a society governed by mutual consent. Instead of focusing upon the role paternalism played in providing food rioters with a legal pretext for a riot as Thompson had done, Bohstedt instead advances the idea of the law of necessity (natural law) as the main impetus and justification for protest.[345] According to Bohstedt, protesters were principally motivated by imminent need and not, as Thompson maintained, by abstract ideals of traditional reciprocity. In this, it is possible to see Thompson describing what he thought should have been rather than what really was. Bohstedt, and the academic community, continue to find notable omissions and

[342] Bohstedt (2010) *Politics of Provisions*. pp. 7-15.
[343] Bohstedt (1992) "The Moral Economy and the Discipline of the Historical Context" pp. 272-273.
[344] Randall (2006) *Riotous Assemblies*. p. 39.
[345] Bohstedt (2010) *Politics of Provisions*. p. 9.

inconsistencies in Thompson's theories and the evidence he elected to use.[346] His focus on the plight of low ranked agents caused Thompson to minimize the excesses which at times attended protest actions, while over emphasizing instances of moderation.

**Robert Shoemaker**

Robert Shoemaker shares in Thompson's opinion that plebeian rioters often rationalized their actions by maintaining that they were defending traditional rights and values. Moreover, they frequently relied on the support, or at least the acquiescence, of the wider community to lend legitimacy to their actions. Shoemaker, like Stevenson and Rogers, finds moral economy sentiments to have been in evidence in a number of protest actions which were not directly related to food. Industrial disputes, resistance to the enclosure of common lands and plebeian actions against turnpike roads, all reflected key elements of Thompson's moral economy.[347] Part of the reason for the many instances of rioting which conformed to the moral economy model lay in the fact that restrained and purposeful protest was relatively effective and ubiquitous.

According to Shoemaker, riots were a common fact of life in London in the early 1700s. Quotidian issues of minor concern ranged from food shortages and unethical business practices to public morality and private disputes. These were usually not regarded by the public as a serious matter. At the time, the word 'riot' was generally understood to encompass a range of behaviours, from people shouting insults and banging pans together, to occasional large scale mob actions which included physical assaults and the destruction of property.[348] While not all of these riots corresponded to the

[346] Randall (2006) *Riotous Assemblies*. pp. 4-12. For an examination of Thompson's continued influence.
[347] Shoemaker (1987) "The London Mob" pp. 301-304.
[348] Roger Wells "Counting Riots in Eighteenth-Century England" *Bulletin - Society for the Study of Labour History* (37) (Autumn, 1978) *Passim*.

restrained model typified in Thompson's description of the moral economy, most of these events were small scale, transient and local, and rioters tended to adhere to accepted patterns of restrained behaviour.[349] However, as crowds increased in size, and disputes took on a longer duration, group behaviour tended to deteriorate. The destruction of private property and physical assaults which typified the Calico riots were exceptional in comparison with most contemporary food riots. However, when contrasted with other rough music type actions of the time, the activities of anti-calico rioters were not particularly remarkable, especially with regard to the use of shame sanctions.

One of the few historians to address the events of the Calico riots in detail, Shoemaker finds that two key features of these riots reflected the principals of Thompson's moral economy. Appeals to maintain traditional values and institutions, and claims that protesters were enduring unwarranted and unnatural suffering.[350] As in the case of the food rioters cited by Thompson, anti-calico protesters actively sought the backing of the wider community both by engendering spontaneous support among people on the street and by way of print appeals. Shoemaker makes the case that people in early eighteenth-century England had great faith in the power of the printed word to shame miscreants into changing undesirable or unlawful behaviour. As Thompson and others note, shame sanctions constituted a powerful and durable feature of contemporary rough music events and would have been approved of by many ordinary people as a legitimate means of correcting and preventing inappropriate behaviour.[351]

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[349] Shoemaker (1987) "The London Mob" p. 275
[350] Daniel Defoe. *The Just Compliant of the Weavers Truly Represented*. (London, 1719) *Passim*. Rey. *The Weaver's True Case*. *Passim*.
[351] Mendelson & Crawford (1998) *Women in Early Modern England.* pp. 59, 69-71. Ingram (1984) "Reform of Popular Culture" pp. 92-93. Thompson (1992) "Rough Music Reconsidered" *Passim*.

Shoemaker points out that servant girls, a group particularly singled out by anti-calico extensive propaganda, were commonly accused of sexual promiscuity and other immoral acts requiring correction.[352] Female focused violence quickly became a mainstay of the anti-calico riots, culminating in the public burning of a female effigy dressed in calico when legislation prohibiting the importation and use of printed cotton was passed in 1721.[353] As in the case of rural rough music events, English society was used to dealing with the transgressions of working women in a rough and ready public fashion which frequently served to reaffirm traditional gender and social hierarchies.[354]

Even in the ordinary course of daily life, many men of all social ranks regarded the violent correction of the women under their control as a natural and legal right and an affirmation of their male authority.[355] As will be demonstrated in Chapter 4, such attitudes were given renewed vigor by a perceived crisis in masculinity. At the time there existed a wider sense in society that traditional English martial masculine culture was in decline, corrupted by new luxuries and fine manners. Consequently, appeals to men of all ranks to control female behaviour, and thereby reaffirm their masculinity, constituted an important feature of the anti-calico crusade which tacitly encouraged and excused violent actions against women dressed in calicos. The extent to which anti-calico propagandists went to encourage such narratives reflects their deep understanding of the important role the backing of the popular consensus played in legitimizing violent actions against women dressed in calicos. Anti-calico writers employed by the wool and silk industries knew that emotional appeals and excited rhetoric could go a long way in generating

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[352] Shoemaker (1987) "The London Mob" p. 278.
[353] Shoemaker (2004) *London Mob*. p. 119.
[354] Thompson (1992) "Rough Music Reconsidered" pp. 4-6, 10-12.
[355] Robert Shoemaker "Male Honour and the Decline of Public Violence in Eighteenth-Century London" *Social History* (26:2) (May, 2001) pp. 190-191.

public support for a cause, particularly when reasoned and logical arguments would not suffice. As will be shown in subsequent chapters, the opinion of the popular consensus that Thompson saw as integral to the operation of the moral economy could be heavily influenced by cunning arguments and well funded media campaigns. Of course, not everyone bought into the propaganda put forth by anti-calico writers. The number of women who continued to purchase and wear printed cottons and linens suggests that there was a significant gender divide on the issue of calicos.

**Women and the Calico Riots**

Thompson has been criticized by Joan Wallach Scott and Anna Clark for his neglect of the female agent in his works. Taking as their example Thompson's highly influential 1963 book *The Making of the English Working Class*, Scott and Clark argue that women and their motives are largely absent from Thompson's writings.[356] They maintain that Thompson inordinately privileged the heroic narrative of men and male agency in the making of the English working class while neglecting evidence of meaningful historic expressions of female activity. This is not to say that female rioters are absent from Thompson's works.[357] Thompson readily acknowledges the fact that women, and even children, participated in food riots. The presence of women and children among the rioters appears to have been calculated both to heighten the legitimacy and emotional appeal of the protests, and to discourage the use of force by the soldiers and militia sent to suppress the crowd. However, he also notes that these protests usually went through phases. If it looked likely that a riot might turn violent, prudent female protesters would leave the more dangerous business of facing down government

[356] Scott (1988) *Gender and the Politics of History*. Chapter 4. Clark (1995) *Struggle for the Breeches*. Introduction.
[357] Thompson (1971) "Moral Economy" pp. 115-119.

troops to able-bodied males.[358] These observations are supported by the work of other historians. Rogers makes the case that women were often active in protests, though they were rarely at the forefront of such endeavors.[359] Bohstedt argues that women commonly acted as an important force in instigating community action. They encouraged their menfolk and neighbours to engage in collective protest, and used their specialized knowledge of local networks and reputations to help direct the actions of the protesters.[360] It must be acknowledged, however, that female rioting was almost always a part of a larger community actions in which men played the predominate role. The important point to be taken from this discussion is that, in the normal course of moral economy style protests, both males and females were present and that plebeian women and men shared at least some of the same goals and interests. In the case of the Calico Crisis, this gender unity is far from clear. As will be shown in subsequent chapters the calico issue was largely defined, in the anti-calico media of the time, as male vs. female conflict.

Anti-calico propagandists did make the case that the wives and children of weavers were involved in attacks on women dressed in printed fabrics.[361] Old Bailey records describe an assault on a woman dressed in calico in which John Larmony and Mary Matton were indicted for "Assaulting Elizabeth Price on the High Way, putting her into Bodily Fear, and feloniously taking from her a Callicoe Gown, [and] a Pocket wherein were a Guinea; and a Shilling, and a Silver Threepence." Moreover, the

[358] Thompson (1991) *Customs in Common*. pp. 305-311.
[359] Rogers (1998) *Crowds, Culture*. Chapter 7 "Crowds, Gender, and Public Space in Georgian Politics"
[360] John Bohstedt "Gender, Household and Community Politics: Women in English Riots, 1730-1810" *Past & Present* (120) (August, 1988) *Passim*.
[361] Claudius Rey (1719) *The Weavers True Case*. Objection XIII. Daniel Defoe "The Weavers' Riot Against the Calicoes" Mist's Journal 27 June 1719. Anonymous. *The Female Manufacturers Complaint.* (London, 1719)

witnesses testified that boys and girls also assisted in the attack.[362] However, the extent of such practices is questionable. Three other Old Bailey records from the time describing anti-calico actions only list men as the antagonists and no mention is made of women or children participating.[363] As will be established, those who wrote in support of the wool and silk industries were frequently given to exaggeration, particularly when it came to the sufferings of the English weavers and their families. Of course, assaults involving women and children as active participants were possible given the rough and ready street life which predominated at the time and some attacks on calico clad women doubtless occurred where women and children were involved. The issue here is the scale and duration of these events. Outside of anti-calico sources, the evidence for such actions is very limited. The addition of the evocative image of starving women and children assaulting calico wearers appears, in this context, to have been designed to appeal to the traditional imagery common to moral economy food riots. Shoemaker argues that the involvement of women in attacks on other women during the Calico riots was in fact comparatively limited.[364] The misogynist language and rhetoric anti-calico propagandists used to decry the female fondness for luxury and novelty, and to vilify women who used foreign fabrics, would likely have had little appeal for many female readers.

**Thompson's Last Word on the Moral Economy**

Though she commends Thompson for his insight into the lives of the working poor, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese has argued that a sympathetic perspective at times caused him to underplay evidence which tended not to present the activities of protesters in a

[362] 8 July 1719 Old Bailey online, ref. no. t17190708-57, accessed 08 August 2011
[363] 12 July 1720 Old Bailey ref. no. t17200712-28, accessed 08 August 2011. 8 July 1719 Old Bailey ref. no. t17190708-59, accessed 08 August 2011. 8 July 1719 Old Bailey online ref. no. t17190708-56 accessed 08 August 2011.
[364] Shoemaker (1987) "The London Mob" p. 285.

positive light.[365] Given Thompson's own statements on the matter, such claims are credible. In *The Making of the English Working Class*, Thompson stated his intention to acknowledge and emphasize the agency and social-intelligence of the average working man. "I am seeking to rescue the poor stockinger, the Luddite cropper, the 'obsolete' hand-loom weaver [and] the 'utopian' artisan…from the enormous condensation of posterity."[366] This approach has been evident in much of Thompson's subsequent work. While these considerations do not invalidate Thompson's theories, they do suggest a reason for the oversights and omissions that specialists in British social history have found in Thompson's evidence and conclusions. Thompson's theory of the moral economy has proved highly influential both in the study of rioting practices in general and crowd behaviour in eighteenth-century England in particular. Though work on the moral economy has continued since Thompson's time, it is useful to conduct a brief review of Thompson's opinion on the manner in which his seminal paper had influenced the study of popular protest.

In his 1991 book *Customs in Common*, Thompson addressed the findings of some of the hundreds of scholars who read and commented upon his "Moral Economy" essay. While Thompson saw no reason to retreat from the overall findings of his influential article, he appreciated the need for clarification of some fundamental points. In fairness to Thompson, it must be noted that he never intended that his theory of the moral to be applied to all types of riots, nor even to all English riots which occurred in the eighteenth century. In response to his critics, Thompson argued that his focus was not on the protests themselves, but rather on the plebeian *mentalités* which sustained them.

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[365] Elizabeth Fox-Genovese "The Many Faces of the Moral Economy: A Contribution to a Debate" *Past & Present* (58) (1973). p. 167.
[366] E. P. Thompson. *The Making of the English Working Class*. p. 13.

> My object of analysis was the *mentalité,* or, as I would prefer, the political culture, the expectations, traditions, and, indeed, superstitions of the working population most frequently involved in actions in the market; and the relations-sometimes negotiations between crowd and rulers which go under the unsatisfactory term of *riot*.

However, this focus on *mentalités* did not imply that ordinary protesters were blind slaves to tradition and customary expectations. Rather, according to Thompson, the decision to engage in a riot was "usually a rational response" to adverse conditions.[367] For the most part, crowds made reasonable decisions based on past history, present conditions and the prospect of future success. Therefore, for a majority of protesters the decision to riot was a cogent and conscious choice. According to this rationale, traditions of paternalist intervention in the regulation of food supplies, which provided plebeian protesters with the pretext for riot, could be seen as little more than displays of social theater with both sides acting out the role long prepared for them. Thompson did not see it that way. For him the moral economy represented something transcendent in the plebeian mind, a traditional appeal to the stable morals and marketing systems of the past.

> It is not only that there is an identifiable bundle of beliefs, usages and forms associated with the marketing of food in time of dearth, which it is convenient to bind together in a common term, but the deep emotions stirred by dearth, the claims which the crowd made upon the authorities in such crises, and the outrage provoked by profiteering in life-threatening emergencies, imparted a particular *moral* charge to protest. All of this, taken together, is what I understand by moral economy.[368]

What then are we to make of the events of the Calico Crisis? As stated, Thompson did not intended that his moral economy should be applied to all types of crowd actions. However, he did appreciate the potential the model had for interpreting the *mentalité* of plebeian protests in a wider range of contexts than the traditional food riot.

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[367] Thompson (1991) *Customs in Common.* pp. 259-265.
[368] Thompson (1991) *Customs in Common.* pp. 337-338.

Given the complex, "political culture, the expectations, traditions, and, indeed, superstitions of the working population most frequently involved in actions in the market," Thompson identified, it was quite possible to conceive of situations where the moral economy might be applied outside of the food riot context.[369] Thompson stated that his concept of the moral economy applied to durable, widely-held and identifiable systems of belief related to customary marketing practices. During times of crisis, popular anger directed against those who sought what were widely perceived to be unjustifiable profits imparted a particular 'moral' charge to the actions of protesters. The actions of the powerful men linked to the Indian cotton trade fit this model, though it was ordinary working women who most commonly endured the brunt of popular plebeian anger against the importation and use of foreign textiles. Despite his focus on the actions of plebeian food rioters, Thompson was not necessarily adverse to the application of his theories outside of the food riot context. In his *Customs in Common*, Thompson undertook a detailed examination of what Adrian Randall termed the industrial moral economy of the Gloucestershire weavers.[370]

Randall identified two protest events in Gloucestershire which he recognized as typifying the *mentalités* of Thompson's moral economy. In 1756 wool workers protested, for the most part peacefully, against the artificially low wages and other harsh conditions imposed on them by clothiers and appealed to the wider community for support. This plea enjoyed noticeable success. The wool industry was a major employer in the region and the unethical practices of some clothiers had the potential to harm the economy of the entire district. For this reason local magistrates and gentry aided the wool weavers in

[369] Thompson (1991) *Customs in Common*. p. 260.
[370] Adrian Randall "The Industrial Moral Economy of the Gloucestershire Weavers" in Rule (1988) *British Trade Unionism.* pp. 29-51.

presenting their case to parliament which passed an act to prevent payment in truck and other practices which reduced the earnings of weavers.[371] While not a complete success, the weavers improved their lot by this restrained appeal to the ethics of the community.

The other instance of moral economy style protesting Randall identified occurred in 1766 when the same weaving groups again engaged in peaceable mass protests against the high food prices caused by middle men. As in 1756, these protests appealed to the collective morals and interests of the community, and consequently enjoyed a measure of success. In the course of his investigation of Randall's work, Thompson found many similarities between expressions of the moral economy in food riots and weavers' protests. The events in Randall's study were characterized by good order, a clear appeal to the collective good, and discipline reflected in the minimal use of violence.[372] According to Thompson, such actions were very much in the moral economy tradition.

> The same weaving communities that were involved in food riots (1766) were involved in industrial actions (1756); these were informed by the same values, showed the same community solidarities and sanctions (such as rough music against those who broke the norms of the trade)…and a similar insistence that, where the community's economic well-being was concerned, market forces and the profits of individuals should be subdued to custom.[373]

Thompson went on to add that he was more than half persuaded by Randall's argument. Using Thompson's own methodology, it is possible to argue that the Calico riots were, in a similar manner, reflective of the fundamental tenants of his moral economy.

There are several important points of commonality between the weavers' protests during the Calico riots, and the Gloucestershire protests. Both events involved a sustained

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[371] Andrew Charlesworth & Adrian Randall "Morals, Markets and the English Crowd in 1766" *Past & Present* (114) (February, 1987) pp. 206-207.
[372] Randall (1988) "The Industrial Moral Economy of the Gloucestershire Weavers" pp. 29-51.
[373] Thompson (1991) *Customs in Common*. pp. 337-339.

and concerted appeal to the popular consensus by wool weaving communities. Their common complaint was that traditional industries were being undermined by profit-driven market innovations, and the selfish desires of individuals who were acting contrary to the collective interest.[374] In each case, the weavers petitioned paternalist authorities and sympathetic magistrates and successfully cultivated the use of print media to win over the support of the popular consensus to their cause.[375] The significant difference between the Gloucestershire protests and the Calico riots was the use of violence against predominantly low rank women dressed in printed fabrics. What is important to stress at this point is that both rioting events were dependent upon a community of common morals and customary traditional cultural expectations, which reflected a widely held cooperative *mentalité*. Outrage against those who willfully violated this value system was a common feature of these rioting events and the case of the Gloucestershire weavers was by no means unique in eighteenth-century England.

As stated, in communities where many people worked in a common industry such as mining or mill work, there often existed a greater sense of collective interest than was the case in areas with mixed economies, and protests tended to be much larger and last longer.[376] David Levine and Keith Wrightson documented instances of community solidarity and collective action in the case of the coal-mining region of Whickham in County Durham in the mid eighteenth century.[377] John Bohstedt found similar mass

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[374] Randall (1988) "Industrial Moral Economy" pp. 35-43.
[375] *House of Commons Journal* (27) (London, 1757) pp. 468, 503. J. Dallaway. *A State of the Case and Narrative of Facts relating to the late Commotions and Risings of the Weavers in the County of Gloucester.* (London, 1757)
[376] Louise Tilly "Food Entitlement, Famine and Conflict" *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* (14:2) (Autumn, 1983) *Passim.*
[377] David Levine & Keith Wrightson. *The Making of and Industrial Society: Whickham, 1560-1765*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991. In particular see Chapter 4, Section 6 "Dependence and Interdependence, Riot and Negotiation" pp. 375-398.

collective behaviour among rioters at Barrow-upon-Soar near Leicester in 1794, though he was more cautious than Thompson when it came to emphasizing community solidarity among ordinary people not linked by trade.[378] While willing to accept Thompson's concept of the moral economy as a useful tool for examining protests over provisions, Bohstedt also emphasized the plurality of the plebeian experience.[379] Many towns and regions experienced food shortages and not all of them rioted. Moreover, when public displays of indignation did occur, they were often reflective not only of the common cultural experiences and expectations of the community, but also of individual motives.[380] As has been shown, protests were often complex affairs, potentially involving the input of a wide variety of social actors from different levels of society. In many such instances, one often finds examples of the influence of the middling ranks, an issue Thompson felt the need to address.

Later in this career, Thompson was willing to concede that his bi-polar model of the patrician-plebeian power dynamic, which has been so widely disputed by other historians, was predominantly reflective of protests in rural settings. However, he was reticent to dispense with this model as an important interpretive tool for dissecting the popular ideas which animated protests concluding, "underlying all crowd actions one can sense the formulation which has been my object of analysis, the patrician / plebs equilibrium." Though the public sphere was increasingly opening up to all social ranks, in Thompson's estimation, at the bottom of every demonstration lay the *mentalité*, if not the actual reality, of the patrician and patriarchal dominated world view. There is

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[378] John Bohstedt. *Riots and Community Politics in England and Wales, 1790-1810*. London: Harvard University Press, 1983. Chapter 1 "The Politics of Riot"
[379] Bohstedt (2010) *Politics of Provisions*. pp. 1-15.
[380] Alexandra Sheppard "Anxious Patriarchs to Refined Gentlemen? Manhood in Britain, circa 1500-1700" *Journal of British Studies* (44:2) (April, 2005) pp. 292-293.

certainly a great deal of validity to be found in this perspective. As will be demonstrated in subsequent chapters, received categories of thought and action exerted a powerful hold over the public mind. However, it will also be argued that ordinary men and women were also increasingly seeking means to exert their agency in the wider world. This was particularly the case when it came to men of the middle ranks. As will be shown, middling men had the potential to exert significant control over riotous actions, both as agents of state authority and as shapers of national policy. Finally, Thompson did not give sufficient attention to the role newspapers played in generating the popular consensus upon which the moral economy relied. Thompson was inclined to be dismissive of the press as something "written by and for the middling orders."[381] However, even in the early eighteenth century, the influence of popular media was not a thing to be taken lightly. Those who were responsible for generating the massive amounts of literature opposed to calicos would not have expended the resources they did if they hoped only to influence the attitudes and purchasing patterns of the middling sort.

**Conclusion**

The consensus which emerges from the historians surveyed in this chapter is that Thompson tended to downplay the violence associated with plebeian food riots and largely neglecting the complex role the middle ranks played in preventing or encouraging riotous actions. The studies reviewed also conclude that moral economy *mentalités* were evident in a wide variety of protest situations, such as actions against press gangs and rapacious clothiers, which were not related to the price of food. In such instances middling and elite agents at times made common cause with working folk, though this was usually in an effort to protect their own interests. It was also often the case that it was

[381] Thompson (1991) *Customs in Common*. pp. 89-93.

ordinary people, millers and bakers, who tended to suffer the most in moral economy subsistence protests. Low ranked women, in particular, were often the subject of attacks. Witch hunts, and anti-calico actions, had a common origin in plebeian conservatism and misogynist narratives, which were also perpetuated by the middle and upper ranks. The extent to which elite interests went to influence public opinion suggests that winning over the support of the English crowd was often seen as an important undertaking. The widespread use of popular media demonstrates the extent to which wool and silk interests considered the support of ordinary people as vital to achieving their ends. However, the common folk were also capable of making their own decisions based on their perceived needs and future interests and could prove difficult to predictably manage and manipulate. The heavy handed female focused violence which characterized the Calico riots may have been orchestrated by elite and middling interests but it was carried out by ordinary people on English streets largely of their own volition.

## Chapter 3

### The Middle Ranks and E. P. Thompson's Moral Economy

> The Reason and End, and for which all Government was at first appointed was to Prevent Disorder and Confusion among the People; that is, in few words, to prevent Mobs and Rabbles in the world.[382]
>
> Daniel Defoe

Issues of public order were of significant concern to the English people of all ranks in the early eighteenth century. In his influential essay on food riots, E. P. Thompson focused primarily upon the interactions of rural plebeian protesters with paternalist elites when he set out to account for the moderate and disciplined actions he saw as typifying the moral economy of the English crowd.[383] In these investigations, Thompson gave limited attention to the role the middling peoples played in preserving the peace and managing parish affairs. In contrast, this chapter will argue that this group played a significant role in mediating the Thompsonian moral economy and establishing what rioting behaviours were acceptable and which were excessive. The degree to which the middling sorts perceived that their interests lay in maintaining the peace often times determined their response to riotous acts. The Calico riots occurred at a time when the growing middle rank were struggling to secure their place in a rapidly changing nation where hierarchical distinctions, gender boundaries, masculine identities and traditional social standards seemed to many to be in a dangerous state of flux.

The purposes of this chapter are threefold. First, to establish who the middling peoples were and clarify what combination of education, occupation and values systems could be said to have defined their identity. Second, to illustrate the significant role the

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[382] Daniel Defoe. *Hymn to the Mob*. (London, 1715) Preface.
[383] Adrian Randal & Andrew Charlesworth (Eds.) *Moral Economy and Popular Protest: Crowds, Conflict and Authority*. London: Macmillan, 2000. p. 8.

middle ranks often played in local protests. Third, to examine concerns related to a perceived deterioration in English masculinity and paternalist authority. This apparent decline in masculine influence was often linked to luxury spending, the gratification of unmanly appetites, foppish manners and the weakening of traditional patriarchal systems of governance. Many feared the implications this ostensible falling off in English manliness had for the defense of the realm, the governance of the state and the traditional male-dominated household.[384] Such concerns resonated with the middle ranks who often stood on the front lines when it came to maintaining the safety and integrity of the nation.

In their capacity as parish officials, the middle ranks had the ability to exert significant influence over food rioters by ensuring that public services were available to aid the deserving poor in times of need. Moreover, middling men often served as constables and in the militia, the forces most frequently called upon in times of unrest.[385] In these roles, middling agents often exerted considerable influence over local protests and popular conceptions of legitimacy. English society was increasingly aware of the growing importance of the middle people and many felt that middling men had to exert a robust, yet restrained, masculine presence in their public and private lives. However, determining who the middle people were was not a simple matter.

**Defining the Middle Rank in Early Eighteenth-Century England**

> [There are] a large number of the people without the sphere of the opulent man's influence, namely, that order of men which subsists between the very rich and the very rabble; those men who are possest of too large fortunes to submit to the neighbouring man in power, and

[384] Catherine Molineux "Hogarth's Fashionable Slaves: Moral Corruption in Eighteenth-Century London" *ELH* (72:2) (Summer, 2005) pp. 499-501. Stephen Gregg. *Defoe's Writings and Manliness.* Burlington: Ashgate, 2009. pp. 1-14. C. M. Owen. *The Female Crusoe: Hybridity, Trade and the Eighteenth-Century Individual*. New York: Rodopi, 2010. p. 55. Karen Harvey. *Reading Sex in the Eighteenth Century: Bodies and Gender in English Erotic Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. pp. 300-302.
[385] Joan Kent "The Rural Middling Sort in Early Modern England, circa 1640-1740: Some Economic, Political and Socio-Cultural Characteristics" *Rural History* (10:1) (April, 1999) *Passim*.

> yet are too poor to set up for tyranny themselves. In this middle order of mankind are generally to be found all the arts, wisdom, and virtues of society. This order alone is known to be the true preserver of freedom, and may be called the People.[386]

In his 1766 novel *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774) shrewdly summarized the growing importance of those who could be said to encompass the middling orders. Defining the parameters of this group proved more difficult. Writing in 1709, Daniel Defoe divided contemporary society into seven ranks. 1) The Great, who live profusely, 2) The Rich, who live plentifully, 3) The Middle Sort, who live well, 4) The Working Trades, who labour hard but feel no want, 5) The Country People, farmers, etc. who fare indifferently, 6) The Poor, that fare hard, 7) The Miserable, that really pinch and suffer want.[387] Life in early eighteenth-century England was often difficult, and unpredictable and many people would have had a real fear of falling into poverty. Defoe reckoned that a small family needed a collective income of about £20 a year to live frugally in London in the early 1700s, yet for many even this modest sum was out of reach. In the years preceding the Calico Crisis, the average rank and file weaving family would be lucky to make £20 a year.[388] Generally speaking, the middle people faired better. However, determining who the middling sorts were was difficult as this rank included a range of trades, professions, levels of education and interests.[389]

Exactly who constituted the English middling sorts at the dawn of the eighteenth century is a subject that continues to intrigue academia.[390] H. R. French has identified

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[386] Oliver Goldsmith. *The Vicar of Wakefield*. (London, 1766)
[387] Jack Lindsay. *The Monster City: Defoe's London, 1688-1730*. London: Granada, 1978. p. 128.
[388] J. M. Beattie. *Policy and Punishment in London, 1660-1750: Urban Crime and the Limits of Terror.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. p. 198.
[389] John Rule. *Albion's People: English Society, 1714-1815*. London: Longman, 1992. pp. 59-98. Lawrence Stone "Social Mobility in England, 1500-1700" *Past & Present* (33) (April, 1966) *Passim*.
[390] Douglas Hay & Nicholas Rogers. *Eighteenth-Century English Society: Shuttles and Swords*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. p. 23.

four clusters of occupations that came under the broad heading of middle rank. 1) Educated professionals (Doctors, Lawyers, Significant Merchants), 2) 'Clean' retail trades (Innkeepers, Large Shopkeepers, Wholesalers), 3)'Dirty' manual trades (Metal and Wood workers, Butchers and Tanners) and 4) Weavers, Tailors, Small Shopkeepers and Petty Retailers.[391] The professionals in the first group would have been readily associated with the middling condition. The tradesmen in the other groups would need to earn a certain income to be considered middle rank as such status was not necessarily linked with their occupations. Maxine Berg argues that middling status was tied to household earnings, normally between £40-£50 a year, and an obligation to contribute to the poor rate. By this criterion, somewhere between one fifth and two fifths of the population of the country could be considered middle rank by the mid-eighteenth century, with thirty percent of the inhabitants of some larger towns being rate payers.[392] Peter Earle takes this definition further in maintaining middling status was commonly understood to reflect a combination of factors including income, education, profession and social standing.

In the early 1700s the lower middle ranks might make between £25 - £40 a year, while somebody earning £50 a year would be in a position to retain a servant and enjoy a modestly comfortable life. An annual income of £100 would enable a family to establish a long lease on a house and furnish it in style, with money left over to provide for the futures of their children. The upper range of the middling sort appears to be £300 - £600 a year. This was at a time when a middling rank income of £50 could be four to five times

[391] H. R. French "The Search for the 'Middle People' in England" *The Historical Journal* (43:1) (March, 2000) pp. 283-284.
[392] Maxine Berg. *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. p. 208.

the yearly wage of a semi-skilled worker.[393] Though income was important in determining middle rank standing, decorum in conduct, association, training and profession were equally vital to being acknowledged as a person of middling status. Learned men, doctors, lawyers, dons, clergymen and the like, worked with their minds and not with their hands. A significant number thought of themselves as being above skilled tradesmen and prosperous merchants even if they had similar, or even higher, incomes.[394] These professionals often received a degree of recognition from the elite leaders in the community and enjoyed a kind of honourary 'gentleman' status.[395]

Many in early eighteenth century England were defined, and differentiated themselves, according to very fine hierarchical divisions, and those who had acquired a degree of social distinction were often very concerned with defending their status.[396] Professionals generally sought to associate themselves with the upper rank, and consequently were keenly aware of the value of honours and titles. Not a few made concerted efforts to restrict the use of rank designations while looking down on lower ranked social climbers who aspired to be recognized as gentleman themselves. The English clergyman and poet Clement Ellis (1633-1700) irritably commented on the proliferation of 'gentlemen' on the streets of London.

> Never was honest name more abused than this of *gentleman*; indeed it is to be feared that having been so long misapplied…[it will] from a title of honour degenerate into a term of greatest disgrace and infamy.[397]

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[393] Peter Earle. *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660-1730*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989. p. 14. Rule (1992) *Albion's People*. p. 124.
[394] John Smail "The Stansfields of Halifax: A Case Study of the Making of the Middle Class" *Albion* (24:1) (Spring, 1992) pp. 28-29. Smail claims formation of the 'middle class' identity occurred after 1750. Gregg (2009) *Defoe's Writings*. pp. 42-47.
[395] Rule (1992) *Albion's People.* p. 48.
[396] M. Dorothy George. *London Life*. London: Penguin, 1966. pp. 158-161. George Rudé. *Hanoverian London, 1715-1808*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1971. pp. 37-38.
[397] Clement Ellis. *The Gentile Sinner; or, England's Brave Gentleman*. (London, 1660) p. 10.

Status mattered intensely to the middling sorts and many actively sought to disassociate themselves from those they saw as being of lesser rank. Evidence of this behaviour was to be seen, at times, even in venues that were ostensibly Godly and egalitarian.[398]

In a study that encompassed multiple generations, the antiquarian Richard Gough (1634-1723) made detailed "Observations concerning the Seates…and the familyes to which they belong" in parish church of Myddle in the West Midlands of England. Gough was particularly interested in how these changed according to the fortunes of the parishioners, and recounted the struggles many families went through to protect their privileged pews. Proximity to the alter constituted a highly visible indicator of social status and such places were jealously guarded.[399] Conflicts over seating were frequent and a committee of church elders was often called upon to negotiate peaceful resolutions.[400] The middling peoples Gough portrays reflect a great diversity of attitudes, capacities and experiences.[401] However, they usually displayed a clear sense of their own worth and standing. This was particularly the case when it came to learned men.

Many well educated professionals of middling station considered themselves to be among the natural leaders in their communities and not a few held important positions within the parish such as officials, clergymen and militia officers.[402] They favoured clubs and associations composed of men of a similar background when it came to occupation, social status, and educational affiliations. The relationships many of these men forged at

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[398] Peter Borsay. *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1700*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989. pp. 226-232.
[399] Susan Amussen "Gender, Family and Social Order" in A. Fletcher & J. Stevenson (Eds.) *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. pp. 212-213.
[400] Richard Gough. *The History of Myddle*. (London, 1701) pp. 117-120.
[401] Craig Muldrew "Class and Credit: Social Identity, Wealth and the Life Course in Early Modern England" in J. Barry & H. French (Eds.) *Identity and Agency in England, 1500-1800*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. pp. 155-158.
[402] Woodruff Smith. *Consumption and the Making of Respectability, 1600-1800*. London: Routledge, 2002. pp. 29-30. Smail (1992) "The Stansfields of Halifax" pp. 28-30.

institutions like Oxford and Cambridge were a particularly important component in the social and business lives of numerous professionals.[403] Karen Harvey has gone so far as to assert that a classical education was, in fact, central to upper middle rank conceptions of manliness.[404] Advanced instruction in Latin, available at both Anglican and Dissenting universities, was commonly associated with men of education and privilege.[405] Elites in government and the church often placed great emphasis upon a classical learning and not infrequently used the absence of a top tier education as a justification for blocking ambitious parvenus from important administrative and clerical posts.[406] Even otherwise erudite men like Defoe could be made to feel lacking in such contexts.

Defoe was publicly berated for errors in his translations of Latin and French by the noted French scholar and writer Able Boyer (c.1667-1729). Though Defoe maintained "men may be scholars without Latin and Philosophers without Greek" such criticisms must have been hard to endure.[407] To be shown up as one of deficient education was a painful blow for Defoe, and likely for many others of the middle ranks.[408] On the other hand many middling men were increasingly unwilling to defer to the traditional power structures and the conventional social categories of the past.

In comparison with professional, classically educated men, the instruction many merchants and tradesmen received was generally practical and hands on, and completed

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[403] Rule (1992) *Albion's People.* p. 36.
[404] Karen Harvey "The History of Masculinity, circa 1650-1800" *Journal of British Studies* (44:2) (April, 2005) p. 58.
[405] Paula Backscheider. *Daniel Defoe: His Life*. Baltimore: John's Hopkins, 1989. p. 15. Lindsay (1978) *The Monster City*. pp. 3-4. Earle (1989) *The English Middle Class*. pp. 66-67.
[406] Lawrence Stone "Literacy and Education in England, 1640-1900" *Past & Present* (42) (1969) p. 75.
[407] Daniel Defoe. *The Complete English Tradesman*. (London, 1727)
[408] Backscheider (1989) *Daniel Defoe*. pp. 433-434.

outside of long-established universities.[409] Dissenters like Defoe were barred from many professions and prestigious Anglican educational institutions because of their faith.[410] Rather than endure a second class status, some middling men instead sought to redefine manliness, education and self worth in relation to the values and needs of their own communities. In *The Complete English Gentleman* (1728) Defoe undertook to separate true knowledge, virtuous manliness and honour from privileged birth, elite education and aristocratic titles. He correctly points out that many titled aristocrats were themselves not committed to education. Despite the many opportunities afforded them, Linda Colley estimates that in 1701 less than thirty five out of every hundred peers attended Oxford or Cambridge, and even fewer graduated.[411] In comparison, growing numbers middling peoples were voicing an appreciation of the value a practical education had for advancing a young man in the worlds of business and trade.

> The learning which is acquired at grammar schools is of little or no use to such as are set to ordinary trades, and consequently that time might have been better spent in attaining some useful knowledge…learning to write a good hand, arithmetic and other things of this nature.[412]

Increasingly, the middle ranks were gaining independence and self esteem through education, industry and moral public conduct.[413]

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[409] Susan Skedd "Women Teachers and the Expansion of Girls' Schooling in England, c. 1760-1820" in Hannah Baker & Elaine Chalus (Eds.) *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities*. New York: Harlow, 1997. p. 101. Margaret Hunt*. The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England, 1680-1780*. Berkley: University of California Press, 1996. p. 81. Stone (1969) "Literacy and Education in England" pp. 130-131.
[410] John Richetti. *The Cambridge Companion to Daniel Defoe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. pp. 3, 163. Basil Williams. *The Whig Supremacy, 1714-1760.* Oxford: Clarendon, 2004. p. 140.
[411] Linda Colley. *Britons: The Forging of a Nation, 1707-1837*. London: Yale University, 1992. p. 167. Daniel Defoe (1722) *The Complete English Gentleman*. *Passim.*
[412] Francis Brokesby. *Of Education with Respect to Grammar Schools and the Universities, to which is Annexed a Letter of Advice to a Young Gentleman*. (London, 1701)
[413] Harvey (2005) "History of Masculinity" p. 298.

Urban growth had the effect of concentrating merchants, skilled tradesmen and professionals into a comparatively small area, thereby enhancing their sense of identity and interdependence. Margaret Hunt argues that, in the early 1700s, there existed a widely held belief among the middle station that their families were somehow more virtuous, cordial and well-ordered than those of other ranks.[414] Most worked diligently to protect their hard won reputations by avoiding associations with persons of lesser or doubtful credit and character.[415] The middle rank had a strong stake in the future of their community, and were both willing and capable of fighting to defend their positions and possessions. Constables, parish officials, militia men and juries were commonly recruited from among the middling station because they could be generally relied upon to advance and protect propertied interests.[416] The job of establishing just what these interests were often fell to middle rank writers and publishers. Newspapers and other periodicals were vital in forming middling opinions, and the popular urban coffeehouses provided one of the main venues wherein these publications were read and debated.[417]

Coffeehouses, some decidedly Whig or Tory in their orientation, frequently served as important locations to conduct business, establish new commercial and social relationships, gather news and participate in political debates.[418] The dynamic atmosphere of such places appealed to middling sensibilities, and foreign travelers reported being

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[414] Hunt (1996) *Middling Sort*. p. 141.
[415] Keith Wrightson. *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern England*. London: Yale University Press, 2000. pp. 300-301. Robert Shoemaker. *Gender in English Society, 1650-1850: The Emergence of Separate Spheres?* London: Longman, 1998. pp. 276-279.
[416] Tim Hitchcock, Lee Davidson, Tim Keirn, & Robert Shoemaker (Eds.) *Stilling the Grumbling Hive: The Response to Social and Economic Problems in England, 1689-1750.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992. pp. XXVIII-XLI. Kent (1999) "The Rural Middling Sort" *Passim.*
[417] Jeremy Black. *The English Press in the Eighteenth Century*. London: Croom Helm, 1987. pp. 18-21, 39 67, 91, 96. Robert Shoemaker. *The London Mob: Violence and Disorder in Eighteenth-Century England.* London: Hambledon & London, 2004. pp. 242-245.
[418] Erin Mackie. *Market à la Mode: Fashion, Community and Gender in the Tattler and Speculator*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997. pp. 209, 217-219, 226. Lindsay (1978) *Monster City*. pp. 59-61. Smith (2002) *Consumption and the Making of Respectability.* pp. 140-161.

struck by the great number of coffeehouses to be found in London that catered principally to the needs and interests of the middle ranks.[419] The editors of the popular periodicals the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*, Sir Richard Steele (1672-1729) and Joseph Addison (1672-1719), were keenly aware of the middling demand for information on issues important to them. Addison was indeed proud to boast,

> I shall be ambitious to have it said of me that I have brought
> Philosophy out of Closets and Libraries, Schools and Colleges,
> To dwell in Clubs and Assemblies…and in Coffee-Houses.[420]

The great increase in newspapers, journals and pamphlet literature evident during this time catered mainly to the needs and concerns of this educated and upwardly mobile coffeehouse clientele.[421] Whatever side was going to prevail in the calico dispute would have to craft arguments which appealed to the aspirations and concerns of this market.[422] Beverly Lemire and Robert Shoemaker both note that the periodicals designed for middle rank coffeehouse patrons played a significant role in shaping popular attitudes and behaviour towards calico wearers.[423] The importance of this growing and influential market was clear to commercially-minded publishers.

Despite the fact that the number of families making over £40 a year still numbered at a little over ten percent of the population in the early 1700s, men of the middling condition often held and aspired to positions of respect and authority in society. For some, this process involved acquiring the skills, education and social connections necessary to ingratiate themselves with the upper ranks. For others it meant reforming

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[419] Béat Louis de Murlat. *Letters Describing the Character and Customs of the English and French Nations.* (London, 1726) pp. 82-83.
[420] Joseph Addison. *Spectator* 10, (London, 1711)
[421] Rudé (1971) *Hanoverian London*. pp. 77-79. Earle (1989) *The English Middle Class*. p. 10.
[422] Harvey (2005) "History of Masculinity" p. 302.
[423] Beverly Lemire (Ed.) *The British Cotton Trade, 1660-1815.* (Vol. II) "International Trade and the Politics of Consumption, 1690s-1730" London: Pickering & Chatto, 2010. pp. 18-19. Shoemaker (2004) *The London Mob*. pp. 242-245.

popular definitions of respectability and self-worth to suit their own needs. Whereas some among the landed aristocracy disdained associations with trade, influential writers like Defoe insisted that the operation of businesses was honourable and useful to society and should be encouraged. [424] Many middle rank men were gaining a sense of their own worth and importance and they were increasingly demanded a say in the governance of the nation and in their local communities. Consequently, middling influence was being felt at all levels of society, though one of its most visible effects was upon the day to day lives of working people.[425] Acting as parish and government agents, law enforcement officials and poor law administrators enabled such men to assert authority over the lives of the lower ranks in significant ways.[426] However, it is important to recall that people of all degrees lived in a nation where traditions and conventional religious expectations continued to exert a significant influence. This was especially the case when it came to working peoples who were often forced to rely on charity and parish poor relief.

**Traditions of Charity and the Importance of Christianity**

> The begging, as now practic'd, is a scandal upon our Charity…How can it be possible that Man or Woman, who being sound in Body and Mind…should be so base, so meanly spirited, as to beg Alms for God -sake. Truly the scandal lies on our Charity; the People have such a Notion in England of being pitiful and charitable, that they encourage Vagrants, and by mistaken Zeal do more harm than good.[427]

Defoe's views on contemporary charitable practices reflect the plurality of opinion which often accompanied public debate on the proper means of providing for the poor. Though there existed no unanimity of thought on how charity should be dispersed,

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[424] Daniel Defoe. *The Complete English Tradesman*. (London, 1727)
[425] Beattie (2001) *Policy and Punishment.* Chapter 3 "Constables and other Officers." Hay & Rogers (1997) *Shuttles and Swords*. pp. 19-20.
[426] Lorna Weatherill. *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660-1750*. London: Routledge, 1988. pp. 13-14. French (2000) "The Search for the Middle People in England" p. 293.
[427] Daniel Defoe. *Giving Alms No Charity*. (London, 1704) p. 12.

in England it was considered seemly that men of wealth and elite rank should give generously to the church and the poor in times of dearth, both as a Christian duty and as a means of justifying their social position within the community.[428] In "The Moral Economy" Thompson identified Christian charity as constituting the animating spirit behind the publication of the *Book of Orders* (1630), a document issued to county justices by the royal court which set forth the manner in which the deserving poor should be aided by the state.[429] Nevertheless, even by the early 1700s, conventional understandings of religious duty and traditional social obligation were undergoing noticeable changes.

Thompson identified liberal donations to charity in times of dearth as constituting, what were widely seen as, one of the core public responsibilities of the patrician class.[430] However, *noblesse oblige* was increasingly understood by elites to constitute a traditional ethical obligation and not a legal duty.[431] This position was neatly summed up in the case of *Steel vs. Houghton et Uxor* (1788) in the Court of Common Pleas when the question of gleaning rights for the parish poor were presented as a legal vs. a customary right.[432] In ruling that gleaning was not a legal right, the court observed that those who cut the fields were inclined by self-interest to leave more grain on the ground for their poor relations to find than would have otherwise been the case. Custom, in this instance, was and inducement to the crime of fraud. In his decision, the presiding justice weighed in on the side of property rights, and the rational allocation of charity.

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[428] Joel Rosenthal. *The Purchase of Paradise*. London: Routledge, 1972. p. 8.
[429] Paul Slack "Books of Orders: The Making of English Society, 1577-1631" *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (30) (1980) *Passim*. E. P. Thompson "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century" *Past & Present* (50) (February, 1971) p. 132.
[430] E. P. Thompson "Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture" *Journal of Social History* (7:4) (1974) p. 390.
[431] Tim Hitchcock "Begging on the Streets of Eighteenth-Century London" *Journal of British Studies* (44) (July, 2005) pp. 488, 492, 497. John Bohstedt. *The Politics of Provisions: Food Riots, Moral Economy and Market Transition in England, c. 1550-1850.* Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010. p. 70.
[432] Gregory Durston. *Crime and Justice in Early Modern England, 1550-1750*. Chichester, West Sussex: Barry Rose Law Publishers, Ltd., 2004. p. 185.

> The law of Moses is not obligatory upon us. [Though] it is agreeable to Christian charity and common humanity that the rich should provide for the indigent poor, [the mode of provision] must be of positive institution.[433]

Increasingly, charity was not a thing to be doled out on a whim, it was to be carefully rationed and apportioned by a regular administrative apparatus so as to induce the poor to useful industry, and correct moral and public conduct according to their station in life.

Margaret Hunt makes the case that in the minds of the upper and middling ranks, even in the early eighteenth century, there existed a clear sense that the actions and minds of the poor had to be positively influenced for the common good.[434] Predominantly middle rank organizations such as the Society for the Promoting Christian Knowledge were indicative of this shift in thinking.[435] Keith Wrightson argues that parishes were interested in regularizing poor relief systems by way of the establishment of workhouses, where the labour and behaviour of the recipients of assistance could be more readily observed and controlled.[436] Such institutions represented innovative approaches to caring for the poor and they appealed to the common sense mindset of the educated middling sort who were increasingly seeking progressive solutions to old social problems.

Influential members of the middle ranks argued for a stable and ordered society predicated upon reason, moral responsibility and good governance.[437] In publications from the period, middling level pamphleteers earnestly entreated magistrates and church officials to assist the Societies for the Reformation of Manners in such reform

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[433] E. P. Thompson. *Customs in Common*. London: Merlin Press Ltd., 1991. pp. 139-141.
[434] Hunt (1996) *Middling Sort*. pp. 101-111.
[435] Craig Rose "Seminary's of Faction and Rebellion: Jacobites, Whigs and the London Charity Schools, 1716-1724" *Historical Journal* (34:4) (December, 1991) *Passim.*
[436] Wrightson (2000) *Earthly Necessities*. pp. 322-325.
[437] Andrew Sneddon "Bishop Francis Hutchinson (1660-1739): A Case Study in the Eighteenth-Century Culture of Improvement" *Irish Historical Studies* (35:139) (May, 2007) pp. 293-294.

movements.[438] Observing what they saw as systemic social and administrative problems going unaddressed, well-educated and socially conscious advocates from the middling ranks were ever more convinced of their right and duty to influence the manner in which their nation dealt with the perennial problem of the poor.[439]

Increasingly, formal taxpayer funded systems of poor relief represented the principal means by which ordinary people could hope to mitigate the misfortunes of the world. Parish administered relief systems had the advantage of being comparatively well funded. Moreover, unlike private charities, they were accessible all year, and such aid was plainly needed. Between 1685 and 1701 the national poor rate had increased significantly from £665,000 to £900,000, this despite the general economic prosperity of the country. This was a pressing concern as rising poor rates were more and more being felt by the growing ranks of middle level urban property holders.[440]

Urban centers had the effect of concentrating many low income earners into a relatively small area. As a result, increases in food prices were felt acutely in cities and towns, though the incidence of subsistence riots tells us that these changes were also causing suffering in rural areas.[441] The shipping of grains out of distressed regions was one of the most common occasions for protest, and a major concern for the middle ranks.[442] Thompson himself noted that food riots were most frequently concerned with the price of grain and bread, and rising wheat prices were particularly felt in the urbanized communities favored by the commercially minded middle ranks. In increasing

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[438] *The Occasional Paper*. (Vol. II, No. X) "An Address to the Clergy" (London, 1716) Introduction.
[439] Daniel Defoe. *Giving Alms no Charity*. (London, 1704)
[440] Berg (2005) *Luxury and Pleasure*. p. 208.
[441] Sara Birtles "Common Land, Poor Relief and Enclosure: The Use of Manorial Resources in Fulfilling Parish Obligations, 1601-1834" *Past & Present* (165) (November, 1999), pp. 74-106. *Passim.*
[442] John Stevenson. *Popular Disturbances in England, 1700-1832*. London: Longman, 1991. pp. 126-127.

numbers, country folk were being forced by enclosures to leave rural areas in such of urban employment. Many of these rustic peoples lacked the job skills needed in towns and few were literate. Consequently, many were forced to turn to the community for aid.

The English system of poor relief relied primarily upon taxes on land and other property which those among the lower middle ranks could ill afford to pay.[443] As such demands increased, many were inclined to grumble at the manner in which the ruling elites were handling the problems of high food prices, crime, unemployment and the apparent prevalence of sturdy beggars on the rates.[444] A lengthy proposal drafted in 1720 for "Relieving, Reforming and Employing the Poor" suggests something of the extent to which poor rate payers were aware of deficiencies and irregularities within the system of parish aid. In this document, the author optimistically proposes reforms so that,

> We may Comfortably *Maintain* all th' *Impotent* Poor, Judiciously *Employ* all the *Capable* poor, Properly Reform the *Profligate* Poor; and Gradually *sink*, and in time, totally *discharge* all our *Poor-rates*.[445]

The problem with such schemes was that they were easily undermined by artificial food shortages which put the cost of basic provisions beyond the reach of the working poor.

Officials who allowed grain shipments out of economically marginal areas effectively increased the price of local bread supplies, a cost that was passed on to the middle ranks by way of higher food prices and rising poor rates. Given such deficiencies in leadership, it is not surprising that some middling tax payers resented being forced to

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[443] Peter Solar "Poor Relief and English Economic Development before the Industrial Revolution" *The Economic History Review* (48:1) (February, 1985). p. 5.
[444] Anonymous. *Proposals for Establishing a Charitable Fund in the City of London*. (London, 1706), John Cary. *An Essay Towards Regulating the Trade, and Employing the Poor of the Kingdom*. Second Edition. (London, 1719). Daniel Defoe. *Giving Alms no Charity*. (London, 1704). Kent (1999) "The Rural Middling Sort" pp. 30-38.
[445] Laurence Braddon. *A Humble Proposal for Relieving, Reforming and Employing the Poor*. (London, 1720) Introduction.

contribute to the poor rates and tried to avoid them when possible.[446] Some justified these actions on the basis that their payments were being badly administered.[447]

> 'Tis well known that vast Sums are yearly collected, for the Relief of the Poor…yet the Money distributed falls far short of answering the Ends for which it is gather'd and our Streets still swarm with Beggars."[448]

Middling citizens were not interested in subsidizing the ill-considered trade practices of others, and such attitudes often complicated the already convoluted and unenviable task of administering poor relief.[449] A government report, tabled in 1715, for the districts of London and Westminster, suggests poor rate payments were often in arrears, despite the significant numbers of claims being made on the parish.[450] Steven King makes the case that such difficulties often accounted for the uneven regional practices concerning the distribution of poor relief.[451] For some of the landed gentry, the problems of rising poor rates were compounded by the falloff in their rents due to declining wool prices.

Many landowners who had taken up sheep farming and wool production when the demand for wool was high now found their incomes much reduced. Anti-calico writers were well aware of this fact. Some made conscious and conspicuous attempts to win over the support of the land-owning gentry by reminding them, in quaint verses, that their true interests consisted in the interconnected nature of the traditional English wool trade.

> Whilst they promote what Indians make
> The employ they from the English take

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[446] Kent (1999) "The Rural Middling Sort" pp. 31-37.
[447] Anonymous. *The Report of the Committee Appointed to Inspect the Poors Rates and the Scavengers Rates within the Cities of London and Westminster, and Weekly Bills of Mortality*. (London, 1715)
[448] Anonymous. *The Laws Concerning the Poor: or, A Complete Treatise of the Common and Statue Law Relating to the Relief, Settlement, Punishment &c. of the Poor*. (London, 1720) Preface.
[449] Rudé (1971) *Hanoverian London*. pp. 138-139.
[450] House of Commons. *Report of the Committee Appointed to Inspect the Poor Rates*. (London, 1715) pp. 417-420. Anonymous. *The Laws Concerning the Poor; or, A Complete Treatise of the Common and Statute Law Relating to the Relief, Settlement, Punishment and &c. of the Poor*. (London, 1720)
[451] Steve King "Reconstructing Lives: The Poor, the Poor Law in Calverley, 1650-1820" *Social History* (22:2) (October, 1997) *Passim*.

> Then how shall tenants pay their rent
> When trade and coin to Indian Sent?
> How shall folks live and taxes pay
> When poor want work and go away?[452]

Parakunnel Thomas argues that these wool producers played an important role in influencing the decision making processes of parliament, as landed interests petitioned their friends and relatives in Westminster for a swift and favourable resolution of the calico issue.[453] Some campaigners even went so far as to assert that it was the duty of the nation to protect the interests of the great landowners, as they were the principal employers, tax payers and revenue generators for the country.[454] The degree to which such arguments resonated with the general public, let alone middling level rate payers, is unclear but common sense suggests that such notions would not have been favourably received. Appeals to the national interest, on the other hand, tended to be more effective.

The nineteenth-century MP and historian Sir Edward Baines made the case that for many woollen manufacture in England held something of a magical quality.

> For centuries [the English wool industry] was regarded with almost a superstitious veneration, as a kind of palladium of national prosperity, and which was incomparably the most extensive branch of manufactures till the close of the eighteenth century.[455]

Many English people were aware of the importance the wool industry to the nation. However, for most among the middling sort their interests were largely confined to their own immediate well-being. Widespread suffering and unemployment among the common people could lead to anger which had the potential to seriously disrupt their lives and

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[452] Anonymous. *England's Almanac*. (London, 1700)
[453] P. J. Thomas. *Mercantilism and the East India Trade*. London: Frank Cass, 1963. pp. 56-60.
[454] Ephraim Lipson. *The History of the Woollen and Worsted Industries*. London: Frank Cass & Company Limited, 1965. p. 28.
[455] Edward Baines. *The History of the Cotton Manufacture in Great Britain*. London: H. Fisher, R. Fisher, & P. Jackson. 1835. p. 77.

threaten their property. The costs of keeping the peace were potentially very high, both personally and financially, for the middling men who often served as officers in the local militia, the first significant line of defense for the region during times of unrest.

**The Important Role the Middle Ranks Played in Maintaining Law and Order**

Elite and middling tolerance for the actions of ordinary protesters was not without limits and the likelihood that authorities would resort to violence was a significant consideration for protesters. Obviously, the threat of force would not have served as a credible deterrent to riotous actions if it were not successfully deployed from time to time, and most ordinary people would have been well aware of the range of sanctions which could be brought against them.[456] The deterrent value of organized state interventions in protest actions, and exemplary punishments which came in their wake were well known. However, it should also be noted that a wide range of sanctions, and negotiation scenarios, were often possible when it came to protests as judicious local authorities were frequently called upon interpret and enforce their sovereign's laws.

England in the eighteenth century had no regular police force.[457] The nobles and gentry remembered well the tyranny of Oliver Cromwell's regime and how close they had come to Catholic domination under James II. French absolutism, with its spies and secret police, filled them with horror, and they were determined to avoid any such centralized state authority.[458] Even attempts by parliament to impose standard practices across the nation, as in the case of uniform weights and measures, were regarded with

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[456] Thompson (1971) "Moral Economy" p. 120.
[457] Walter Shelton "The Role of Local Authorities in the Provincial Hunger Riots of 1766" *Albion* (5:1) (Spring, 1973) pp. 56, 65. Frank McLynn. *Crime and Punishment in Eighteenth-Century England* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.pp. XII-XIV. Beattie (2001) *Policy and Punishment.* pp. 77-78.
[458] Douglas Hay, Peter Linebaugh, John Rule, E. P. Thompson, & Carl Winslow. *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England*. New York: Pantheon, 1975. p. 18.

suspicion and widely resisted with local elites and middling officials leading the charge against this affront to local traditions.[459] The ordinary Englishman's vaunted love of liberty, and fears of oppressive central authority, were widely commented upon at the time by European travelers.[460] The implications this had for regional administration meant that decentralized systems of governance remained highly relevant in the early eighteenth-century England. For these reasons the upper and middle ranks often acted as significant figures in the community by dispensing justice and enforcing government regulations with a remarkable degree of latitude when compared with aristocrats under the centralized rule of the French king Louis XIV.[461]

Linda Colley argues that the British came to define themselves as a nation distinct from the French during the course of the eighteenth century.[462] The War of Spanish Succession, a clear victory over the French by any reckoning, had done much to reaffirm the validity of British methods and institutions in the minds of the people.[463] Victory brought the country significant commercial and colonial gains and the development of a strong British navy meant that the nation was now in a position to play a much greater role in world affairs and expanding global commerce.[464] French expansion in Europe had been checked by the terms of the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht. Moreover, they were forced to renounce their backing of the Jacobite claimant and recognize the Hanoverian succession. However, constructing a national philosophy, and organizational systems of the country, in opposition to those of France, presented England with unique problems which had

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[459] Randall (1996) *Market, Culture*. p. 16.
[460] Béat Louis de Murlat. *Letters Describing the Character and Customs of the English and French Nations.* (London, 1726) Letter I.
[461] Thompson (1991) *Customs in Common*. p. 48.
[462] Colley (1992) *Britons*. Introduction.
[463] Mark Kishlansky. *A Monarchy Transformed: Britain 1603-1714*. London: Penguin, 1996. pp. 321-335. Gregg (2009) *Defoe's Writings*. pp. 32-33.
[464] Lindsay (1978) *Monster City.* pp. 185-186. Rule (1992) *The Vital Century.* pp. 280-281.

important implications for Thompson's moral economy, and the paternalist systems of governance upon which it depended. In the absence of a regular police force, regional authorities had three options for maintaining law and order: constables, the militia and professional soldiers. Constables were usually the first to be called upon in times of trouble, though their numbers and resources were limited.

Untrained constables, known as 'the watch or trained bands' in some urban areas where they performed a regular evening patrol, were usually recruited from among the tax payers of the district to serve a compulsory term as unpaid law enforcement officials.[465] Acting under the direction of magistrates, or at the instigation of the victims of crime, these men performed difficult and, at times, dangerous tasks. If they could afford it, those selected normally hired another to take their place.[466] Joan Kent notes that for this reason the position of constable was most commonly held by those rate payers unable to afford to employ a substitute, and the sometimes disreputable replacements hired by the better off. This is not to say that those who were forced to take on this undesirable position were necessarily always negligent in their duties.[467] However, the temporary and unappealing nature of the position of constable meant that most placeholders had little real incentive to pursue their duties with vigor. Consequently, constables were often depicted in the popular culture of the day as either corrupt or, as in the case of William Shakespeare's Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing*, comically

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[465] Tim Hitchcock & Robert Shoemaker. *Tales from the Hanging Court*. London: Hodder, 2006. p. 1. Durston (2004) *Crime and Justice in Early Modern England.* pp. 258-259.
[466] Robert Shoemaker "The Decline of Public Insult in London, 1660-1800" *Past & Present* (169) (November, 2000) p. 128.
[467] Joan Kent "The Village Constable, 1580-1642: The Nature and Dilemmas of the Office" *Journal of British Studies* (20:2) (Spring, 1981). pp. 26-28. Randall (2006) *Riotous Assemblies*. pp. 35-39. Mclynn (1991) *Crime in England*. pp. 18-19.

incompetent.[468] While there undoubtedly was some truth in such representations, evidence supports the conclusion that most constables were reasonably diligent most of the time, with some taking their duties very seriously despite the risks involved.[469]

It must be recalled that constables dealt not only with the transgressions of the common folk. Some members of the gentry and the aristocracy were notorious for their unlawful behaviour and even those reckoned among the highest in the land could be taken up by the law and laid low by the courts. Laurence Shirley, 4th Earl Ferrers, a sitting member of the House of Lords, was publicly executed at Tyburn on the 5th of May 1760 for killing his land steward in a fit of rage.[470] Though it was said his lordship was hanged with a silken rope and given a fine funeral, the execution of a man of such high status did a great deal to perpetuate the idea of British equality before the courts when it came to murder. As one eighteenth-century justice noted "the hanging [of] one rogue in *ruffles* was of more public benefit than hanging a hundred in [clogs]." [471] However, most people knew that old corruption would normally be on hand to see that the terror and majesty of the law did not fall too heavily upon the privileged.[472] Given such considerations, only a constable of considerable courage and conviction would normally to attempt to bring a member of the nobility or even the gentry before the courts.

On one remarkable occasion in March 1709, two London constables found themselves on trial for unlawfully arresting and imprisoning an Earl, a Baronet and

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[468] J. A. Sharpe. *Crime in Early Modern England, 1550-1750*. London: Longman, 1999. pp. 48-49.
[469] Gwenda Morgan & Peter Rushton. *Rouges, Thieves and the Rule of Law: The Problem of Law Enforcement in North-East England, 1718-1800*. London: UCL Press, 1998. pp. 27-30. Kent (1999) "The Rural Middling Sort" pp. 24-28. Durston (2004) *Crime and Justice in Early Modern England.* pp. 59-60.
[470] Sharpe (1999) *Crime in Early Modern England*. p. 138.
[471] E. Wilson. *Hints to the Public and the Legislature, on the Prevalence of Vice, and on the Dangerous Effects of Sedition.* (London, 1811) p. 102.
[472] Anthony Simpson "Popular Perceptions of Rape as a Capital Crime in Eighteenth-Century England: The Trial of Francis Chartis in the Old Bailey, February 1720" *Law and History Review* (22:1) (Spring, 2005) *Passim*. Durston (2004) *Crime and Justice in Early Modern England, 1550-1750*. pp. 254-255.

several other gentlemen on charges of drunk and disorderly conduct.[473] The outcome of the trial strongly suggests that all involved knew that the arresting officers had acted appropriately, and that what was really required was a face saving compromise. Ultimately, the court permitted the constables to publicly apologize for their behaviour and the gentlemen in question graciously agreed to let the matter drop. If middle rank constables were to be encouraged to do their duty, such accommodations were occasionally required. The primary impediment to the efficient performance of the constabulary was normally not a lack of will. Rather it was a lack of manpower, resources and the contrary force of the popular consensus.[474]

Constables were often effectively unarmed, bearing only a staff or pike as a symbol of their office.[475] Though their ranks could be augmented in times of emergency, constables were normally few in number, and those who attempted to impose unpopular laws in defiance of community standards routinely risked ostracism, violence and even death.[476] In addition to their policing duties, constables were required to perform other unpopular tasks such as collecting taxes, enforcing local bylaws and participating in the balloting process by which local men were selected by lot to serve a term in the militia.[477] Added to the dangers inherent in the office, there was the problem of imposters pretending to be law enforcement officials who extorted bribes or other favours from gullible victims in return for not arresting them on real or imagined charges.[478] The fluid

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[473] *Post-Boy*. 5-8 March 1709.
[474] J. M. Beattie "Patterns of Crime in England, 1660-1800" *Past & Present* (62) (1974). p. 62.
[475] Daniel Statt "The Case of the Mohocks: Rake Violence in Augustan London" *Social History* (20:2) (May, 1995) p. 192. Randall (2006) *Riotous Assemblies.* p. 35.
[476] Beattie (2001) *Policing and Punishment.* Chapter 3 "Constables and Other Officers."
[477] Gregory Durstan. *Crime and Justice in Early Modern England, 1500-1750*. Chichester, West Sussex. Barry Rose Law Publishers Ltd., 2004. pp. 244-247. Stevenson (1991) *Popular Disturbances*. p. 46.
[478] Jennine Hurl-Eamon "Westminster Impostors: Impersonating Law Enforcement in Early Eighteenth-Century London" *Eighteenth-Century Studies* (38:3) (Spring, 2005) *Passim*.

nature of the office of constable, where a man might be a constable one week and not the next, the absence of identifying uniforms or badges of office, and the lack of arms and manpower limitations often times served to limit the authority of the constable.

In comparison with the local constable, the militia had the advantage of numbers, arms and a degree of training. This often made them the most practical choice for officials dealing with anything approaching large scale regional unrest and a great deal of stock was necessarily put into the ability of the militia to maintain law and order.[479]

> The Militia of England is the natural Strength, and in its Original Constitution the great standing Army, and the Safeguard of the Nation in Case of Insurrection, or Rebellion at home, or Invasion from abroad, and is happily distinguished from the other common Forces, that it is not the Nature of the Militia as such, to be harassed or exposed to any foreign Dangers, but to keep and defend the Kings Peace at Home.[480]

Contemporary observers extolled the virtues of the militia system and enlistment rates suggest that many shared in this perspective. Figures for 1690 indicate that the number of militia in England came to over 92,000 men, of whom 6,000 served as mounted troops. In London alone, 9,000 men were listed as militia (known in the city as 'trained bands') with a reserve force of auxiliary members amounting to 6,000 men.[481] The numbers of men listed as available to serve in the militia gives some idea of the degree to which authorities relied on such forces. However, the use of professional soldiers to suppress rioters was not unknown in England, and in some cases it was the preferred option.

From the perspective of local authorities, regular troops had a number of advantages over militia forces. Professional soldiers were better trained than the militia,

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[479] J. R. Western. *The English Militia in the Eighteenth Century*. London: Routledge, 1965. Tony Hayter. *The Army and the Crowd in Mid-Georgian England*. London, 1978. pp. 20-21.
[480] John Hardisty. *The Militia Law.* (London, 1718) Introduction.
[481] Max Beloff. *Public Order and Popular Disturbances: 1660-1714*. London: Frank Cass and Company Limited, 1963. pp. 148-150.

and often displayed a higher order of discipline when deployed against protesters. Moreover, as these troops usually did not have a stake in local affairs, they were less likely to disobey lawful orders due to community pressure.[482] Nevertheless, the problems associated with using such forces were well known to municipal and parish officials. Many military men regarded suppressing civilian disorders as beneath their professional dignity and often displayed little enthusiasm for undertaking such work.[483] What is more, even when ordered to move at speed, soldiers could take days to arrive and by that point the rioters had frequently done their worst and departed.[484] Added to this, once summoned, troops often had to be fed and housed. For practical reasons, this meant lodging them in venues large enough to accommodate extra people such as public buildings owned by the middling sort, inns, livery stables and the like. Though by law those "who do not suffer tippling in their houses" were to be exempt from this type action, regulations when it came to billeting often proved to be remarkably elastic.[485]

The Disbanding Act of 1679 (19 Car. II. c. 1) had made billeting soldiers upon citizens illegal. Nevertheless, necessity appears to have frequently triumphed over law, and troops were occasionally forced to stay in private residences, when public houses were unavailable or over full. Though legislation (12 Anne c. 13) did limit the number of days soldiers could be billeted to six, the practice remained highly unpopular.[486] Out of practical necessity, this burden often fell disproportionally on the middle ranks as the working poor often had little room to accommodate extra persons. Middling home and

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[482] Andy Wood. Riot, Rebellion and Popular Politics in Early Modern England. London: Palgrave, 2002. p. 39.
[483] Mclynn (1991) *Crime in England*. p. 18.
[484] Thompson (1991) *Customs in Common*. pp. 156-158.
[485] George (1966) *London Life in the Eighteenth Century*. p. 43.
[486] Beloff (1963) *Public Order*. pp. 101-114.

business owners were normally compensated for feeding and housing troops, at the rate of 4-8 pence per day for each soldier depending on the area. However, the trouble associated with providing for these forces was seen by many as exceeding the benefits and riots against the billeting of troops were not unknown.[487] Thompson notes that petitions calling for troops to quell unrest were often followed, within a few weeks, by petitions to have the same soldiers removed when things quieted down.[488] This is hardly surprising as such forces were notorious for their rowdy behaviour when off duty.

Military records from the time indicate a high rate of misbehaviour among ordinary troops despite the imposition of occasionally draconian punishments. Drunken behaviour was at the root of most discipline issues during this period but few meaningful efforts were made to curtail military alcohol consumption.[489] Not all members of his majesty's army were volunteers. Though the army was not technically allowed to press gang men in the naval fashion, various unscrupulous tricks were employed by recruiting sergeants, including the use of strong drink, to oblige potential recruits to take the "King's Shilling."[490] Others, usually convicts and debtors, were released from prison on sole condition that they join the army.[491] Most soldiers were kept in their place by the lash and the terror of the noose. They were understandingly bitter and resentful, and frequently turned to drink to relieve their frustrations while their officers, usually heavy drinkers themselves, turned a blind eye to such practices. In the absence of a widespread

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[487] Williams (2004) *Whig Supremacy*. pp. 214-215.
[488] Thompson (1971) "Moral Economy" p. 121.
[489] Andy Wood. *The Politics of Social Conflict*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. pp. 308-311. G. Steppler "British Military Law, Discipline, and the Conduct of Regimental Courts Martial in the late Eighteenth Century" *English Historical Review* (102:405) (October, 1987) *Passim*. Paul Kooperman. "The Cheapest Pay: Alcohol Abuse in the Eighteenth- Century British Army" *Journal of Military History* (60:3) (July, 1996) pp. 445-446.
[490] Stevenson (1991) *Popular Disturbances*. p. 49. Beloff (1963) *Public Order*. pp. 114-117.
[491] Williams (2004) *Whig Supremacy*. pp. 220-221.

and credible threat to important persons and property, it was often difficult for authorities to justify their use and expense of the King's soldiery.[492] For these reasons, local militia units were the forces usually called upon to deal with rioters.

Militia forces did have recognized advantages over regular army soldiers when it came to dealing with local problems. As they lived in the district, militia units could be, at least in theory, assembled quickly. What is more, the fact that local militias were often largely made up of middling men of some position within the community meant that local needs and sensibilities were seen to be represented. For these reasons, parish militia units were the principal and preferable means of maintaining large scale public order in the early eighteenth century.[493] However, it must be stressed that most militia units were amateurish affairs.[494] Paying militia men, and ensuring they were property trained and equipped, was an expensive undertaking that most communities could not afford. Moreover, infrequent musters and a lack of qualified officers meant that many militia units had often little sense of *esprit de corps*. In most cases, local authorities were well advised not to rely overmuch on the efficiency and loyalty of such troops.

It was not without reason that many observers of the day considered militia forces to be of limited value. The dramatist Thomas Baker (c.1680-1749) openly mocked militia officers, in his popular play *Tunbridge-Walks; or, the Yeoman of Kent,* as men who were over-proud of their martial pretensions and affected titles,

> Taylors, Shoemakers, and Barbers may serve for Militia
> Officers since you only fight Mock-battles, and represent
> what a Captain shou'd be.[495]

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[492] Anonymous. *An Essay for Regulating and Making More Useful the Militia*. (London, 1701) *Passim*.
[493] Beloff (1963) *Public Order*. p. 153.
[494] Stephen Conway "War and National Identity in the Mid Eighteenth-Century British Isles" *English Historical Review* (116:468) (September, 2001). pp. 865-866.
[495] Thomas Baker. *Tunbridge-Walks; or, the Yeoman of Kent*. (London, 1703) p. 62.

Another contemporary observer went so far as to maintain that such militiamen were "the jest of the soldiery of England."[496] Writing in 1762, William Thomas, a school master from south-west Wales, lamented that the local militia was all too often "a shame to the shire."[497] Such failures in discipline were largely attributable to failures in leadership.

For the most part, militia officers had little in the way of military education. Those who took their responsibilities seriously could obtain a copy of one of several manuals available to instruct militia officers in military terms and tactics.[498] Most were not so diligent. Not a few had obtained their rank as a consequence of their financial and social standing in the parish and they were not keen to put themselves in jeopardy by becoming unpopular with the men under their command, or with the rioters they faced. Indeed, some appear to have been drawn to militia commands principally as a means of obtaining the prestige title of 'captain' while avoiding the very real dangers associated with service in the army and navy.[499] Moreover, leaders in the militia were not on duty all the time. Unlike professional soldiers who were often called away to serve in regions far from home, militia captains remained in their communities and were at liberty to manage their lands and businesses, issues which often took precedence over their responsibilities to the men under their command. Given these conditions, it is hardly surprising that the capacities of militia officers were often not held in high regard by their troops.

Rank and file militiamen resented being called up for training at the best of times. Understandably, they disliked being drilled by amateur officers and some refused to

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[496] Anonymous. *An Essay for Regulating the Militia*. (London, 1701) Introduction.
[497] *The Diary of William Thomas of Michaelston-super-Ely, near St. Fagan's Glamorgan, 1763-1795.* R. T. W. Denning (Ed.) Cardiff, 1995. p. 48.
[498] William Breton. *Militia Discipline*. (London, 1717)
[499] Hannah Smith. "Politics, Patriotism and Gender: The Standing Army Debate on the English Stage, circa 1689-1720" *Journal of British Studies* (50:1) (January, 2011) pp. 59-60.

attend the annual militia musters. Often times these recusants had to be rounded up by force and it often happened that this process took so much time that the muster was over before the men could be assembled.[500] As may be expected, these militiamen often had little enthusiasm for putting down civil disturbances and frequently displayed a troubling lack of professionalism when it came to dealing with protesters. Many lower rank militia members were not volunteers.[501] Normally they were selected by ballot to serve in the local militia and they often resented being called away from their homes and occupations to deal with protesters. This was particularly the case when the community displayed a strong sympathy for the rioters, and a disdain for the activities of intruding grain merchants and rapacious and irresponsible local landowners and employers.[502]

Risings occurred in the tin mining regions of Cornwall in 1690 when corporate greed and low tin prices led to widespread suffering and unemployment. In this instance the militia proved unwilling to suppress disorder and professional soldiers had to be called upon.[503] Given such behaviour, it is not surprising that local authorities often had cause to complain about the lack of professionalism displayed by militias.[504] Thompson was undoubtedly correct when he emphasized the extent to which militias were willing to countenance protest actions which reflected, in their methods and ends, normative community standards and expectations.[505] Ultimately, militia men had to live in the parishes they served. Therefore, many officers and men endeavored to make the interests of their friends, family and district their first priority.

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[500] John Miller "The Militia and the Army in the Reign of James II" *The Historical Journal* (16:4) (December, 1973) pp. 659-660.
[501] Conway (2002) "War and Identity" p. 865. Stevenson (1991) *Popular Disturbances.* p. 46.
[502] Thompson (1971) "Moral Economy" p. 121.
[503] Beloff (1963) *Public Order*. p. 89.
[504] William Breton. *Militia Discipline* (London, 1718). An Officer of the Army. *An Essay for Regulating and Making More Useful the Militia of this Kingdom*. (London, 1715)
[505] Thompson (1971) "Moral Economy" pp. 112, 128.

Respect for local sensibilities, fear of reprisals and the fact that militiamen often spent little time functioning as a trained unit frequently undermined the effectiveness of such groups.[506] At those times when militia units were persuaded, or forced, to engage with rioters, foot dragging, half-hearted efforts to apprehend offenders and the deliberate misinterpretation of orders meant that protesters not infrequently escaped identification and arrest. During riots in London in June of 1715 constables and the trained bands made little effort to suppress anti-Whig rioting and additional troops had to be brought in to quell the unrest.[507] However, given the legal conditions under which militiamen and their officers were expected to operate, a certain degree of hesitation is understandable.

Militia officers who conspicuously failed to perform their duty by refusing to issue warrants, report for duty, or who allowed prisoners to escape, could be charged with sedition. However, authorities also appear to have had a good idea of the difficulties they faced in the performance of their duties.[508] Rank and file militia men often openly displayed sympathy with the plight of rioters and they were not always inclined to follow the orders of their leaders when it came to suppressing plebeian crowds. Moreover, aggressive officers who caused what were seen as unwarranted civilian injuries and deaths could be prosecuted as a matter of justice, or even to placate the community.[509] From the perspective of self interest, it is hardly surprising that many militia officers in particular preferred to exercise caution and use negotiation when possible.

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[506] Miller (1973) "The Militia and the Army in the Reign of James II" pp. 659-660.
[507] Nicholas Rogers "Popular Protest in Early Hanoverian London" *Past & Present* (79) (May, 1978) p. 73.
[508] Robert Shoemaker. *Prosecution and Punishment: Petty Crime and the Law in London and Rural Middlesex, c.1660-1725*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. pp. 98-99. John Hardisty. *The Militia Law.* (London, 1718). pp. X-XI. Randall (2006) *Riotous Assemblies.* p. 36.
[509] Wood (2002) *Riot, Rebellion and Popular Politics*. pp. 38-43.

The legal powers of militia captains and army officers were often unclear when it came to dealing with crowds, making discretion and compromise advisable.[510] The provisions of the 1714 Riot Act supposedly protected soldiers called in to deal with public protests, provided the appropriate legal procedures pertaining to the reading of the Riot Act were observed.[511] Unlawful or tumultuous assemblies of twelve persons or more could be forcibly dispersed by troops after the Riot Act was read by a designated official and an hour had passed. However, in crowded streets and dimly lit areas determining the number of people at the scene of a protest could be impossible and considerable damage could be done in an hour before law enforcement officials could legally act. These concerns left militia officers in an uncertain legal position which made them reticent to enforce the law.[512] Moreover, even when the forms of the Riot Act were observed, those in charge of troops assigned to deal with protesters were well advised to exercise as much restraint as possible.

The weight of popular opinion could rapidly turn against an officer despite the legality of his actions. Captain John Porteous, the official in charge of the Edinburgh City Guard, was sentenced to hang after he ordered his men to fire into a crowd of protesters who were angered over the death sentences given to a group of smugglers in April of 1736.[513] Six demonstrators died in the altercation and public sentiment ran strongly against Porteous. When news reached Edinburgh that the Captain's sentence might be overturned, an incensed crowd stormed the jail and lynched the prisoner.[514] In light of

[510] Rogers (1978) "Popular Protest" pp. 73-75.
[511] Morgan & Rushton (1998) *Rogues and Thieves and the Rule of Law*. pp. 194-195.
[512] Geoffrey Holmes "The Sacheverell Riots: The Crowd and the Church in Early Eighteenth-Century London" *Past & Present* (72) (August, 1976) pp. 56-57. Rogers (1978) "Popular Protest" pp. 73-75. By the King, *A Proclamation for Suppressing Rebellions and Rebellious Tumults*. 28 July 1715.
[513] H. T. Dickenson & K. J. Logue "The Porteous Riot" *History Today* (22:4) (April, 1972) *Passim*.
[514] *Gentlemen's Magazine*. September 1736.

such events militia men, parish officials and magistrates often feared to undertake their duties with too much vigor.[515] This is not to say that successful militia operations were not occasionally carried out under the command of competent officers. Militias would not have existed for long if they were not of some reasonable and predictable benefit to the communities they served. The point here is that given these difficulties it is not surprising that authorities of the upper and middling ranks would usually prefer negotiation when dealing with moderate rioters.[516] Though middling constables and militia officers were often on the front lines of protest events, it is worth noting that local elites also favoured negotiation and it was their attitudes which often set the tone when dealing with rioters.

**The Advantages and Limits of Negotiation**

The wealth and power that the nobility and gentry held meant that their opinions and values were particularly relevant to the operation of the moral economy.[517] The public intervention of the privileged in protest situations was often very much in keeping with Thompson's emphasis upon the symbolic importance of paternalism in eighteenth-century English culture.[518] Such negotiation was often effective in mitigating conflict, and it was a tactic employed by nobles and prominent landowners well into the nineteenth century. Local nobility and gentry frequently used such public performative events to enhance their prestige among the ordinary folk by dispensing charity, and endeavoring to display exemplary leadership by interceding on their behalf.[519]

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[515] Roger Wells "Counting Riots in Eighteenth-Century England" *Bulletin - Society for the Study of Labour History* (37) (Autumn, 1978) pp. 68-69.
[516] Mclynn (1991) *Crime in England*. p. 18. Thompson (1971) "Moral Economy" p. 121. Holmes (1976) "The Sacheverell Riots" p. 58. The bill for troops for the 1710 Sacheverell riots came to over £10,000. Hay & Rogers (1997) *Shuttles and Swords*. pp. 32-34.
[517] Bohstedt (2010) *Politics of Provisions*. pp. 7-15, 63-64, 172, 268.
[518] Thompson (1991) *Customs in Common*. pp. 16-96.
[519] Paul Monod "Dangerous Merchandise: Smuggling. Jacobitism, and Commercial Culture in Southeast England, 1690-1760" *Journal of British Studies* (30:2) (April, 1991) p. 158.

John Walter advances the argument that nobles and gentry frequently sought to avoid conflict by deliberately cultivating popular narratives which cast the upper ranks as the natural defenders of the welfare of the common folk.[520] The shrewd performance of compassionate deeds and charitable works often served to reaffirm their paternalist credentials, and by extension their right to rule, in the minds of many ordinary people.[521] However, it should also be noted that the common folk were well aware of the fact that judicious displays of popular plebeian discontent often had the effect of provoking upper rank benevolence.[522] Thompson found such performative rituals to be important in sustaining the patrician-plebeian power relationships, referring to elite largess and timely interventions in local affairs as "the theatre of the great."[523] On the other hand, the social stability of the nation could not rely wholly upon intermittent displays of *noblesse oblige*, law enforcement actions and the exemplary punishments handed down by the courts. Paternalist systems of governance, which characterized so much of early eighteenth century socio-economic life, would not have functioned if a fair number of middling and common folk had not found a degree of benefit in them. Moreover, it is worth noting that these groups could also influence paternalist ideas and institutions to suit their own ends.

In his works, Thompson placed a great deal of emphasis upon the agency and social intelligence of ordinary people.[524] He asserted that protests, and the threat of riots, effectively twisted the arms of the powerful. However, there were more subtle, and less dangerous, methods for the poor to gain concessions from the wealthy and their middle

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[520] John Walter. *Crowds and Popular Politics in Early Modern England*. Manchester: University of Manchester, 2006. pp. 198-199, 216.
[521] Sara Lloyd "Pleasing Spectacles and Elegant Diner: Conviviality, Benevolence, and Charity Anniversaries in Eighteenth-Century London" *Journal of British Studies* (41:1) (January, 2002) *Passim*. Hay (1998) "Patronage, Paternalism" pp. 27-29. Bohstedt (2010) *Politics of Provisions*. p. 154.
[522] French & Barry (2004) *Identity and Agency*. pp. 4-7.
[523] Thompson (1974) "Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture" pp. 389-390.
[524] E. P. Thompson. *The Making of the English Working Class*. New York: Vintage, 1963.

rank functionaries. For their part, common people were well aware of the advantages that calculated appeals to the community and paternalist authorities could bring, and they often had beneficial experience in such matters. This was particularly the case when it came to negotiating with officials, to obtain parish support.[525] The efficiency of local governance was predicated upon the consent and contributions of ordinary people. If most authorities found the traditional tactics of negotiation, timely charity, and turning a blind eye to restrained protests to be the most effective and cost efficient means of dealing with plebeian protesters, it was because most common folk, and their social allies, wanted it that way.[526] The middle rank and the working peoples were evidentially not ignorant of the benefits firm but fair paternalist leadership brought to the parish.

Most communities relied upon the supervision and social services provided by the nobility, gentry and their functionaries. The maintenance of local roads, bridges and other public works, law enforcement, the administration of justice and the dispensation of poor relief all required the executive oversight provided by educated and influential men.[527] As the gentry and nobility proceeded with the enclosure of common lands, elite property holdings were becoming evermore vital to the local economy. Though there is some academic debate regarding this issue, it has been argued that large and well managed estates were more efficient than the old systems of common field use with greater returns per acre.[528] Moreover, these large farms provided work for overseers, agricultural labourers and domestic servants. In urban areas, tradesmen and professionals alike

[525] Alannah Tomkins. The Experience of Urban Poverty, 1723-82: Parish, Charity and Credit. Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 2006. p. 15. T. Hitchcock, P. King & P. Sharpe (Eds.) *Chronicling Poverty The Voices and Strategies of the English Poor, 1640-1840.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. pp. 26-31.
[526] French and Barry (2004) *Identity and Agency*. pp. 5-12.
[527] H. R. French "Social Status, Localism and the Middle Sort of People in England, 1620-1750" *Past & Present* (166) (February, 2000) pp. 72-73.
[528] Michael Turner "English Open Fields and Enclosures: Retardation or Productivity Improvements" *Journal of Economic History* (46:3) (1986) *Passim.*

profited from the patronage of large land owners. From this perspective, the leadership and stability provided by effective and responsible local elites was of practical and tangible benefit to the community. Peace and order were usually considered preferable to their opposites and most people had personal and practical reasons not to take riotous performances too far. However, Thompson rightly reminds us that the authorities ultimately always served their own interests.[529] Elite landowners and their middling level agents were dependent upon the labour and goodwill of the common folk and their efforts to propitiate the masses through negotiation must be seen in this light.

From the perspective of most property holders ordinary men and women were valuable, even if they were occasionally troublesome or in need of aid. Douglas Hay makes the case that the local magistrates who passed judgment upon the actions of the common folk were often also significant landowners or their close relations. The viability of elite estates, and many middling level businesses, relied heavily upon having a population of reasonably healthy and contented labourers available to till the land, tend the livestock and perform other menial, yet essential tasks. For these reasons, judgments and jury decisions in favour of the poor might appear as manifestations of upper rank paternalism and middling sort benevolence, when in reality they were primarily motivated by the practical self interest of local property owners.[530] This interplay of forces, combined with traditional vertical and horizontal linkages, frequently made negotiation between community stakeholders of all ranks prudent and profitable.[531]

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[529] Thompson (1991) *Customs in Common*. pp. 16-24.
[530] Hay (1998) "Patronage, Paternalism and Welfare" pp. 29-30.
[531] Dietrich Oberwittler "Crime and Authority in Eighteenth-Century England: Law Enforcement at the Local Level" *Historical Social Research* (15:2) (1990) *Passim.* Wrightson (2000) *Earthly Necessities*. pp. 284-287.

Even decades after the creation of the 1715 Riot Act, a law designed to give authorities greater license to use force when dealing with rioters, face-to-face negotiation between patricians, middling level functionaries and plebeians, was still frequently effective in diffusing local conflicts.[532] On the other hand, English property owners also were evidently concerned at what was seen as rising levels of plebeian disorder. The proliferation of legislation designed to curtail the actions of the disgruntled masses suggests something of the extent to which some were coming to favour armed force over negotiation and charity as the main means of social control.

**The Practical Consequences of New Restrictive Legislation**

> Our Sovereign Lord the King chargeth and commandeth all Persons being assembled, to immediately disperse themselves, and peaceably to depart to their Habitations, or to their lawful Businesses, upon Pains contained in the Act made in the first year of King George, for preventing Tumults and riotous Assemblies. God Save the King. *The Riot Act*

The 1715 Riot Act (1 Geo. I. s. 2 c. 5), along with the Vagrancy Act (12 Anne c. 23) (1713), Transportation Acts (4 Geo. I. s. 4 c. 11) (1718) and (6 Geo. I. s. 9 c. 23) (1720) and the Black Act (9 Geo. I. c. 22) (1723) represented new attempts to control crowd actions through the use of legislative power and coercive force.[533] In his 1975 work *Whigs and Hunters: The Origin of the Black Act*, Thompson argues that these laws were draconian overreactions to what he saw as comparatively minor transgressions such as poaching.[534] Though Thompson was correct in asserting that the number of offences subject to the death penalty increased markedly at this time, the effect of these laws was

[532] John Bohstedt. *Riots and Community Politics in England and Wales, 1790-1810*. London: Harvard University Press, 1983. pp. 1-4.
[533] Peter Linebaugh. *London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. pp. 17-19. Beattie (2001) *Policy and Punishment in London*. p. 431.
[534] E. P. Thompson. *Whigs and Hunters: The Origin of the Black Act*. London: Allen Lee, 1975. *Passim*.

often less than legislators had anticipated.[535] Magistrates and middle rank juries were noticeably reluctant to impose harsh sentences and otherwise employ the full rigor of the law and instead relied on the tried and true methods of negotiation and moderate action.[536] Prudence and pragmatism often still played a significant role in dictating the manner in which elite officials and middling station authorities responded to incensed plebeian crowds. Moreover, there also existed a widely held sense, at all levels of the social hierarchy, that certain types of market behaviour were manifestly unethical. The notion that the poor were enduring unwarranted suffering at times excited the genuine moral indignation of many persons, of all social ranks, within the community.[537]

Writing late in the seventeenth century, the English antiquarian Anthony Wood (1632-1695) described "Poor women in Oxford Market clamoring again at the Price of Corn, pelting Millers, Mealmen, Bakers." However, rather than calling out the constables or the militia the mayor, hearing of their legitimate complaints, came himself and quieted them.[538] Among many in the middle and upper ranks there existed a belief that, in circumstances of artificial dearth, protesting crowds had a natural right to basic subsistence and self preservation. When it came to food riots, it was not infrequently the case that the larger community shared the sense that protesters were only acting to put into effect the just and natural laws against regrators, engrossers and forestallers, that the

[535] Rogers (1978) "Popular Protest" pp. 74-75.
[536] Holms & Szechi (1993) *The Age of Oligarchy*. pp. 182-185. Hay, Linebaugh, Rule, Thompson & Winslow (1975) *Albion's Fatal Tree*. pp. 32-49.
[537] John Bohstedt "The Moral Economy and the Discipline of the Historical Context" *Journal of Social History* (26:2) (Winter, 1992) pp. 269-270.
[538] Anthony Wood. *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*. (Vol. III) (London, 1693) p. 373.

magistrates were not enforcing.[539] The theories of the English philosopher John Locke (1632-1704) respecting the defense of property were evident in such thought.[540]

According to Locke, grain merchants had a right to dispose of their property as they saw fit. However, they could not remove so much from the community that a reasonable quantity was not left for the common use of others.[541] Moreover, by denying the poor essential foodstuffs, the merchants were threatening the property the poor had in their own persons by artificially undermining their 'natural right' to their own self-preservation.[542] Anna Clark maintains that the notions of natural rights and natural needs had a strong hold over the plebeian mind in eighteenth-century England.[543] In his study of pre-industrial poor relief in England, Peter Solar found that many among the working poor looked upon parish aid as a birthright and a form of insurance against illness, injury and protection in old age. Such notions were based not only on the traditional concept of English rights and liberties, but also in the faith and education of the realm.

Douglas Hay notes that justices often shared a common sense of Christian values with the working people and they would, at times, actively prosecute those who artificially increased the price of essential foodstuffs.[544] Occasional displays of judicial outrage against those who willfully deprived the poor of food did much to reassure common folk that those in power could be called upon in times of need. This was important as religion played a prominent role in the narratives elites used to justify their

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[539] Thompson (1971) "Moral Economy" pp. 83-84. For an example of some common market regulations.
[540] Jeremy Schmidt "Charity and the Government of the Poor in the English Charity School Movement, circa 1700-1730" *Journal of British Studies* (49:4) (October, 2010) pp. 785-786.
[541] John Locke. *Two Treatises of Civil Government.* (London, 1794) pp. 188-189.
[542] Istvan Holt & Michael Ignatieff. *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of the Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983. pp. 22-23.
[543] Anna Clark. *The Struggle for the Breeches. Gender and the Making of the British Working Class.* Berkley: University of California Press, 1995. p. 183.
[544] Douglas Hay "The State and the Market in 1800: Lord Kenyon and Mr Waddington" *Past & Present* (162) (February, 1999) pp. 130-133.

place in society. George Rudé makes the case that religious instruction, along with rudimentary education, was often used to inculcate habits of obedience in the poor. However, teaching the lower ranks to do their duty in the station to which God had called them was only effective when local authority figures occasionally displayed the charity required of them by scripture. Parables in the Bible often made the case for feeding and clothing the poor, along with other acts of kindness.[545] The traditions of Maundy Thursday, before Easter, were part of a ritual church calendar that demonstrated the centrality of charity to the poor. Catholic and Protestant English churches plainly recognized the importance such ancient rituals had for common folk and were careful to ensure the proper forms and spirit of the event were observed.[546] Such efforts were evidentially successful. In 1788 the popular periodical *Gentleman's Magazine* described in detail the local variations and names for Maundy Thursday which were still to be observed across the nation.[547] Christian ideas and rituals mattered to ordinary people. Consequently, the authorities who relied upon moral educational narratives to shape the thoughts and actions of the poor had to acknowledge their Christian obligations to provide for common people in need.[548]

Thompson has been criticized for neglecting the importance of the church and clergy in his studies of the moral economy.[549] Thompson did acknowledge the importance of Christian ideology in the formation of *The Book of Orders* (1630), which officially laid out the principals under which parish charity should be administered.[550]

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[545] Schmidt (2010) "Charity and the Government of the Poor" p. 782.
[546] Karl Young "Instructions for Parish Priests" *Speculum* (11:2) (April, 1936) *Passim*.
[547] *Gentleman's Magazine Library* (London, 1788) "Popular Superstitions" p. 32.
[548] Rudé (1971) *Hanoverian London*. p. 116.
[549] Steven King "Edward Thompson's Contributions to Eighteenth-Century Studies: The Patrician-Plebeian Model Re-Examined" *Social History* (21:2) (May, 1996) p. 221. Randall (2006) *Riotous Assemblies*. p. 5.
[550] Slack (1980) "Book of Orders" pp. 1, 17.

However, he maintained that the force of such Christian authority was in noticeable decline even by the mid-eighteenth century.[551] Thompson claims that by this time the Church of England had "ceased to engage with the emotional calendar of the poor." Church offices were increasingly held by middle rank appointees, or the second sons of the aristocracy, who tended to place the temporal interests of themselves and their patrician masters above the spiritual needs of their plebeian flocks.[552] Even those churchmen of comparatively independent means, and reasonably good intentions, often resembled country squires more than religious divines "[men] of some fortune but not much religion."[553] Moreover, Thompson rightly points out that few young men from the lower ranks were recruited into the priesthood.[554] Yet for all this, ordinary people continued to have their children baptized. Church weddings and funerals remained common, and Christian ideals continued to inform the thoughts and actions of ordinary people who defined the value systems of their communities. Such sentiments were particularly in evidence during times of artificial crisis.

Nicholas Rogers finds that unscrupulous middlemen were frequently represented in pamphlets of the time as un-Christian profiteers who were willfully undermining the integrity of the state. Rogers maintains that such characterizations resonated with the wider public and manifestly contributed to the latitude accorded food rioters.[555] When it came to the actions of merchants who shipped grain from one area to another to obtain a better price, it was not difficult to cast the willful actions of those who denied and starved

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[551] Thompson (1971) "Moral Economy" pp. 132-133.
[552] Rule (1992) *Albion's* People. pp. 41-43.
[553] J. Ayres (Ed.) *Paupers and Pig Killers: The Diary of William Holland, a Somerset Parson, 1799-1818*. London: Alan Sutton, 1985. p. 35.
[554] Thompson (1991) *Customs in Common*. pp. 50-51.
[555] Nicholas Rogers. *Crowds, Culture and Politics in Georgian Britain*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1998. p. 70.

the poor as un-Christian.[556] Daniel Defoe recognized the resonance such language had for labouring people and he used these sentiments to great effect.

In Defoe's 1722 work *Colonel Jack* and *Journal of the Plague Year*, the titular hero and his companions are fleeing plague-stricken London. When they are prevented from passing through the town of Walthamstow by constables, who demand the travelers pay the toll for the use of the road, Jack is incensed. "We have a Right to seek our own Safety as well as you, and you may see that we are fleeing for our Lives, and 'tis very Unchristian and unjust to stop us." When the constables prove adamant, Jack then demands the town provide the company with provisions. In a discourse reminiscent of scenes likely enacted thousands of times in English history, Jack then goes on to make his case. "We have Offer'd no Violence to you yet, why do you seem to oblige us to it? I am an old Soldier and cannot Starve." Through careful negotiation, and mutual assurances of peaceful intent, Jack obtains a good quantity of provisions for the company and their eventual free passage, albeit by way of trudging though the adjacent fields.[557] As may be seen in Defoe's work, the crucial duty for the protesters lay in conveying their sense of moral legitimacy to the wider community. Theft was explicitly forbidden in the Bible. Those who engaged in food riots were walking a fine moral and legal line, and they knew it. Therefore, most common folk regarded the forced seizure of foodstuffs as something not to be done lightly. Protesters had to carefully weigh the public mood against their private needs and peaceful negotiation was frequently the best way to do this.

Elite and middle rank recognition of the validity of the complaints of the rioters was predicated upon natural law, Christian faith, traditional practice, public opinion and

[556] Thompson (1974) "Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture" p. 395.
[557] Daniel Defoe. *A Journal of the Plague Year*. (London, 1722)

surviving remnants of paternalist legislation.[558] Laws enforced by local authorities, many dating back to Tudor times, required that foodstuffs should be sold at or near their place of origin, and that market place transactions should be as transparent as possible to demonstrate to the community the fairness of the process. Among other things, such regulations prevented farmers from selling grain by sample and merchants from purchasing crops still standing in the farmer's fields.[559] Though not always rigorously applied, these laws had traditionally served to ensure that locally produced grains were sold at a designated market, at an appointed time, and that sufficient limited quantities were available for low-income shoppers.

The practice of setting aside small lots of grain for the poor to purchase at 'pitching markets' was a common practice which persisted after the selling of grain by sample became more widely accepted.[560] Despite contemporary complaints that such public markets were in decline even in 1718, due to the interference of dealers and interlopers, there remained a popular conviction that the needs of local consumers had to be placed above those of middlemen and profiteers.[561] The sight of local nobles, gentry and middle rank militia officers negotiating with people who were undoubtedly suffering, did a great deal to reaffirm the legitimacy of the actions of subsistence protesters.[562] However, it is important to also note the important role a robust assertion of traditional male authority, by both the middling and upper ranks, could also play in such instances. Courage and gravitas were often conspicuous when leaders engaged in negotiations with

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[558] Rogers (1998) *Crowds, Culture and Politics in Georgian Britain*. pp. 16-18, 67-74, 80-82, 194.
[559] Randall & Charlesworth (Eds.) (2000) *Moral Economy and Popular Protest.* p. 1.
[560] Rogers (1998) *Crowds, Culture and Politics in Georgian Britain*. p. 67.
[561] Anonymous. *An Essay to Prove that Regrators, Engrossers, Forestallers, Hawkers, and Jobbers of Corn, Cattle, and other Marketable goods are Destructive of Trade, Oppressors of the Poor, and a Common Nuisance to the Kingdom in General*. (London, 1718) p. 13.
[562] Thompson (1991) *Customs in Common*. pp. 150-151.

protesters. Therefore, a perceived decline in English manliness and paternalistic authority was troubling to many in the conflict-ridden years of the early eighteenth century.

**The Perceived Decline in English Masculinity and Paternalistic Authority**

> Parents are obliged to take care of their Children; Masters of the Families of their Household, Apprentices and Servants; the Clergy of their Parishioners; Magistrates and inferiour officers of those under their Authority, and princes of their Subjects.[563]
>
> Arthur Bedford (1668-1745)

The author Arthur Bedford understood conservative paternalist systems of governance to be omnipresent in early eighteenth-century England, and without doubt paternalist modes of thought and action permeated every corner of society.[564] Paternalism existed as a powerful idea and men of all social ranks were expected to exercise a degree of paternalistic authority over the persons under their care. From God the Father, the sovereign (typically and preferably a male) had for centuries been held to be the Lord's agent on earth, with the Biblical duty and authority to lead and protect his people.[565] Despite the rapid social, political and economic changes which were occurring in England in the early 1700s, the concept of the traditional male dominated social order remained deeply embedded in the psychology and culture of the nation.[566] Expressed in legal, religious and customary terms, power descended from the ruler through a series of male secular and religious officials down to the fundamental unit of the nation, the family

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[563] Arthur Bedford. *A Sermon Preached to the Society for the Reformation of Manners*. (1734) pp. 8-9.
[564] Douglas Hay "Patronage, Paternalism, and Welfare: Masters, Workers, and Magistrates in Eighteenth-Century England" *International Labour and Working-Class History* (53) (Spring, 1988) *Passim*. Bohstedt (2010) *Politics of Provisions.* pp. 1-15. Monod (1991) "Dangerous Merchandize" pp. 154-159. E. P. Thompson "Eighteenth-Century English Society: Class Struggle Without Class" *Social History* (3:2) (May, 1978) pp. 133-137.
[565] John Walter. *Crowds and Popular Politics in Early Modern England*. Manchester: University of Manchester, 2006. pp. 198-199, 216. Anonymous. *Angliae Notitia* (London, 1702) Part II. pp. 72-83.
[566] Colley (1992) *Britons*. pp. 48-49. See Exodus 20:12 where the concept of 'honour your father' was applied to the people's duty to their (male) superiors.

home with the *paterfamilias* as its head.[567] Thompson emphasized this idea when he spoke of the important role paternalism played in the maintenance and performance of the moral economy, going so far as to claim that "the crowd derived its sense of legitimation…from the paternalist model."[568] Paternalism was masculine in conception and men of all social ranks had a role to play in the operation of this male centred social system which ensured the safety and integrity of the nation.

Nobles and gentry exercised control over their lands and exerted influence within their districts through the management of government and ecclesiastical offices. Middle rank constables, militia officers and parish officials asserted authority over the common folk. Tradesmen exercised control over their apprentices and all men were expected to maintain a degree of paternalist authority within their own homes. Such patterns of manly behaviour were fundamentally bound up in a traditional comprehension of the natural and God given great chain of being where men and women had their appointed place, and the obligation to do their duty in the station to which they were called.[569] As has been demonstrated, traditions of paternalist intervention could serve the interests of the common people, particularly in times of dearth and crisis.[570] English nobles, the landed gentry and the more prosperous middling sorts were all traditionally expected to exercise a wise and compassionate paternalist influence in local affairs through acts of charity and benevolent governance.[571] The continuing viability of such traditional local authority had a great deal to do with the efficient use of restrained plebeian protest events, and

[567] Hunt (1996) *Governance of the Consuming Passions*. pp. 260-261.
[568] Thompson (1971) "Moral Economy" p. 95.
[569] Patricia Crawford & Sara Mendelson. *Women in Early Modern England, 1550-1720*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998. p. 61. Fletcher & Stevenson (1985) *Order and Disorder*. pp. 2, 13. Mendelson & Crawford. *Women in Early Modern England.* p. 61. Hay & Rogers (1997) *Shuttles and Swords*. p. 17.
[570] Beattie (1975) "The Criminality of Women" p. 109.
[571] Thompson (1991) *Customs in Common*. For Thompson's views on early eighteenth-century systems of patriarchal governance see Chapter 2. "The Patricians and the Plebs."

conspicuous displays of benevolent paternalist leadership, which were the hallmarks of Thompson's moral economy.[572] The practice of justice at circuit courts, the operation of the militia, the administration of parish affairs, and judicious displays of charity and benevolent leadership were the principal means by which nobles, gentry and their middle rank functionaries validated their right to rule.[573] Elites relied on the support of the middling sorts, and both groups had important roles to play in the efficient and peaceful functioning of the affairs of their district.

By way of their social position and wealth, local nobles and gentry were often looked upon as the natural leaders in their communities. However, rank also occasionally entailed unpleasant responsibilities.[574] These high profile figures were traditionally expected to ride out to meet groups of suffering protesters, to give serious consideration to their appeals and to provide what remedies they could, and some nobles in fact won great respect for their charitable works.[575] Local elites realized the value of maintaining a benevolent image, and often took care to present themselves as impartial arbitrators of the king's justice, and as great men who cared for ordinary folk in times of distress.[576] There was some truth in this narrative. Nobles and gentry had the financial means, political connections and social status necessary to provide effective leadership.[577] Some were very well educated by the standards of the time, and most could call upon middle rank experts to aid them in their duties as parish administrators and as agents of the courts. Thompson noted that magistrates and gentry often took it as a point of pride that they

[572] Thompson (1971) "Moral Economy" pp. 78-79.
[573] Thompson (1991) *Customs in Common*. p. 47. Bohstedt (2010) *Politics of Provisions*. pp. 1-7.
[574] Smith (2002) *Making of Respectability*. p. 29. Linda Pollock "Honour, Gender and a Reconciliation in Elite Culture, 1500-1700" *Journal of British Studies* (46:1) (January, 2007) p. 3.
[575] Monod (1991) "Dangerous Merchandize" p. 155.
[576] Fletcher & Stevenson (1985) *Order and Disorder*. pp. 15-21. Thompson (1974) "Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture" p. 388.
[577] Hay & Rogers (1997) *Shuttles and Swords*. p. 194.

were able to address problems in areas under their control without recourse to troops, and evidence suggests that a fair number did this both regularly and effectively. These systems and practices of paternalist leadership represented a form of governance that many Britons found valuable, or at least acceptable.[578]

Though the day to day realities of paternalist rule may not have always lived up to their ideals, structures of local and national authority in England were at least as efficient as their continental counterparts.[579] However, the absence of a strong central authority meant that the upper and middling ranks could not rely wholly on good governance, judicious displays of charity, negotiation and the use of occasional exemplary violence to maintain order.[580] The most effective form of policing is self policing, and those who dealt with parish affairs knew, when it came to dealing with the occasionally unruly poor, that "prevention was better than a cure."[581] Consequently, authorities put considerable effort into controlling the perceptions of ordinary people through religion, education, the manipulation of the popular media, and the cultivation of nationalist sentiment.[582] Through the careful use of education and persuasion, ordinary people were trained in useful and patriotic ideas and habits.[583]

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[578] Randall & Charlesworth (2000) *Moral Economy and Popular Protest*. Introduction.
[579] Colley (1992) *Britons*. p. 50.
[580] Gregory Durston. *Crime and Justice in Early Modern England, 1500-1750.* Chichester, West Sussex: Barry Rose Law Publishers, Ltd., 2004. pp. 229-233. Thompson (1974) "Patrician Society" p. 390.
[581] James Knapton. *The Occasional Paper*. (Vol. II, No. X) "An Address to the Clergy In Relation to Societies for the Reformation of Manners" (London, 1717)
[582] Marco H. D. van Leeuwen "Logic of Charity: Poor Relief in Pre-Industrial Europe*" Journal of Interdisciplinary History* (24:4) (Spring, 1994) pp. 593-595.
[583] Kathleen Wilson "Citizenship, Empire and Modernity in the English Provinces, c. 1720-1790" *Eighteenth-Century Studies* (29:1) (Fall, 1995) pp. 71-75. Colley (1992) *Britons*. pp. 40-42.

From pulpits to school rooms, the poor were instructed in what it was needful for them to know, according to their station and occupation.[584] Bernard Mandeville likely articulated the attitude of many among the middling and upper ranks when he declared,

> To make the Society and People Easy under the meanest Circumstances, it is requisite that great numbers of them should be Ignorant as well as Poor. Knowledge both enlarges and multiplies our Desires… The more a Shepard, a Ploughman or any other Peasant knows of the World…the less fit he'll be to go through the Fatigues and Hardships of it with Chearfulness and Content.[585]

Working through social institutions, such as the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) and Societies for the Reformation of Manners, middle rank men advocated for the basic education and instruction of the poor so that they might lead profitable and dutiful lives.[586] Excessive education was seen to be a cause of unrest and the source of new ideas and modes of conduct which could threaten traditional patterns of governance.[587] However, the perpetuation of the paternalist mystique was not entirely contingent upon the control of counter-narratives and education. The problem with being a nobleman was that you were occasionally expected to act as one. The aristocratic elites were essentially prisoners of their own rhetoric, forced to engage in the performative rights appropriate to their station.[588] Those in hereditary paternalist positions of authority were required by the custom they espoused to exert a significant masculine presence, particularly in the defense of the realm by serving in army and navy. Such concerns were not limited to the upper ranks. Men of the middle station were also expected to display

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[584] Rudé (1971) *Hanoverian London*. pp. 115-117. Alannaha Tomkins. *The Experience of Urban Poverty, 1723-1782. Parish, Charity and Credit*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006. pp. 166-171. David Levine & Keith Wrightson. *The Making of an Industrial Society: Whickham, 1560-1765*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1991. pp. 324-327.
[585] Mandeville (1795) *Fable of the Bees*. p. 179.
[586] Laurence Baddon. *A Humble Proposal for Relieving, Reforming and Employing the Poor*. (London, 1720) p. 16. Anonymous. *Proposals for Establishing a Charitable Fund in the City of London*. (London, 1706) p. 17. Lindsay (1978) *The Monster City.* pp. 92-96. Hitchcock (1997) *English Sexualities*. pp. 70-73.
[587] George (1966) *London Life*. p. 247. Stone (1969) "Literacy and Education in England" p. 85.
[588] Barry (2004) *Agency in England*. p. 5. Bohstedt (2010) *Politics of Provisions*. pp. 144-147.

conspicuous courage as military and militia officers and as constables. Therefore, fears over an apparent decline in English manliness had important implications for the safety of the nation as a whole, and for the preservation of law and order. At the dawn of the eighteen century, conventional ideas of what constituted acceptable behaviour were in a state of flux. The use of new material goods and refined manners by middling and aristocratic men, and increasing instances of independent female action, were causing some to believe that traditional English masculinity was in a state of crisis.

**Changing Conceptions of Masculinity**

> Whence is it that so many gentleman descended from antient families, that can boast of a race of worthys in their line, men of gallant principles, brave in the field, able in the council, here an eminent lawyer, there a judge, here a states-man, there a generall, here a patriot, there a divine: and the degenerate heir of all this fame; a empty, weak, rattling fop.[589]

Defoe's observations on the apparent decline in English masculinity reflected the substance of a greater societal anxiety over the state of male authority in the nation. By law, custom and necessity, the ordinary folk looked to middling and elite leaders to manifest the steady and reliable masculine governance which was the ideal of traditional paternalist governance.[590] Aristocratic army officers and middling naval officers and militia leaders constituted the most visible features of a military complex which was meant to keep the nation safe at home and further British interests abroad. However, with more and more men of middling and elite ranks apparently neglecting their manly duties, traditionalists increasingly expressed their concerns over the safety of the nation and its

[589] Daniel Defoe. *The Complete English Gentleman*. (London, 1722)
[590] Mclynn (1991) *Crime in England*. pp. 141-150.

institutions.[591] The writer Henry Carey (c.1687-1743) was particularly scathing in his assessment of the capacities of a new generation of fashionable and foppish men.

> To Learning, and to Manly Arts estrang'd
> (As if with Women Sexes they'd exchang'd)
> They look like Females, dress'd in Boys Attire.[592]

In the same line, the Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713) complained that young men of means who had been formerly trained in horsemanship and the military arts had by 1711 become so "lazy and effeminate" that they neglected their traditional military duties. Some attributed this apparent decline in masculinity to the proliferation of new fashions which challenged traditional manly expectations and put the genders into confusion.

> The Sexes have now little other apparent Distinction, beyond that of Person and Dress: Their peculiar and characteristic Manners are confounded and lost: The one Sex having advanced into *Boldness*, as the other have sunk into *Effeminacy*.[593]

Speaking in House of Commons in 1732, the famed English admiral Edward Vernon (1684-1757) expressed his contempt for stylish fops. In his opinion, such "fine Gentlemen [who could not] bear the smell of Gunpowder" were useless to the nation.[594] The French writer and traveler Béat Louis de Muralt (1665-1749) felt that the heroic virtue required to defend the nations of England and France was being corrupted by "luxury and an effeminate and voluptuous life."[595] For good reason, the apparent decline in manliness preoccupied writers and decision makers.[596] The ability to exert efficient

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[591] Smith (2011) "Politics, Patriotism, and Gender" pp. 60-64. Philip Carter "An Effeminate of Efficient Nation? Masculinity and Eighteenth-Century Social Documentary" *Textual Practice* (11:3) (1997), pp. 434-435. Baker-Benfield (1992) *Culture of Sensibility*. p. 122. Hunt (1996) *Sumptuary Law*. p. 80.
[592] Henry Carey. *A Satyr on the Luxury and Effeminacy of the Age.* (London, 1729)
[593] John Brown. *An Estimate of the Manners and Principals of the Times*. (London, 1757) p. 51.
[594] Gerald Jordan & Nicholas Rogers "Admirals as Heroes: Patriotism and Liberty in Hanoverian England" *Journal of British Studies* (28:3) (July, 1989) p. 207.
[595] Béat Louis de Muralt. *Letters Describing the Character and Customs of the English and French Nations*. (London, 1726) p. 275.
[596] Gregg (2009) *Defoe's Writings*. pp. 32-33.

governance often depended to a great extent upon courage and ingenuity of the nobility and gentry and the middling militia officers and constables who supported them.[597]

If their actions were usually followed by some meaningful effort at remedial action, the visible presence of local leaders engaging with rioters on a compassionate and responsible level did much to affirm the validity of the cause of the protesters and mitigate their anger.[598] However, it must be recalled that a violent confrontation was always a very real possibility when disgruntled crowds gathered.[599] Therefore meeting with protesters took bravery and accounts from the period speak highly of the nerve and ingenuity of the those who parleyed with angry mobs.[600] Thompson noted the importance of such competent traditional paternalist leadership in the handling of disputes.[601] Given the prominent role such negotiations played in the preservation of law and order, a robust assertion of manliness at such times was seen by many as essential.[602]

Stephen Gregg argues that English masculinity in the early 1700s was expressed in ways that are not easy to decode today. Masculine qualities appeared to many people to be vital and essential to the operation of the nation. Consequently, any diminution in conventional expressions of manly virtues were particularly troubling.[603] Threats to traditional paternalist systems of governance, and to military institutions, appeared to many to be increasing in the early 1700s.[604] From coffeehouses frequented by men of the influential middle rank to the larger public sphere, an alarming rise in effeminacy, and

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[597] Edward Chamberlayne. *Angliae Notitia.* (20th Edition) (London, 1702) pp. 318-319.
[598] Hay & Rogers (1997) *Shuttles and Swords*. pp. 32-34.
[599] Robert Shoemaker "Male Honour and the Decline of Public Violence in Eighteenth-Century London" *Social History* (26:2) (May, 2001) *Passim.*
[600] Thompson (1974) "Patrician Society" pp. 387-390. Breton (1717) *Militia Discipline*.
[601] Thompson (1971) "Moral Economy" p. 120.
[602] Kathleen Wilson. *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. pp. 41-43.
[603] Gregg (2009) *Defoe's Writings*. pp. 2-3.
[604] Beattie (2001) *Policy and Punishment.* p. 59.

what were seen as overly refined feminized tastes and affectations, appeared to many to be corrupting the martial heart of British masculine culture.[605]

Writing in the early eighteenth century, the French writer and traveler Henri Misson was struck by the abundance of foppish fellows to be seen on the streets of London.[606] The sight of educated and prosperous young men of fighting age wholly devoted to the pursuit of pleasure and fashion amused the French traveler. Many others expressed consternation at such sights. For a country so often at war in recent years, military readiness and the leadership skills of military and militia officers represented a legitimate national concern, and novels and plays from the era reflect the societal preoccupation with this issue.[607] In such works, the stock character of the stylish fop served as the antithesis of true English manhood, a disturbing example of the damage that the pursuit of fashions caused.[608] Though educated, propertied and occasionally titled, the fop was portrayed as having been hopelessly corrupted by soft living, the pursuit of pleasures and the satisfaction of luxurious, feminized affectations.[609]

In works like *Fool for Fashion* (1697) the playwright Sir John Vanbrugh (1664-1726) made considerable use of the character Sir John Foppington to lampoon the effete lifestyle, and the writer and early feminist Mary Astell (1666-1731) bemoaned the lot of a

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[605] Brian Cowan "What Was Masculine about the Public Sphere? Gender and the Coffeehouse Milieu in Post-Restoration England" *History Workshop Journal* (51) (Spring, 2001), p. 136. Ingrid Tague "Love, Honour and Obedience: Fashionable Women and the Discourse of Marriage in the Early Eighteenth Century" *Journal of British Studies* (40:1) (January, 2001), pp. 86-88. Wilson (1995) "Citizenship and Empire" pp. 74-75. Owen (2010) *Female Crusoe*. p. 3.
[606] H. Misson. *M. Misson's Memories and Observations in his Travels over England.* (London, 1719)
[607] Smith (2011) "Politics, Patriotism and Gender" pp. 60-61.
[608] Harvey (2005) "History of Masculinity" pp. 300-301.
[609] Philip Carter "Men About Town: Representations of Foppery and Masculinity in Early Eighteenth-Century English Society" in Hannah Baker & Elaine Chalus (Eds.) *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities*. New York: Harlow, 1997. pp. 31-57.

woman subjected to the authority of a imprudent and improvident fop of a husband.[610] The poet and social commentator Lady Mary Chudleigh (1656-1710) was of a similar opinion when she referred to this set as "empty men."[611] Many felt that new luxuries and refined manners were undermining the masculine capacity to exert authority and sound judgment.[612] Incapable of acting as effective leaders and stewards of the realm, fops and effeminate men of the upper and middling ranks increasingly appeared powerless to assert legitimate masculine firmness even within their own households.

Alan Hunt argues that public concerns over declining masculinity contributed to a feeling of moral panic in some quarters.[613] When Jonathan Swift expressed anxiety at the frequent extinction of aristocratic lines he was articulating popularly held societal fears regarding the decline in English manliness.[614] However, new ideals of masculinity were also being explored at different levels of society in the early 1700s. A measured refinement in manners and conduct was increasingly regarded by the middle ranks as an acceptable alternative to conventional expressions of robust traditional manliness.[615] Gradually, English masculinity was being favourably described in terms of civility, where the tyranny of the passions was subjugated to the control of the educated and refined intellect.[616] Thompson believed that a calculated display of dignified patrician manners often did a great deal to mollify the crowd while at the same time reaffirming the status of the ruling class. The merits of this type of behaviour were not lost on

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[610] Mary Astell. *Reflections Upon a Marriage*. (London, 1706) p. 28.
[611] Mary Chudleigh. *The Ladies Defence*. (London, 1709) p. VIII.
[612] Aileen Ribeiro. *Dress and Morality*. Oxford: Berg, 2003. pp. 89-90. Carter (1997) "Effeminate Nation" pp. 432-433.
[613] Hunt (1996) *Sumptuary Law*. p. 218.
[614] Baker-Benfield (1992) *Culture of Sensibility*. pp. 113-114.
[615] Amanda Vickery. *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998. Chapter 6 "Civility and Vulgarity" Shoemaker (2001) "Male Honour and Public Violence" Passim.
[616] Pollock (2007) "Honour, Gender" p. 5.

contemporary observers and examples of vigorous, yet restrained, masculinity were not conceived of as a thing that should be limited to the upper ranks.[617]

Not a few thought that English men could also benefit from some remedial education on the proper duties of a husband, father, employer and citizen. Writers like Defoe earnestly undertook to persuade those of the middle station to make self-control their primary goal.[618] In his two volume work *The Family Instructor* (1720), Defoe envisioned the middle-rank householder as the master of his domain. As such he was responsible for the spiritual and moral conduct of his family and servants.[619] A subsequent work, *The Complete English Tradesman* (1728), provided extensive information and instruction to those who sought to improve their working and domestic lives through the diligent practice of their vocation.[620] Increasingly, English men of all degrees were being encouraged to pursue the middle way between the extravagant feminized affectations of the fop and the archaic and violent forms of traditional masculinity.[621] The many Reform of Manners societies which flourished in the early 1700s, actively sought to improve the rough and ready culture of the lower orders.[622] Such efforts reflected the extent to which the middling and upper ranks had internalized new modes of thought and behaviour.[623]

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[617] Thompson (1974) "Patrician Society" pp. 387-390.
[618] Robert Shoemaker "Reforming the City: The Reformation of Manners Campaign in London, 1690-1738" in Davidson, Hitchcock, Kerin & Shoemaker (1992) *Grumbling Hive*. Hurl-Eamon (2004) "Policing Male Heterosexuality" *Passim*. John McVeagh "Defoe: Satirist and Moralist" in Richetti (2008) *Companion to Daniel Defoe*. pp. 200-203.
[619] Daniel Defoe. *The Family Instructor in Three Parts.* (London, 1720)
[620] Daniel Defoe. *The Complete English Tradesman.* (London, 1728)
[621] Harvey (2005) "History of Masculinity" *Passim.*
[622] Hunt (1996) *Middling Sort*. pp. 114-117.
[623] F. Dabhoiwala "Sex and Societies for Moral Reform, 1688-1800" *Journal of British Studies* (46:2) (April, 2007). Hunt (1996) *Middling Sort*. pp. 101-124. Hitchcock (1997) *English Sexualities*. pp. 70-72.

Evolving expectations of civilized conduct and material culture were helping to redefine normative behaviour at all levels of society. As they often existed in a world where customer service and interactions with the public were important in their professions and businesses, middling level men had a strong motive to embrace the changing standards of the times. Increasingly, a man of quality was expected to display good manners and sophistication while avoiding the extremities of foppery.[624] Writers like Defoe readily acknowledged the difficulties inherent in this balancing act when he vividly described the troubles of English shopkeepers who had to ingratiate themselves with female shoppers while keeping their manly dignity and authority intact.[625] As levels of female autonomy increased, and women became more active in the purchasing of goods and in seemingly dictating the direction of English trade and commerce, clashes with traditional masculine ideas and institutions were inevitable. The implications these changing attitudes and gender conflicts had for middling men and maidservants during the Calico riots will be explored in Chapter 4.

**Conclusion**

The middling sorts were a growing and significant force in early eighteenth-century England. Their combination of education, wealth, social position and occupation within the district meant that their opinions and value systems mattered. As has been demonstrated, men from the middle ranks served as important figures in their communities. They worked to maintain the peace as constables and militia, they administered parish affairs, sat on juries and were vital interlocutors between the elite and

[624] Michele Cohen "Manners Make the Man: Politeness, Chivalry, and the Construction of Masculinity, 1750-1830" *Journal of British Studies* (44:2) (April, 2005) pp. 322-323. Carter (1997) "Men About Town" pp. 31-35. Vickery (1998) *Gentleman's Daughter*. p. 217.
[625] Daniel Defoe. *The Complete English Tradesman.* (London, 1728) p. 94.

the plebeian masses. Notable in the writings of middle ranked men like Daniel Defoe, they brought their own values and needs to the issue of law enforcement and manifestly contributed to the manner in which the moral economy was expressed and understood in society. The manner in which this group interpreted concepts of natural law, English liberty and Christian charity had far reaching implications for all social ranks.[626]

For Thompson, the moral economy represented the obstinate plebeian struggle to force paternalist elites to defend established market regulations, and the customary value systems that sustained them, by challenging local leaders to fulfill their self-appointed role as protectors of the people in opposition to developing commercial capitalism. In such cases, Thompson describes paternalist elites as being 'prisoners of the people' who were bound by tradition to defend the poor.[627] Paternalist leaders were the natural targets for appeals and recriminations during times of hardship.[628] Important clerical and county officers, such as magistrates and the parish guardians, who oversaw the application of the poor laws, were made up of these elites, their relatives or appointees from the middle ranks.[629] The actions of parish officials were greatly influenced by the traditional values and expectations of the community and particularly those of the middling sort.[630] Middle rank men proved vital in defining the practical and legal limits of Thompson's moral economy through parish administration, jury decisions and law enforcement actions where mediation played a prominent role. The manner in which this crisis of masculinity influenced the course of the Calico riots will be examined in Chapter 4. For the present it

[626] Crawford & Mendelson (1998) *Women in Early Modern England*. p. 50. Hitchcock, King and Sharp (1997) *Chronicling Poverty*. pp. 10-11. Tomkins (2006) *Urban Poverty*. pp. 79-119.
[627] Thompson (1978) "Moral Economy" pp. 78-79, 88.
[628] Thompson (1991) *Customs in Common*. p. 47.
[629] Thompson (1974) "Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture" pp. 382-405.
[630] French & Barry (2004) *Identity and Agency in England*. p. 9.

is sufficient to note that middling men were active and vital participants in the creation and definition of the moral economy and to the preservation of law and order. On the other hand, these same men were concerned with upholding their hard won place in society. Concerns over social climbers usurping their status and a decline in English masculinity were consequently very real to the middling sort. For these reasons, many among the middle ranks took refuge in conservative attitudes towards the lower ranks and actively sought to enforce traditional social and gender hierarchies.

## Chapter 4

### The Influence of Middling Male Attitudes on the Calico Crisis

This chapter will assess the manner in which the position of the middling male was being challenged by changing female labour trends and purchasing habits in early eighteenth-century England. As was demonstrated in previous chapters, these changes ranged from the local to the national and encompassed a range of concerns from male authority within the home to the military readiness and governance of the state. Not a few at this time blamed the troubles of the nation on deleterious effects of luxury on English men and a concomitant rise in female autonomy, particularly among female servants. At the time of the Calico riots an extraordinary abundance of novel consumer products were bringing unprecedented changes to English society.[631] New material goods, modes of dress, standards of public behaviour and shifting labour patterns were challenging conventional notions of gender and social hierarchy as well as standards of masculinity, respectability and creditworthiness. As important figures in their communities, the middling sort were central to this social discussion.

Middle rank men worked as newspapers editors, writers, industry leaders, professionals, government authorities and sat on juries.[632] These men had toiled diligently to obtain their place in the world and many feared that the social and economic

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[631] Beverly Lemire. *Fashion's Favourite: The Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain, 1660-1800.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991. pp. 161-163. Peter Borsay. *The English Urban Renaissance. Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1770.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989. pp. 225-256. Paul Langford "The Uses of Eighteenth-Century Politeness" *Transactions of the Royal Society* (12) (2002) *Passim*. Beverly Lemire. *The Business of Everyday Life: Gender, Practice and Social Politics in England, c. 1600-1900*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005. pp. 122-123.

[632] Peter Earle. *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life, 1660-1730.* Berkley: University of California Press, 1989. pp. 1-16. Jennie Hural-Eamon "Policing Male Heterosexuality: The Reform of Manners Societies' Campaign Against Brothels in Westminster, 1690-1720" *Journal of Social History* (37:4) (Summer, 2004) *Passim*. Margaret Hunt. *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender and the Family in England, 1680-1780*. Berkley: University of California Press, 1996. pp. 101-124.

innovations which were sweeping the nation had the potential to threaten their hard-won status.[633] During the Calico Crisis independent working women who chose to purchase and wear exotic foreign printed fabrics over traditional English textiles seemed to embody many of the concerns of middling sorts. Men of the middling station were at the forefront of the efforts to control this behaviour and English men of this era were used to controlling female behaviour with violence.[634]

Two female focused narratives were prominent during the Calico Crisis, both of them reflecting a growing concern over increasing levels of female independence and the apparent decline in traditional masculine systems of governance. First, anxiety over mixed social messaging caused by working people, particularly maidservants, using refined manners and stylish clothing to obtain undue social credit and advancement.[635] Second, concerns with respect to increasing numbers of self-governing 'masterless' women. Though the latter concern had existed for years, such discussions were becoming evermore important in the early eighteenth century.[636] Increasing levels of female literacy, new patterns of labour and female driven consumerism made independent

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[633] Keith Wrightson. *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain*. London: Yale University Press, 2000. pp. 289-306.

[634] Jennine Hurl-Eamon "Domestic Violence Prosecuted: Women Binding Over Their Husbands for Assault at Westminster Quarter Sessions, 1685-1720" *Journal of Family History* (26:4) (October, 2001) *Passim*. Alexandra Shepard "From Anxious Patriarchs to Refined Gentlemen? Manhood in Britain, circa 1500-1700" *Journal of British Studies* (44:2) (April, 2005) *Passim.* Elizabeth Foyster "Male Honour, Social Control and Wife Beating in Late Stuart England" *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (6) (1996) *Passim.* Sara Mendelson & Patricia Crawford. *Women in Early Modern England, 1550-1720.* Oxford: Clarendon, 1998. pp. 140-147.

[635] Chloe Wigston-Smith "Calico Madams: Servants, Consumption and the Calico Crisis" *Eighteenth Century Life* (31:2) (Spring, 2007) *Passim*. G. J. Baker-Benfield. *Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992. p. 321. Sandra Sherman "Servants and Semiotics: Reversible Signs, Capital Instability, and Defoe's Logic of the Market" *Economic History Review* (47:3) (August, 1993). pp. 558-559.

[636] Diane Willen "Women in the Public Sphere in Early Modern England: The Case of the Urban Working Poor" *Sixteenth Century Journal* (19:4) (Winter, 1988) p. 561. Judith Spicksley "A Dynamic Model of Social Relations: Celibacy, Credit and the Identity of 'Spinster' in Seventeenth-Century England" in Henry French & Jonathan Barry (Eds.) *Identity and Agency in England, 1500-1800.* New York: Palgrave, 2004. p. 112. Mendelson & Crawford (1998) *Women in Early Modern England*. p. 96.

women appear to be a particularly pressing problem to many social commentators.[637] However, it important to note that these concerns functioned as elements of a wider public discourse on the direction of English society and the appropriate roles of men and women from all social ranks.

**The Challenges Posed by Changes in Social Status and Signifiers**

> Wealth, howsoever got, in England makes
> Lords of mechanics, gentlemen of rakes
> Antiquity and birth are needless here
> 'Tis imprudence and money makes a peer.[638]
> *The True-Born Englishman*, 1701

Like so many others of his rank, Defoe could not fail to recognize the fact that the early eighteenth century was a period of significant transformation in England. Military successes, colonial expansion, commercial innovations and international trade, were bringing significant new wealth and prestige to the nation.[639] On the domestic front, the expansion of urban centres, and the proliferation of new products and ideas were leading people, and particularly the growing middle ranks, to reassess the value of the social and economic relationships which had sustained the country for centuries.[640] A revolution in material culture was causing a redefinition of traditional hierarchical standards as the population was awakened to the potentialities of the emerging consumer society. Unparalleled new opportunities for social and economic advancement were increasingly available to those with sufficient intelligence, ambition and good fortune to take advantage of them. The upper ranks, and particularly the middle orders, felt the relentless

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[637] Hunt (1996) *Middling Sort*. pp. 88-89. Geoffrey Holms & Daniel Szechi. *The Age of Oligarchy: Pre-Industrial Britain, 1722-1783.* London: Longman, 1993. pp. 106-107.
[638] Daniel Defoe. *The True-Born Englishman.* (London, 1701)
[639] Stephen Gregg. *Defoe's Writings and Manliness.* Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2009. pp. 15-16. Owen (2010) *Female Crusoe*. pp. 63-65.
[640] John Styles "Product Innovation in Early Modern England" *Past & Present* (169) (2000) p. 128. Joyce Appleby "Consumption in Early Modern Social Thought" in John Brewer & Roy Porter (Eds.) *Consumption and the World of Goods*. London: Routledge, 1993. pp. 162-164.

pressure from those below them as working people sought out the new sartorial status signifiers that England's increasingly affluent society had to offer.[641]

Once largely the province of the well-off, stylish clothing was increasingly accessible in the early 1700s. However, the extent to which someone brought up in trade could hope to move up the social ladder was not necessarily limited only by the dress they could afford. Each trade had its own perils, and many left deep scars on those who were forced to labour hard for their daily bread.[642] Unsafe working conditions and low quality food stunted growth and shortened life spans for many labouring people.[643] Fine dress could not straighten backs bent by decades of labour or smooth hands callused and reddened by a lifetime in trade. Nor could fashion hide coarse mannerisms, rough accents, the ravages of strong drink and a lack of education. Nevertheless, times were changing and with increasing social mobility came increasing concern. In a country without sumptuary laws, the inability to accurately determine the status of others could lead to serious problems for those deceived by well-dressed pretenders.[644]

Members of the upwardly mobile middling sort had a strong motive to visibly set themselves apart from the lower ranks in a society preoccupied with maintaining and obtaining status.[645] However, such efforts were threatened by the rapid social and economic changes sweeping the nation which often served to undermine traditional sartorial signifiers, one of the principal visual determinates of place and position.[646] Compared with the experiences of previous generations, new clothing was relatively

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[641] Neil Mckendrick, John Brewer & J. H. Plumb. *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England*. London: Hutchison, 1982. p. 14.
[642] M. Dorothy George. *London Life in the Eighteenth Century*. London: Penguin, 1965. pp. 202-205.
[643] John Rule. *Albion's People: English Society, 1714-1815*. New York: Longman, 1992. p. 25.
[644] Lemire (1991) *Fashions Favourite*. p. 9. All sartorial prohibitions had been removed in 1604.
[645] Daniel Defoe. *The Great Law of Subordination Consider'd*. (London, 1724). p. 284.
[646] Penelope Corfield "Walking the City Streets: The Urban Odyssey in Eighteenth-Century England" *Journal of Urban History* (16:2) (February, 1990) pp. 156-157.

inexpensive, and the brisk trade in stolen and second-hand garments was putting fashionable attire within the reach of many ordinary folk.[647] At a time when people were often obliged to assess a person's wealth, status and respectability based on outward appearances, this was an unsettling trend. As the philosopher and satirist Bernard Mandeville (1670-1733) trenchantly observed,

> Fine feathers make fine birds and people, where they are not known, are generally honour'd according to clothes and other accoutrements they have about them; from the richness of them we judge of their wealth, and by their ordering of them we guess at their understanding. It is this which encourages everybody, who is conscious of his little merit…to wear clothes above his rank, especially in large and populous cities, where obscure men hourly meet with fifty strangers to one acquaintance and consequently have the pleasure of being esteem'd by a vast majority, not as what they are, but as what they appear to be. [648]

Popular literature from the era suggests that many in the middle station feared that their socio-economic position might be threatened by dissembling persons in fashionable clothing, and such fears were not entirely without foundation.[649]

Publications like *The Cheats of London Exposed; or Tricks of the Town Laid Open* provided gentlemen with an extensive list of the devices and deceits used by well turned out confidence tricksters, and particularly those of fashionable, beguiling women.

> The Lady comes up to you with a kind of formal Impudence, And fixes herself as near to you as she can, and then begins Some loose and impertinent Prate, to draw you into Discourse with her. If she finds you a Man fit for their Turn…she leaves you a little, to go and make her Report to her Friends and Allies.

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[647] Beverly Lemire "Consumerism in Pre-Industrial and Early Industrial England: The Trade in Second-Hand Clothes" *Journal of British Studies* (27:1) (January, 1988) pp. 1-6.
[648] Bernard Mandeville. *The Fable of the Bees; or, Private Vices, Public Benefits*. (London, 1795) p. 68.
[649] Frank Mclynn. *Crime and Punishment in Eighteenth-Century England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991. pp. 94-95, 127.

Once their quarry is thus discovered "a Set of Bullies, Shapers and Whores" descend upon him to discover, by whatever means, his wealth and how they may obtain it. The narrator concludes his discourse with a grim warning:

> You see, Sir, how naturally all these Beasts of Prey hunt a Country Squire…they seldom lose the Scent till they have…brought him to a Bay, and then they soon pull him down and mangle him as they will.[650]

However, such dangers were not only confined to unwary travelers and naive country gentlemen newly come to town. Large and powerfully built coachmen and footmen could protect the persons of their wealthy employers from physical dangers of London's streets. The deceits of confidence tricksters were harder to guard against.[651] Though the rich were favoured targets, the middling sorts also needed to be on their guard.

The anti-calico writer Sir Richard Steele was particularly keen to caution middling level coffeehouse patrons against those who used charming manners and stylish clothing to mask devious purposes. "The Sharpers About Town [are] what Foxes are to Lambs" when it came to depriving "any innocent and inadvertent Man of his Purse."[652] Of course, not all people in London were bent on deceit and thievery. Defoe provides a humorous account of a servant maid coming to the home of a middling gentleman in search of work. When the visitor inquires after the mistress of the house the master, assuming by her dress that she is a lady of quality come to call, treats her as an honoured guest and seats her comfortably in the best room. It is only when his sister falls into conversation with the maid that the true nature of the exchange becomes apparent and the master realizes his mistake. "How great was my surprise when I found my fine lady to be

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[650] Gentleman at London. *Tricks of the Town Laid Open.: or, a Companion for a Country Gentleman.* (London, 1747) pp. 28-31.
[651] Adrian Randall. *Riotous Assemblies: Popular Protest in Hanoverian England.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. p. 21.
[652] *The Spectator*. No. 504 (1712)

a common serving-wench."[653] Though Defoe recognized the important role dress, image and social credit played in public and commercial life, he was also aware of the pitfalls inherent in placing too much trust in outward appearances. The protean nature of visible social signifiers were not a matter that the middling sort could afford to take lightly.

By need and inclination, the middling station placed a great deal of stock in outward manifestations of success, including titles, dress and etiquette. Practices attributable to trading gentlemen, which emphasized learning, self-control, accountability and respectability, were essential to the sense of self that characterized the ambitions of the middle ranks. Publicly maintaining these standards was vitally important to the security of their position in society.[654] Fears that ambitious low rank social climbers would be mistaken for their social equals or superiors were thus particularly relevant to the middle rank audiences. The intimate contact domestics had with household activities meant that this group was especially well placed to emulate the clothing and manners of their employers. As young female servants were the least expensive to employ, they were the group most commonly to be found working in middling homes. Their position within the intimate family space made it a comparatively simple matter for opponents of the India trade to style the purchasing habits of this group as a threat to the moral integrity of the families they served, and the financial stability of the state in which they lived. Such claims were not without some foundation as maidservants, like so many other women, were interested in improving their lives and moving up in the world.

**The Lives of Maidservants**

Everything in the world is purchased by labour; and our passions

[653] Daniel Defoe. *Everybody's Business is Nobody's Business*. (London, 1725) pp. 18-21.
[654] Wrightson (2000) *Earthly Necessities*. pp. 300-301.

are the only causes of labour.[655] David Hume (1711-1776)

The middle ranked who crafted the anti-calico propaganda which vilified the purchasing habits of maidservants were correct in their assertion that a passion for novel material possessions was not limited to the upper ranks. Maxine Berg notes that the great increase in global British trade at this time brought a wide range of hitherto unheard of luxuries to England, and people at all social levels were clearly hungry for them.[656] Jan De Vries argues that as early as 1650 northwestern European families were beginning to voluntarily work additional hours in order to earn extra wages with the goal of purchasing new material goods and semi-luxuries. In London and other urban centers the material expectations of the growing ranks of the middling sort were increasingly manifesting themselves in modern homes bedecked with novelties and comforts virtually unknown a generation before. The middle orders were developing new expectations of domesticity, propriety and cleanliness which were dependent upon the labours of armies of predominately young female servants.[657]

As more and more positions for maidservants became available with middle rank employers in urban centres, growing numbers of working women came in search of a new life.[658] Employment as a servant allowed country girls with few other job skills a chance to move away from the customary control of the family and the village and experience unprecedented freedoms, material pleasures and opportunities. Time in service doubtless had its benefits, many young females gained valuable housekeeping

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[655] David Hume "On Commerce" in *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*. (London, 1759)
[656] Maxine Berg "In Pursuit of Luxury: Global History and British Consumer Goods in the Eighteenth Century" *Past & Present* (182) (February, 2004). *Passim.*
[657] Jan De Vries. *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behaviour and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008. pp. 128, 178-180, 198.
[658] Robert Shoemaker. *Gender in English Society, 1650-1850: The Emergence of Separate Spheres?* London: Longman, 1998. pp. 175-176.

skills while earning wages with which to set up a family home of their own once they were married. For these reasons, work as a maid was looked upon by many as a natural and productive stage of life for young women from the lower orders.[659]

Admittedly, life as a servant could be difficult, and the position carried with it well known risks. Physical harassment, sexual assault and general neglect were not unusual, though it should be noted that girls could also suffer similar treatment in their paternal homes and rural communities.[660] Maids had limited rights in law and could be physically chastised by their master and mistress for real or imagined faults. Young maidservants had few resources to pursue justice on their own behalf and they were easily replaced. As was previously noted, years of warfare meant many women were spinsters or widowed and many poor women were to be seen begging and prostituting themselves on the streets of cities like London.[661] Given these conditions, Bridget Hill argues that life in service presented working women with many tangible benefits.[662]

From a practical standpoint, working as a live-in maidservant had a number of advantages. Such servants were largely shielded from increasing food and fuel costs, as meals and shelter were provided.[663] Moreover, for appearances if for no other reason, employers were expected to take at least a perfunctory paternal interest in the lives of those under their care, and this was particularly the case when it came to young

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[659] J. Jean Hecht. *The Domestic Servant Class in Eighteenth-Century England*. London: Routledge, 1956. Passim. George (1966) *London Life*. pp. 119-120. Bridget Hill. *Servants: English Domestics in the Eighteenth Century*. Oxford: Clearendon Press, 1996. *Passim*.

[660] Tim Meldrum "London Domestic Servants from Dispositional Evidence, 1660-1750: Servant-Employer Sexuality in the Patriarchal Household" in Tim Hitchcock, Peter King & Pamela Sharpe (Eds.) *Chronicling Poverty: The Voices and Strategies of the English Poor, 1640-1840*. London: Macmillan, 1997. *Passim*. Antony Simpson "Popular Perceptions of Rape as a Capital Crime in Eightieth-Century England: The Press and the Trail of Francis Charteris in the Old Bailey, February 1730" *Law and History Review* (22:1) (Spring, 2004). *Passim*. Hecht (1956) *Domestic Servant Class*. p. 181.

[661] Tim Fulford "Fallen Ladies and Cruel mothers: Ballad Singers and Ballad Heroines in the Eighteenth Century" *The Eighteenth Century* ( 47:2/3) (Summer/Fall, 2006) p. 313.

[662] Hill (1996) *Servants*. pp. 19-20, 93.

[663] Hecht (1956) *Domestic Servant Class*. p. 123.

women.[664] This situation was certainly preferable to labour in the 'putting out' system of garment production where there was not even a pretense of paternal care for workers and the sole interest of most employers was to obtain the greatest amount of work at the least possible cost. Even for expert needle women female incomes were generally quite low, perhaps 10 shillings a week as opposed to the £1 a week for an fully qualified tradesman who was lucky enough to find fulltime work.[665] A semi-skilled woman who endured the sporadic employment endemic at the bottom of the socio-economic spectrum, might be lucky to make 5 shillings a week and this income was generally understood to serve as an addition to a household income where the father or husband earned the greater salary.

Women were not expected to live alone or sustain themselves on their own wages. Marriage was widely seen as a natural condition and many females married out of economic necessity, family pressure or to avoid being 'old maids.'[666] In contrast, a life in service provided a young woman with a socially accepted reason to delay marriage, gain job skills and save a little money. Admittedly, wages were usually low and a servant girl of seventeen years might be lucky to make £2 a year, with room and board.[667] However, John Styles points out that gratuities and gifts, including used calico gowns given them by their mistress, could add a fair bit to the amount servants received.[668] More than this, life in the city offered a girl possibilities for social advancement and economic gain.

Elizabeth Sanderson makes the case that more than a few women looked upon a life in the city as an opportunity to achieve a degree of independence from a confining

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[664] Mendelson & Crawford (1998) *Women in Early Modern England*. pp. 92-108
[665] Randall (2006) *Riotous Assemblies*. p. 2. Rule (1992) *Albion's People*. p. 17. George (1966) *London Life*. pp. 158-212.
[666] Mendelson & Crawford (1998) *Women in Early Modern England*. pp. 169-174.
[667] Peter Earle "The Female Labour Market in London in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Century" *Economic History Review* (42:3) (August, 1989) p. 342. Hill (1996) *Servants*. p. 162.
[668] John Styles "Involuntary Consumers? Servants and their Clothes in Eighteenth-Century England" *Textile* (33:1) (2002) *Passim*.

and limited rural culture.[669] In towns and cities girls had the potential to acquire the skills and wealth necessary to secure an advantageous marriage, and the range of eligible marriage partners was much larger.[670] Of course, urban life brought with it its own perils, particularly for the young, improvident and inexperienced. It was not without reason that middling sort moral reformers focused upon irresponsible low income workers, and maidservants in particular, who wasted their wages, got themselves with child or otherwise made themselves dependent upon the parish.

Not a few young servant girls who became pregnant, and consequently lost their jobs, were forced to rely on begging, prostitution or the limited social services provided by church and state. Rogers notes that a great many of these illegitimate mothers were young unmarried women who had come to London to work as servants.[671] This situation was troubling to many employers. Susan Amussen notes that the head of the household where the unwed mother worked was often held legally liable for the maintenance of her child.[672] The fact that this was usually a sound assumption on the part of authorities did not stop middling men like Defoe from blaming the young maidservant for beguiling her older, wealthier, and presumably wiser, master with her feminine charms.

> How many families have been ruined by these ladies? When the father or the master of the family, preferring the flirting airs of a young prinked up strumpet, to the artless sincerity of a plain, grave, and good wife, has given his desires aloose, and destroyed soul, body, family and estate.[673]

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[669] Elizabeth Sanderson. *Woman and Work in Eighteenth-Century Edinburgh*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1996. pp. 74-107.
[670] J. M. Beattie "The Criminality of Women in Eighteenth-Century England" *Journal of Social History* (8:4) (Summer, 1975), pp. 98-99. Susan Amussen "Gender, Family and the Social Order, 1560-1725" in Anthony Fletcher & John Stevenson (Eds.) *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. pp. 214-215.
[671] Nicholas Rogers "Carnal Knowledge: Illegitimacy in Eighteenth-Century Westminster*" Journal of Social History* (23:2) (Winter, 1989) *Passim*.
[672] Amussen (1985) "Gender, Family and the Social Order, 1560-1725" p. 200.
[673] Daniel Defoe. *Everybody's Business is Nobody's Business.* (London, 1725)

Of course, most people knew perfectly well what went on in many master-maidservant relationships and working parents often expressed apprehension over their daughters going into service for just this reason.[674] However, the idea of the conniving and corrupted maidservant seems to have had a particular resonance for middling readers. While there were some who expressed concern for the sufferings of the poor, and made attempts to mitigate the worst excesses of the age, they were not in the majority.[675]

Most middling reformers were a product of their time, and the mental architecture of the era was focused largely on the importance of maintaining strict social and sexual hierarchies and punishing aberrant female behaviour.[676] Consequently, the movement of young girls away from the authority of the family and the supervision of the larger community was topic of particular interest. J. M. Beattie argues that growing levels of public concern over increasing levels of urban female autonomy were expressed in anxiety over what were styled as 'masterless women' and what to do about them.[677] The fact that so many independent women were forced to resort to prostitution or begging on the streets at some point in their lives due to widowhood, abandonment, pregnancy or unemployment caused many to call for control over working women.[678] However, it is worthwhile noting that those who advocated regulating female actions were motivated not only by concern for reducing the poor rate and preventing the spread of crime and disease. Many felt that the moral and economic behaviour of low-ranked women had to

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[674] Anonymous. *The Maid-Servants Modest Defence*. (London, 1725)
[675] Tim Hitchcock. *English Sexualities, 1700-1800*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. pp. 61-62.
[676] Margaret Sommerville. *Sex and Subjection: Attitudes to Women in Early-Modern Society*. London: Arnold. 1995. *Passim*.
[677] Beattie (2001) *Policing and Punishment in London*. pp. 63-67.
[678] Fulford (2006) "Fallen Ladies and Cruel Mothers" pp. 313-315.

be curtailed for the good of the nation and the preservation of the social order.[679] Anti-calico writers exploited these anxieties to craft arguments for the banning of calicos which turned on low ranked female perfidy and selfishness.

**Concerns with Respect to the Clothing and Manners of Female Servants**

> It is not to be wondered at, that in an Age abounding with Luxury, and overrun with Pride, Servants should be in general so bad, that it is become one or our Calamities not to be able to live without them.[680]

As has been established, anti-calico campaigners made a particular effort to vilify calico-clad maidservants. Some of the reasons this argument resonated with middling readers are to be found in prevalent prejudices against serving women. Publications like Hannah Woolley (1622-1675) *The Complete Maid Servant*, Eliza Haywood (1693-1756) *A Present for a Servant Maid* and Defoe's lengthy tirade against "bad" maid servants who "overvalue themselves so much" in *Everybody's Business is Nobody's Business*, reflect the extent to which the middling sort were concerned with regulating the dress, thoughts and behaviours of those of they saw as of lesser social standing.[681] John Styles has identified the three key narratives which were used in attempts to regulate the clothing worn by servants in the eighteenth century. First, servants were derided for dressing above their station, and putting on airs. Second, their pursuit of fashion was seen as an inducement to frivolous spending and demands for higher wages. Moreover, it was widely feared that servants would turn to theft and fraud to obtain fashionable clothes. Finally, there was the issue of emulative competition, where mistresses were obliged to

[679] Hannah Woolley. *The Complete Servant-Maid; or, The Young Maidens Tutor*. (London, 1704), Anonymous. *The Maid-Servants Modest Defence*. (London, 1725), Daniel Defoe. *The Great Law of Subordination Considered*. (London, 1724), Anonymous. *Virtue Rewarded, or, The Fortunate Servant Maid*. (London, 1710)
[680] Eliza Haywood. *A Present for a Servant-Maid*. (London, 1742) Preface.
[681] Daniel Defoe. *Everybody's Business is Nobody's Business*. (London, 1725)

purchase a constant stream of new clothes to keep ahead of the dress of their maids, a concern which had particular resonance for the middle ranks.[682] The amount of effort middling male writers put into influencing social conventions reflected their conviction that they had the right and wisdom to dictate the way material culture was expressed and interpreted, particularly by low-ranked maidservants.

In his lengthy diatribes upon the dress, Defoe grumbled at the manners and the acquisitive nature of modern servants, equating their fine clothing with loose morality, and a worrying decline in standards of household management.[683] A mistress could not be eclipsed by her fashionable maid. However, constantly striving to keep abreast with fashion trends could prove to be ruinously expensive.[684] Bernard Mandeville neatly encapsulated the dilemma faced by upwardly mobile middling women.

> Women of quality are frightened to see merchants wives and daughters dressed like themselves…the contrivance of fashions becomes all their study…that they may have always new modes ready to take up.[685]

Defoe repeatedly cautioned those engaged in retail occupations to avoid overspending on luxuries and the perils of credit and he advised that "it [was] every Lady's prudence to bring her spirit down to her condition."[686] Defoe made the case that constantly seeking to emulate the latest fashions would lead younger or more impressionable members of the middle orders into the pursuit of extravagances they could not afford.

Maintaining clear distinctions between the middling households and the lower orders was an important consideration for the middle ranks.[687] The difference in incomes

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[682] Styles (2002) "Involuntary Consumers?" pp. 9-10.
[683] Daniel Defoe. *Everybody's Business is Nobodies Business*. (London, 1725) *Passim*.
[684] Sherman (1995) "Servants and Semiotics" pp. 561-565.
[685] Mandeville (1795) *Fable of the Bees*. Remarks. p. 70.
[686] Defoe (1727) *The Complete English Tradesman*. pp. 302-303.
[687] Rule (1992) *Albion's People*. pp. 85-87.

between the lower orders, and those who aspired to respectable middle level status, was not always substantial.[688] Therefore, the middle ranks had a much harder task in distinguishing themselves from ordinary folk. The nobles had their titles, the gentry their wealth, but the middle peoples were forced by their socio-economic position to traffic principally in the appearance of creditworthiness, industriousness and respectability.

With very few lending institutions in the country, the middling sort had to rely on family and private lenders for loans making the creation and maintenance of a good reputation crucial.[689] A shortage of copper and silver coinage meant that many day to day transactions had to be done on the basis of credit.[690] Even those of wealth and property might only settle their bills once a year when they received their annual rents, and some deferred payments for years. These circumstances forced middle rank professionals, merchants and tradesmen to participate in the dangerous world of giving and getting credit.[691] Knowing when to advance credit was one of the more difficult skills the middling sort had to master. In a world where considerable emphasis was placed upon dress and deportment as indications of status, respectability and trustworthiness it was possible for the inexperienced and incautious to be dangerously deceived.[692]

The fear that servants and deceitful social climbers dressed in finery and displaying affected manners and graces could pass themselves off as respectable middle

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[688] Joan Kent "The Rural Middling Sort in Early Modern England, circa 1640-1740: Some Economic, Political and Socio-Cultural Characteristics" *Rural History* (10:1) (April, 1999) pp. 21-22.
[689] Hunt (1996) *Middling Sort*. pp. 22-23.
[690] Giorgio Riello. *A Foot in the Past: Consumers, Producers and Footwear in the Long Eighteenth Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. pp. 119-120. Frank McLynn. *Crime and Punishment in Eighteenth-Century England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991. p. 166. J. de L. Mann. *The Cloth Industry in the West of England from 1640-1880*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971. p. 108. John Rule. *The Vital Century: England's Developing Economy, 1714-1815*. London: Longman, 1992. p. 303. Hunt (1996) *Middling Sort*. pp. 30-31. Mckendrick, Brewer & Plumb (1982) *Birth of Consumer Society*. pp. 209-214.
[691] Linda Colley. *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*. London: Yale University Press, 1992. pp. 66-67.
[692] Daniel Defoe. *The Complete English Tradesman*. (London, 1727) *Passim*.

rank citizens to the unwary was not without some foundation in reality.[693] For a fee, people using assumed names and pretend titles were perfectly willing to supply servants with false references.[694] While most of those who availed themselves of such services were sincerely looking for work others had more sinister motives. Inside servants were ideally placed to supply their criminal compatriots with specialized knowledge of the valuable contents of a house, and they could help facilitate an illegal entry. However, crime was not the only option for those seeking material and social gain.

More attractive and ambitious domestics sought to obtain legal access to the wealth of a household by marrying a family member, and it was not unknown for a son of a well-off family to marry a governess or even a maid. The passage of Hardwicke's Marriage Act in 1753 (26 Geo. III. c. 33) was a reflection of the concern upper and middling parents had that their children might be tricked into marriage by low ranked fraud artists who used new fashions and borrowed manners to deceive and enchant the naive and love struck.[695] English society was becoming disturbingly fluid and persons of status had to be constantly on their guard, especially in urban areas.

The relative anonymity of city life meant that cunning individuals might well receive preferment based on false pretences, and publications of the time cautioned newcomers to the city not to be taken in by first appearances.[696] Under the right conditions, ordinary people could be taken for a person higher status based upon their

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[693] Alan Hunt. *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law*. New York: St. Martins Press, 1996. p. 66. Sherman (1995) "Servants and Semiotics" p. 560. Lemire (1991) *Fashions Favourite*. p. 16.
[694] Hecht (1953) *The Domestic Servant Class*. pp. 84-85.
[695] K. D. M. Snell "English Rural Societies and Geographical Marital Endogamy, 1700-1837" *Economic History Review* (55:2) (May, 2002) pp. 267-271. Tim Hitchcock. *English Sexualities, 1700-1800*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. p. 106. Marriages had to be licensed, performed in a church, and carried out only after the banns had been posted. Hill (1998) *Servants*. p. 209.
[696] Gentleman at London. *The Ticks of the Town Laid Open*. (London, 1747)

clothing. For some, to be treated with the deference normally accorded a lady or gentleman, even for a few hours, was a unique and rewarding experience in and of itself. Others evidentially felt entitled to a more permanent improvement in their socio-economic status. Considering the ambitions of designing maidservants, Defoe protested that such behaviour was made inevitable by the temptations of modern city life.

> The Pockets thus furnish'd, and the Back thus cloath'd, and the Servant thus exalted, how can it be expected she shou'd not be above herself.[697]

Fears over the immoral behaviour of female domestics seemed particularly to capture the imagination of the middling peoples as anti-calico writers exploiting misogynist traditions and time-honored stereotypes of female corruptibility to their own advantage.

As noted in previous chapters, when Defoe spoke out against the wiles of maidservants and other low-ranked female social climbers, he was tapping into a vein of growing anxiety which was well represented in popular literature of the day. Maintaining clear symbols of social status was a pressing concern for many upper and middling level employers who were often undermined in their efforts by the proliferation of fashionable clothing. The "well-dressed apprentice is taken for his absent master," Defoe observed petulantly and "the well-dressed maid…seems as good as anyone."[698] Anti-calico propagandists were aware of the tensions surrounding this issue. These writers represented the finely-clothed maidservant as a malevolent social chameleon, adapting her appearance and manners to all occasions, while she subverted the integrity of the middle rank family from within.[699] Of course, such threats were not limited to female

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[697] Daniel Defoe. *The Behaviour of Servants in England Inquired Into*. (London, 1726) p. 15.
[698] Nina Auerbach "Incarnations of the Orphan" *ELH* (14:2) (Autumn, 1975) pp. 395-400. J. S. *The Accomplished Ladies Rich Closet of Rarities* (London, 1687), Eliza Haywood. *A Present for a Serving Maid, or, the Sure Way of Gaining Love and Esteem*. (London, 1747).
[699] Wigston-Smith (2007) "Calico Madams" *Passim*. Sherman (1995) "Servants and Semiotics" p. 506.

servants. The streets of London were often represented in popular literature as being inundated with accomplished fraudsters.

For many influential men of the middle rank, the anti-calico campaign in part amounted to an appeal to man the barricades against the threats posed to their hard-won socio-economic status by economic and social pretenders.[700] The numbers of middle rank men bankrupted and imprisoned for debt at this time (including Defoe himself) showed that such mistakes could have disastrous consequences.[701] For dissemblers, on the other hand, the benefits of deceit frequently far outweighed the risks of detection. Practiced confidence artists were well aware of the value of fake honours and lineages, and many were willing to exploit the gullibility of the public for their own ends. Of course, not everyone was deceived. However, fraudsters would not have gone to the trouble of taking on false titles if there were no potential benefit in it.[702]

By the early eighteenth century, high social status was becoming rapidly dislocated from its traditional basis in landed property.[703] The urban environment in particular blurred distinctions of rank making the practice of giving and receiving credit became evermore complicated and perilous.[704] These legitimate fears were particularly felt by a growing middle-rank population that relied on outward displays of respectability

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[700] Gregg (2009) *Defoe's Writings*. pp. 20-21.
[701] Paula Backscheider. *Daniel Defoe: His Life*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989. Chapter 3. Wrightson (2000) *Earthly Necessities*. pp. 293-294.
[702] Robert Shoemaker. *The London Mob. Violence and Disorder in Eighteenth-Century England*. London: Hambeldon & London, 2004. pp. 1-18. Smith (2002) *Consumption and Respectability*. pp. 25-59.
[703] H. R. French "The Search for the 'Middle Sort of People' in England, 1600-1800" *The Historical Journal* (43:01) (March, 2000), pp. 87, 94-98.
[704] Mckendrick, Brewer & Plumb (1982) *Birth of Consumer Society*. pp. 209-215. Hunt (1996) *Middling Sort*. pp. 22-45. Earl (1989) *Middling Sort*. pp. 124-129.

when conducting business.[705] However, concerns over unstable sartorial indicators were not the only problem facing the middling sort. New consumer goods were bringing refinements of taste and expectation to English society making the assertion of middling manly authority ever more complicated as men were increasingly required to reconcile traditional attitudes with new manners and changing expectations of masculinity.[706]

As has been shown, to many at the middle level, the proliferation of new fashions and manners appeared to be contributing to a crisis of masculinity as independent and assertive women challenged accepted patterns of middling order male conduct.[707] During the Calico riots, writers like Daniel Defoe (often depicted as the "literary apostle" of the middling sort) and Claudius Rey played upon such concerns.[708] When they complained that new clothing blurred the distinctions between the social ranks and sowed confusion, anti-calico activists were effectively calling on middle rank men to reassert normative standards of gender and social order.[709] However, within this spectrum of concern, the actions and purchasing habits of independent working women appeared as the greatest threat to middle rank masculine society, and they attracted the greatest attention during

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[705] Lorna Weatherhill. *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660-1760*. London: Routledge, 1988. pp. 13-17. Stana Nenadic "Middle Rank Consumers and Domestic Culture in Edinburgh and Glasgow, 1720-1800" *Past & Present* (145) (November, 1994) p. 123.

[706] Michele Cohen "Manners Make the Man: Politeness, Chivalry, and the Construction of Masculinity, 1750-1830" *Journal of British Studies* (44:2) (April, 2005) pp. 314-315. Langford (2002) "The Uses of Eighteenth-Century Politeness" pp. 312-318. Robert Shoemaker "Male Honour and the Decline of Public Violence in Eighteenth-Century London" *Social History* (26:2) (May, 2001) *Passim*. Gregg (2009) *Defoe's Writings*. Chapter 2. Harvey (2004) *Reading Sex*. pp. 10-11.

[707] Michael Kimmel "The Contemporary Crisis of Masculinity in Historical Perspective" in Harry Brod (Ed.) *The Making of Masculinities: The New Men's Studies*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1987. pp. 121-153. Hunt (1998) *Middling Sort*. pp. 211-212. John Styles & Amanda Vickery (Eds.) *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830.* London: Yale University, 2006. pp. 16-17. Philip Carter "An Effeminate of Efficient Nation? Masculinity and Eighteenth-Century Social Documentary" *Textual Practice* (11:3) (1997) *Passim*.

[708] French (2000) "Middle People" p. 282.

[709] Jonathan Eacott "Making an Imperial Compromise: The Calico Acts, the Atlantic Colonies, and the Structure of the British Empire" *William & Mary Quarterly* (69:4) (2012) pp. 745-746. Rey. *The Weavers' True Case*. Objection IV (London, 1719). Lemire (1991) *Fashion's Favourite.* pp. 16, 21. Sherman (1995) "Servants and Semiotics" *Passim*. Baker-Benfield (1992) *Culture of Sensibility.* pp. 173-179.

the Calico riots.[710] Thompson argues that customary paternalism represented an idealized past and seemed to offer stability to eighteenth-century English people.[711] In times of rapid change, and political and economic uncertainty, traditional social and gendered hierarchies assumed an iconic significance which made challenges to male authority appear particularly threatening to middle rank commentators.[712]

Patriarchal governance of the social and domestic realms was considered by many to be both normal and natural, and even tacit female challenges to traditional masculine authority were regarded with grave suspicion.[713] As has been demonstrated, moving from the closely ordered rural life of the village to the relative anonymity and freedom of England's rapidly growing urban centres offered working women unprecedented levels of personal liberty.[714] By the early eighteenth century, the fact that notable numbers of women were living beyond the control of conventional male-dominated authority structures was a new and unsettling phenomenon for persons of all ranks, however it was middling level males who displayed the greatest interest in this issue.[715] Though expressed in concerns over effeminacy, masterless women and social climbers, the principal motive for the strong middle rank male reaction to the use of printed fabrics was

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[710] Beverly Lemire (Ed.) *The British Cotton Trade, 1660-1815.* (Vol. II) London: Pickering and Chatto, 2010. pp. XIV-XVI. Wigston-Smith (2007) "Calico Madams" *Passim*.
[711] E. P. Thompson. *Customs in Common*. London: Merlin Press, 1991. pp. 23-24. Earle (1989) *The English Middle Class*. pp. 3-16.
[712] Erin Mackie. *Market a la Mode: Fashion, Gender and Community in the Tatler and Speculator*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997. pp. 117-121.
[713] Laura Gowing. *Common Bodies: Women, Touch and Power in Seventeenth-Century England*. London: Yale University Press, 2003. Introduction. Ingrid Tague "Love, Honour and Obedience: Fashionable Women and the Discourse of Marriage in the Early Eighteenth Century" *Journal of British Studies* (40:1) (January, 2001) *Passim.* Hunt (1996) *Sumptuary Law.* pp. 85, 218. Borsay (1989) *The English Urban Renaissance.* pp. 225-308. Shepard (2005) "From Anxious Patriarchs to Refined Gentlemen" *Passim.*
[714] Penelope Corfield "Walking the City Streets: The Urban Odyssey in Eighteenth-Century England" *Journal of Urban History* (16:2) (February, 1990) pp. 133-134. Peter Earle (1989) "The Female Labour Market" *Passim*. Willen (1988) "Women in the Public Sphere" p. 561.
[715] Fulford (2006) "Fallen Ladies and Cruel mothers" *Passim*. Mendelson & Crawford. *Women in Early Modern England.* pp. 165-201. Nenadic (1994) "Middle Rank Consumers" p. 129.

a desire to assert conventional authority over the dress and conduct of women. Thompson tended to minimize the importance of this group.[716] However, middling men were significant to the creation and control of urban rioting situations.[717] This fact was to have profound implications for those who wished to control the spread of calico clothing and punish women who indulged in Indian fashions. Middle rank men were in an excellent position to manipulate public policy and popular opinion, and were occasionally complicit in encouraging mob actions that served their own interests. In their roles as professionals, newspapermen, religious figures, legal officials and the leaders of merchant and trade organizations, such men proved willing and capable of manipulating public opinion and exploiting popular grievances for their owns ends. Such considerations make the analysis of some crowd actions complicated.[718]

As has been demonstrated, many large scale protesters in early eighteenth-century England seem to have been directed from above and some were not what they appeared to be.[719] For example, protests in support of the Pretender were often used as a means to advance partisan political, economic and social ends, and not with any serious intention of installing the Stuart claimant.[720] In such instances, well funded and skilful agitators

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[716] Kent (1999) "Middling Sort" pp. 19, 41, 44. Susan Brown "A Just and Profitable Commerce: Moral Economy and the Middle Classes in Eighteenth-Century London" *Journal of British Studies* (32:4) (October, 1993) pp. 325-326.

[717] Simon Renton "The Moral Economy of the English Middling Sort in the Eighteenth Century: the Case of Norwich in 1766-1767" in Adrian Randall & Andrew Charlesworth. (Eds.) *Markets, Market Culture and Popular Protest in Eighteenth-Century England and Ireland*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996. pp. 115-136. Randall (2006) *Riotous Assemblies.* pp. 6-7.

[718] Kathleen Wilson. *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism, 1715-1785*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. pp. 84-117. Shoemaker (2004) *The London Mob*. p. 136.

[719] Nicholas Rogers "Popular Protest in Early Hanoverian England" *Past & Present* (79) (May, 1978) p. 87. Paul Monod "Dangerous Merchandise: Smuggling, Jacobitism, and Commercial Culture in Southwest England, 1690-1760" *Journal of British Studies* (30:2) (April, 1991) pp. 151-162. Andy Wood. *Riot, Rebellion and Popular Politics in Early Modern England*. New York: Pelgrave, 2002. pp. 182-185.

[720] Robert Shoemaker "The London Mob in the Eighteenth Century" *Journal of British Studies* (26:3) (July, 1987) pp. 293-294. P. J. Thomas. *Mercantilism and the East India Trade*. London: Frank Cass and Co., Ltd., 1963. pp. 140-142.

were able to whip up a crowd with inflammatory rhetoric and free liquor and similar efforts proved useful during the Calico Crisis. However, a sustained nation-wide appeal to protect the traditional wool and silk industries could not be maintained using such tactics alone. Winning the support of influential middling men was of pivotal importance, and the focus of the wool and silk campaign against printed cottons and linens was directed at that group. The use of print media directed towards the perceived interests and concerns of the middling sort was vital to this process.

**Rising Levels of Female Independence and Consumer Autonomy**

As has been established, despite the traditional limitations on their actions, women at all levels of society were visibly asserting their agency in the economic and domestic spheres.[721] For some women the prospect of a separate existence from a marriage dictated by financial need or social pressure had a significant appeal. Evidence for such attitudes can be found both in female employment patterns and in their consumption of non-traditional items. Those who wrote for the female marketplace were catering to the needs of women who were interested in bettering themselves, as well as reading for its own sake. A proliferation of conduct manuals and books on household and business management were targeted at this predominantly middling female audience. Moreover, female writers were producing novels for female readers and some were even writing their autobiographies.[722] However, even as popular writings served as a vehicle for female social and intellectual advancement, they also served a means for those troubled by rising levels of female agency to publicly express their concerns.

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[721] Randall (2006) *Riotous Assemblies.* pp. 312-313. Baker-Benfield (1992) *Culture of Sensibility*. Chapter 6 "Women and Individualism: Inner and Outer Struggles Over Sensibility" Maxine Berg. *The Age of Manufacturers: Industry, Innovation and Work in Britain, 1700-1820*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985. pp. 169-171.

[722] Hunt (1996) "Middling Sort" pp. 88-89.

Apprehension over incidents of female independent thought and action were a common feature of literature in early eighteenth-century England.[723] While public opinion was far from united on this issue, there could be no doubt that a noticeable shift in female behaviour was underway.[724] In the streets of the rapidly growing urban centres, 'masterless women' not under the direct authority of a male guardian, were increasingly to be seen. Though most were gainfully employed others were reduced to begging or soliciting.[725] As discussed previously, a significant gender imbalance existed in England, which was particularly evident in urban centres. Some women were war widows or abandoned mothers while others faced the prospect of never marrying in a society which regarded unmarried women as socially unproductive, unnatural and sexually suspect creatures.[726] Consequently, increasing numbers of low–ranked women were having to work on their own and live in a world that was hostile to their perceived autonomy.[727] Despite the fact that most unmarried working women who remained single did so out of necessity rather than choice, society tended regard then as suspicious and women who attempted to go it alone were constrained by more than public disapproval.[728]

A range of legal and traditional impediments existed to limit independent female participation in public life. This was particularly the case when these unattached females

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[723] D. E. Underdown "The Taming of the Scold: the Enforcement of Patriarchal Authority in Earl Modern England" in Anthony Fletcher & John Stevenson (Eds.) *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. p. 117.
[724] Owen (2010) *Female Crusoe*. pp. 13-14.
[725] Willen (1988) "Women in the Public Sphere" p. 561. Mendelson & Crawford (1998) *Women in E. M. England*. pp. 96-97. Spicksley "A Dynamic Model of Social Relations" in French and Barry (2004) *Identity and Agency in England*. p. 112.
[726] French & Barry (2004) *Identity and Agency in England.* p. 28. Bridget Hill. *Women, Work and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth-Century England*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994. pp. 229-231.
[727] Ellen Pollck "Gender and Fiction in *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*" in John Richetti (Ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Daniel Defoe.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. pp. 148-149. Nina Auerbach "Incarnations of the Orphan" *ELH* (42:3) (Autumn, 1975) pp. 396-397. Earle (1989) *The English Middle Class*. pp. 157-174.
[728] Anonymous. *The Maids Vindication; or, the Fifteen Comforts of Living a Single Life*. (London, 1707). Shoemaker (1998) *Gender in English Society.* pp. 91-92.

were young and appealing. J. M. Beattie argues that such women were frequently associated in the popular mind with prostitution and other forms of immoral living which had the potential to destabilize families and even whole communities.[729] This was not an unreasonable conclusion. Given the shortage of men, many married women had good reason to fear their husbands might leave them for a younger woman, or at the very least squander money on prostitutes. As the number of young single working women living on their own became impossible to ignore, tensions inevitably mounted.[730] Of course, most women of the time only turned to the sex trade out of desperation. Many more actively sought honourable work. They were increasingly to be seen engaged in gainful employment and actively participating in the culture and commerce of the time.

For all the social conventions which discouraged female participation in business and public life, early eighteenth-century England was witnessing noticeable increases in the levels of female commercial enterprise and political action.[731] In 1720 approximately ten percent of businesses, usually food and drink shops or stores which catered to a largely female clientele such as dress makers, were operated by women.[732] Peter Earle contends that 10 percent of London pawnbrokers in the early 1700s were women, and that females were often important partners in middling level businesses.[733] Such conclusions, based on insurance and tax records, likely only hint at the number of women who traded, and engaged in other money-making ventures.

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[729] Beattie (2001) *Policy and Punishment in London.* pp. 63-73.
[730] P. Sharpe "Literary Spinsters: A New Interpretation of Local Economy and Demography in Colyton in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries" *Economic History Review* (44:1) (February, 1991) *Passim.*
[731] Lorna Weatherill "A Possession of One's Own: Women and Consumer Behaviour in England, 1660-1740" *Journal of British Studies* (25:2) (April, 1986) *Passim*. Baker-Benfield (1992) *Culture of Sensibility*. pp. 191-198. Smith (2011) "Politics, Patriotism and Gender" p. 67.
[732] Mendelson & Crawford (1998) *Women in Early Modern England*. pp. 331-333.
[733] Earle (1989) The *English Middle Class*. pp. 169-170.

The renting of rooms was an acceptable occupation for a single woman and a common means for widows to maintain an independent existence, and those who possessed an acceptable degree of literacy might even board and teach young girls for a few pence a day. Middling families appreciated the value of a practical female education, and the proliferation of educational facilities for girls suggests something of the extent to which those with disposable incomes invested in the instruction of young girls.[734] Even for the lower orders female literacy rates were increasing in early eighteenth-century and not a few women who came to London became passably literate as adults.[735] With knowledge came power, and some women were keen to assert their agency on the economic stage, and more than a few progressive men thought they should do so.

Some middle rank men felt it appropriate for their wives and daughters to have a sound practical instruction which would aid them in their domestic responsibilities and enable them to be efficient helpmeets to their husbands.[736] Daniel Defoe earnestly advised tradesmen to make their wives aware of their financial affairs to prevent the problems which arose from imprudent spending and the ill-advised use of credit.[737] Other social commentators of the time offered up cautionary tales of what could happen to the wives and children of middle rank men who died unexpectedly. Without sufficient education and training, women in such situations often came to grief.[738] Defoe believed in education for middle rank women. He saw to it that his own daughters were educated, and he appreciated the aid and support of his wife, whom he often praised as a virtuous

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[734] Hunt (1996) *Middling Sort*. pp. 19, 88-89, 96, 271.
[735] Earle (1989) "The Female Labour Market" pp. 333-336.
[736] Francois Felon. *The Education of a Young Gentlewoman.* (London, 1699)
[737] Daniel Defoe. *The Complete English Tradesman.* (London, 1728) pp. 132-136.
[738] John Rogers. *A Sermon Preached before the Corporation for the Relief of the Poor Widows and Orphans of Clergymen*. (London, 1719) p. 16. Hunt (1996) *Middling Sort*. pp. 155-157.

woman possessed of an abundance of practical common sense.[739] Though legally and traditionally the husband exercised the supreme authority, it is likely that a number of middling marriages operated beneficially along such companionate lines.[740] This is not to say that middle rank women were necessarily free to enjoy the novel material refinements of the age. Many social impediments still existed to limit their freedom of choice.

Conventional thought held that a woman should be a mistress of her own condition. In practical terms, this was understood to mean that she should not aspire to things beyond her station in life and live sensibly within her means.[741] Therefore, female education and labour was meant to augment male leadership not replace it. Laws which gave a father, husband or employer the right to physically chastise the females under his authority left many women with little doubt as to where they stood in the pecking order.[742] Changing manners and social expectations may have meant that wife beating was increasingly less acceptable in middle rank society. Nevertheless, the practice remained a check upon female thought and action. The anti-calico polemicist Sir Richard Steele abhorred the mistreatment of women which was endemic in early eighteenth-century English society. However, he was also a man of his time, and believed that the education of women should be appropriate to their sex, and their station in life.

In *The Tatler* and *The Spectator,* the popular magazines he published with Joseph Addison in the years prior to the Calico Crisis, Steele appealed to women of the middle station to adopt moderate dress and demonstrate the education and decorum appropriate to their sex and rank. He implored them to help maintain a superior and immutable moral

[739] Backscheider (1989) *Daniel Defoe*. p. 33.
[740] Fletcher & Stevenson (1985) *Order and Disorder*. pp. 31-32. Gowing (2003) *Common Bodies*. p. 177.
[741] Owen (2010) *Female Crusoe*. p. 61.
[742] Fletcher (1995) *Gender Subordination*. pp. 364-375.

and social hierarchy by preserving time-honoured traditional values and patterns of deference.[743] Within these systems, the stylish cotton and linen clothing preferred by female consumers often assumed great practical and symbolic significance.[744]

The clothing and the purchasing habits of ordinary women were at the heart of the Calico Crisis. Defoe's petulant complaints at the habits of servant girls provides insight into the extent to which ordinary women felt entitled to spend their wages.

> The Behaviour of Women Servants, I assure you, is at this time grown up to be as great a Grievance [any] other…Pride, haughty and insolent Behaviour, gay dressing, and profusion of Clothing; by which it is now become frequent in middling Families, that the Chambermaids have better Laces, and finer Silks than the Mistress, and it is not easie to know the Servants from the Daughters of a Family.[745]

Female workers were often ill-paid compared to their male counterparts, and their hours and working days were frequently irregular as demand for their services was often subject to rapid fluctuation.[746] On the other hand, women at this time worked long and hard for the wages they earned, and many felt that they had the right to dispose of their surplus income as they saw fit. Anti-calico propagandists skillfully exploited widely felt concerns over the rise of female assertiveness in the market place to level charges of treason against working women who refused to wear woollen textiles.[747]

Allegations that English women were engaged in reckless spendthrift habits which were putting the country at risk by undermining traditional economies, values and hierarchies were a common feature of anti-calico propaganda. Defoe was quick to place the blame for the suffering of "starving" wool and silk workers on the "Folly of [English]

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[743] Lemire (2005) *Business of Everyday Life*. p. 122. Mackie (1997) *Fashion, Commodity & Gender*. p. 1.
[744] Baker-Benfield (1992) *Culture of Sensibility*. p. XXII.
[745] Daniel Defoe. *The Great Law of Subordination Consider'd.* (London, 1724) Letter X. p. 284
[746] Katrina Honeyman. *Women, Gender and Industrialization in England, 1700-1870*. London: McMillan Press Ltd., 2000. pp. 12-13, 23, 27-28. Mendelson & Crawford (1998) *Women in E. M. England*. pp. 102-105. Hill (1994) *Women, Work. Passim*.
[747] Beverly Lemire. *Cotton*. Oxford: Berg, 2011.p. 52.

Women" and their passion for Indian Fashions.[748] Such arguments were intended not only to reflect badly on the manliness of those responsible for such wayward women, they were also intended to engender a wider sense of moral panic in the general public.[749] An examination of the witch craze in Chapter 5 will establish the fact that moral panics relied heavily on the fear generated by emotional and evocative imagery for their effectiveness and they were often engendered by groups wishing to advance claims which were not supported by substantial evidence or even logic. J. A. Sharpe makes the case that moral panics were particularly prone to occur during times of political and social upheaval and economic distress.[750] England was facing a number of serious problems in the early 1700s and these conditions contributed to the strong bias against plebeian women who were perceived to be violating traditional values, traditions and hierarchies. Such female plebeian behaviour was particularly alarming to middling men.

Lemire argues that anti-calico propagandists deftly built upon existing narratives of female corruptibility when they made the agency and purchasing habits of English women the focus of their campaign.[751] Jonathan Eacott argues that anti-calico propagandists cleverly framed their arguments, juxtaposing a woman's freedom of action in the marketplace with the natural and traditional rule of men. In suppressing the activities of women, men were not only asserting their rightful masculine authority, they were also told that they were also acting in the best interests of the nation.[752] Margaret Hunt acknowledges that an appeal to traditional male dominated social conservatism doubtless resonated with English men of all social ranks and faiths. Such narratives were

[748] Daniel Defoe. *The Weaver's True Case*. (London, 1719)
[749] Claudius Rey. *The Weavers' True Case*. (London. 1719) Appendix.
[750] J. A. Sharpe. *Crime in Early Modern England, 1550-1750*. London: Longman, 1999. p. 61.
[751] Lemire (2011) *Cotton*. pp. 51-61.
[752] Eacott (2012) "Making an Imperial Compromise" p. 754.

particularly strong among the leading men of the middle rank who had the keenest interest in propagating patriarchal policies and attitudes intended to maintain the hierarchical standards which sustained their social and economic position.[753]

**Conclusion**

In E. P. Thompson's own words, early eighteen century paternalism and the male dominated social order seemed, "a magical social quantum, every day refreshed from the innumerable springs of the small workshop, the economic household [and] the landed estate."[754] Traditional paternalism was seen to do important and necessary things and the institutions which were perceived to sustain paternalism mattered, and had to be preserved. Maintaining masculine power structures was crucial to this process even as the meanings of masculinity evolved. The calico issue was portrayed as an instance where English men should reassert their customary authority over their female relatives, employees and low ranked women.[755] During the Calico riots, skilled pro-wool polemicists effectively conveyed the message that calicos, exemplified by the clothing worn by immoral and over proud maid servants, represented an insidious threat to the patriarchal prerogatives of fathers, husbands, employers and authorities.[756] By means of an artful appeal to maintain traditional English masculine power structures, the architects of the Calico riots undermined the traditional social safeguards built into Thompson's moral economy, which prevented excessive violence.

If the fundamental basis of the moral economy, the paternalist chain of command, was portrayed as being under threat, protesters could make a credible claim that

[753] Hunt (1996) *Middling Sort*. p. 50.
[754] Thompson (1991) *Customs in Common*. p. 20.
[755] Eacott (2012) "Making an Imperial Compromise" p. 746.
[756] Fletcher & Stevenson (1985) *Order and Disorder*. pp. 31-33.

reasserting male dominance and protecting traditional trades and markets was more important than protesting in a moderate fashion. On the streets, rank and file weavers asserted a vigorous physical discipline over women dressed in calico, while prominent anti-calico writers made direct appeals to the male middle rank to restrain the pernicious fashion choices of their womenfolk, by exercising traditional domestic authority.[757] Men of the middling station were emerging as significant actors on the early eighteenth-century English stage, and they stood as important arbitrators of public opinion. Obtaining the backing of this group proved vital to the anti-calico campaign, and skilled propagandists made it clear that this was an issue of concern to all middle rank men.

The concerns of the influential urban middle rank played an important role in forming the public discourse surrounding the Calico Crisis. Fears that ambitious social climbers and dissembling servants might corrupt or undermine the socio-economic position of the middling sort were made more credible to middling audiences who were already preoccupied with the apparent decline in masculine authority. New fashions, manners and luxuries were seen by many people to be diminishing the manliness of English society at all social levels. Effeminate men, who were incapable of controlling their households, could not be expected to maintain the systems of governance, and martial readiness, which ensured integrity of the nation. The rise in the number of independent women, and their decision to purchase and wear corrupting foreign cotton fabrics in the face of popular opposition, appeared to many to be symptoms of a society in distress. Anti-calico propagandists skillfully tapped into these generalized fears when they consciously set about creating a moral panic which demonized the actions of women who chose to wear exotic imported Indian calico cotton printed fabrics.

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[757] Claudius Rey. *The Weavers True Case*. (London, 1719) Appendix.

## Chapter 5

### Politics, the Anti-Calico Controversy and the Targeting of Women

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the political, economic, historical and social context in which the Calico Crisis took place. Orchestrated by wealthy and powerful men within the wool and silk industries, a sustained and well-funded media campaign which cast calico clad women as the enemy of morality and the national interest did much to engender and legitimize anti-female attitudes at all levels of society.[758] However, such propaganda cannot alone fully account for the levels of public aggression directed against low ranked women dressed in printed fabrics, the defining feature of the Calico riots. In the early eighteenth century England was undergoing rapid and unprecedented changes. Within this evolving cultural milieu, traditional patriarchal systems of governance and conventional social boundaries were showing signs of strain.[759] This was particularly the case when it came to the conduct and appearance of working women. In a culture which placed great importance upon dress as an indicator of rank, the issue of fashionably clothed maidservants represented a troubling ambiguity to many among the middling sort which anti-calico writers were keen to exploit.

Women in early eighteenth century England were experiencing greater freedoms and opportunities than ever before. This process was aided by the growing use of new printed textiles which served to blur the visible sartorial lines between the social ranks as it was becoming increasingly difficult to differentiate maids from their mistresses based

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[758] Beverly Lemire. *Fashion's Favourite: The Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain, 1660-1800*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991. pp. 12-42. Chloe Wigston-Smith "Callico Madams: Servants, Consumption, and the Calico Crisis" *Eighteenth-Century Life* (31:4) (Spring, 2007) *Passim*.
[759] E. P. Thompson "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century" *Past & Present* (50) (February, 1971) *Passim*.

on their dress alone.[760] Such ambiguous social indicators were a source of considerable anxiety for the growing middle ranks who placed great emphasis upon visibly distinguishing themselves from those they saw as their social inferiors. For this reason, the men of the middling station who acted as local and state authorities, law enforcement officers and jury members, were generally disinclined to prevent anti-calico violence directed against low ranked women dressed in fashionable printed fabrics. This was particularly the case when it came to maidservants who were often depicted in anti-calico propaganda as disingenuous social climbers out to subvert the integrity of the middle station from within their own homes. However, it would be inaccurate to ascribe widespread tolerance for anti-calico violence entirely to this motive.

Transformations in plebeian dress coincided with increasing numbers of women living and working outside of the traditional family structure and away from conventional male authority. During the Calico Crisis, this rise in female autonomy was linked to the use of printed cotton and linen textiles. In these behaviours, not a few saw dangerous challenges to what was widely perceived to be the natural social and gender order. As seen in Chapter 1, these changes came at a troubled time for the nation, and for the wool and silk industries and the many working families they employed.[761]

The 1707 Act of Union had brought Scotland, and an influx of Scottish goods, into England's economic sphere.[762] When the wool industry was already struggling against the danger posed by Indian cottons, the production of printed Scots and Irish

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[760] Woodruff Smith. *Consumption and the Making of Respectability*. London: Routledge, 2002. pp. 56-60.
[761] Stant Nenadic "Middle-Rank Consumers and Domestic Culture in Edinburgh and Glasgow, 1720-1840" *Past & Present* (145) (November, 1994) *Passim*. Beverly Lemire. *Cotton*. Oxford: Berg, 2011. pp. 43-64. Margaret Hunt. *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender and the Family in England, 1680-1780*. Berkley: University of California Press, 1996. Chapters 4 and 5.
[762] Bob Harris "Parliamentary Legislation, Lobbying and the Press in Eighteenth-Century Scotland" *Parliamentary History* (26:1) (2007) pp. 76-77, 81-84. Keith Wrightson. *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain*. London: Yale University Press, 2000. pp. 264-268.

linens posed an additional threat to a traditional English manufacture at a time when many perceived the nation to be internally weak and at risk from foreign influences.[763] The War of Spanish Succession had driven up the national debt and caused sharp tax increases at a time of already rising food prices. Peace had brought joblessness for many who had been working in war related industries while returning soldiers took to banditry.[764] Finally, the Stuart dynasty had come to a disputed end, leaving the nation in turmoil as elite leaders undertook to exploit public uncertainty for their own advantage.

**The Politics of England in the Early Eighteenth Century**

> God bless the King, I mean the Faith's Defender,
> God bless – no harm in blessing – the Pretender;
> But who Pretender is or who is the King,
> God bless us all – that's quite another thing.[765]
>
> John Byrom (1692-1763)

By any standard the thirty years leading up to the Calico Crisis were notable for many significant events following one hard upon the other. The most profound of these, from the perspective of the traditional leadership of the nation, was the accession of the House of Hanover.[766] With the death of her sole surviving child and heir in 1700, it was clear that the aging and chronically ill Anne (r. 1702-1714) would be the last of the Stuart line.[767] By the terms of the 1701 Act of Settlement (12 & 13 Will. III. c. 2) the throne was to pass not to those in direct relation to Anne, as they were tainted by their associations with Catholicism, but rather to a distant Protestant claimant who was over fifty steps

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[763] Beverly Lemire "Transforming Consumer Custom: Linens, Cottons and the English Market, 1660-1800" in Brenda Collins & Philip Ollerenshaw (Eds.) *The European Linen Industry in Historical Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University press, 2003. *Passim.*
[764] J. M. Beattie. *Policing and Punishment in London, 1660-1750: Urban Crime and the Limits of Terror.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. pp. 47-48.
[765] John Byrom. *To an Officer in the Army*. (London, 1720).
[766] Kathleen Wilson. *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. pp. 84-117.
[767] Mark Kishlansky. *A Monarchy Transformed, Britain, 1603-1714*. London: Penguin, 1996. p. 316.

down the ladder of succession.[768] Though establishment clergy still spoke to the common folk of their religious duty to serve the sovereign, it was clear to many that political and religious expediency, and not the will of God, had brought George Lewis to the throne of England.[769] This was not necessarily an impediment to a successful transfer of royal power. Similar accommodations had been made before. The Glorious Revolution of 1688 had resulted in the ouster of the unpopular Catholic James II (r. 1685-1689) on the grounds that he had threatened the ancient rights and liberties of the English people.[770] Officially regarded as an abdication as opposed to an overthrow, the fact that James II was followed by his Protestant daughter Mary II (r. 1689-1694) and her Dutch husband William III (r. 1689-1702) gave the succession a needed veneer of legitimacy.[771] This was not the case when the Elector of Hanover came to the British throne.

George I (r. 1714-1727) was German, and a Lutheran. He was despised by many of the ordinary people of England on both these counts and more than a few feared the Anglican church was threatened by a combination of Whig policies of religious toleration and German Lutheranism.[772] The personality of the imported king did little to improve matters. Fifty-four years old when he came to the throne, the portly and irritable George I cut a poor figure. He had never been to England before, barely spoke the language, and

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[768] Linda Colley. *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*. London: Yale University Press, 1992. pp. 46-47.
[769] J. C. D. Clark. *English Society, 1660-1832: Religion, Ideology and Politics During the Ancien Regime*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. p. 87. Colin Haydon. *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth-Century England, c. 1714-1780: A Political and Social Study*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993. pp. 86-87. Basil Williams. *The Whig Supremacy, 1714-1760*. Oxford: Clarendon, 2004. pp. 14-15.
[770] Tim Harris "The People, the Law, and the Constitution in Scotland and England: A Comparative Approach to the Glorious Revolution" *Journal of British Studies* (38:1) (January, 1999) p. 28.
[771] Douglas Hay & Nicholas Rogers. *Eighteenth-Century English Society: Shuttles and Swords*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. pp. 54-55.
[772] Nicholas Rogers "Popular Protest in Early Hanoverian London" *Past & Present* (79) (1978) pp. 90-95.

lacked many of the social graces which might have endeared him to his new subjects.[773] Nicholas Rogers, among others, notes the extent to which George I squandered the goodwill of the nation by focusing his attentions upon German functionaries and favorites, and the military intrigues of his little principality of Hanover.[774] The British, who had just finished one long and expensive continental war, feared becoming embroiled in another and were justifiably wary of the aggressive anti-French foreign policy of their new Hanoverian ruler.[775] Persons of all ranks were taking a growing interest in the governance of their nation and were increasingly unwilling to accept untrammeled authority of any sort.[776] While the ruler of England remained a powerful individual, the conventions which governed the monarchy in 1714 were significantly different from those which prevailed less than thirty years earlier.

The nature of kingship in England had changed considerably since the reign of James II. The 1689 Bill of Rights (1 Will. & Mary s. 2 c. 2) had laid out the terms under which the sovereign would and could rule.[777] Significant powers over taxation, law, and the armed forces were given to parliament and ancient rights and liberties, including the right to free speech and to petition the sovereign, were to be protected.[778] While these changes placed substantial new limits upon royal authority, the crown remained

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[773] Nicholas Rogers. *Crowds, Culture and Politics in Georgian Britain*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1998. pp. 54-55. Andy Wood. *Riot, Rebellion and Popular Politics in Early Modern England*. New York: Palgrave, 2002. pp. 190-191. Paula Backscheider. *Daniel Defoe: His Life*. Baltimore: John's Hopkins University. Press, 1989. pp. 372-373. Adrian Randal. *Riotous Assemblies: Popular Protest in Hanoverian England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. p. 24. Wilson (1998) *The Sense of the People.* p. 87.
[774] Rogers (1998) *Crowds, Culture and Politics*. p. 24. Jeremy Black "Hanover and British Foreign Policy, 1714-1760" *English Historical Review* (120:486) (April, 2005) *Passim*. Williams (2004) *The Whig Supremacy*. pp. 11-15. Rogers (1978) "Popular Protest in Early Hanoverian London" pp. 95-97.
[775] Hay & Rogers (1997) *Shuttles and Swords*. p. 56. Backscheider (1989) *Daniel Defoe: His Life*. p. 369.
[776] H. R. French "The Search for the Middle Sort of People in England, 1600-1800" *Historical Journal* (43:1) (March, 2000) p. 287.
[777] Harris (1999) "The People, the Law and the Constitution" *Passim*.
[778] Kathleen Wilson "Inventing Revolution: 1688 and Eighteenth-Century Popular Politics" *Journal of British Studies* (28:4) (October, 1989) *Passim*.

important to the effective functioning of government and still held considerable power. The monarch could appoint and dismiss ministers and important officials, declare war or make peace, and call and dissolve parliament.[779] Intelligent and capable as a leader, William III had been able to actively work within this system to effect policy initiatives which he favoured.[780] His successor, Queen Anne, was cut from very different cloth.[781]

Neither Anne nor her husband, Prince George of Denmark (1653-1708), were politically accomplished. They relied heavily upon the use of pageantry and calculated acts of charity to endear themselves to the people while the real work of government was largely done by others.[782] The contrast between the capacities of skillful William and the pliable Anne was neatly summed up in a popular verse from the time.

> King William thinks all
> Queen Mary talks all
> Prince George drinks all
> And Princess Anne eats all.[783]

A sometime intimate of the queen, Sarah Churchill (1660-1744), wife of the Whig general John Churchill Duke of Marlborough (1650-1722), was even more blunt. She described Anne as being concerned with "very little besides ceremonies and customs of courts and suchlike insignificant trifles."[784] Without an effective husband to aid her, and with few internal resources to fall back on, the dull-witted Anne shifted uneasily under

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[779] Colley (1992) *Britons: Forging the Nation*. p. 196.
[780] James Bohun "Protecting Prerogative: William III and the East India Trade Debate, 1689-1698" *Past Imperfect* (2) (1993) p. 81. Williams (2004) *The Whig Supremacy*. pp. 14-15.
[781] J. H. Plumb "The Organization of the Cabinet in the Reign of Queen Anne" *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (7) (1957) pp. 155-156.
[782] R. Bucholz "Nothing but Ceremony: Queen Anne and the Limitations of Royal Ritual" *Journal of British Studies* (30:3) (July, 1991) *Passim*.
[783] Julian Hoppit. *Land of Liberty? England 1689-1727*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. p. 135.
[784] William King (Ed.) *Memoirs of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough: Together with Her Characters of Her Contemporaries and Her Opinions*. London: Henry Colburn, 1930. p. 230.

the influence of a succession of partisan advisors and notorious favourites.[785] Where the shrewd William had maintained a delicate balance between competing political interests, Anne oscillated unpredictably between the Whig and Tory factions.[786] A weak and ineffective monarch left a power vacuum that had to be filled, and consequently nascent political parties were becoming ever more important. By the end of the reign of Queen Anne, the Tories had assumed dominance within parliament and at court.[787]

Traditionally the supporters of the crown, the Tories were not inclined to be charitable to the imported Hanoverian monarch and his German court, and an ambitious few actively intrigued to reinstate the House of Stuart.[788] This was not an impossible dream. Charles II (r. 1660-1685) had been restored to the English throne, with French backing, after the death of Oliver Cromwell (r. 1653-1658). James Stuart (1688-1766) was not, however, destined to replicate the success of his late uncle.

For all the build up, the 1715 landing of James Stuart in Scotland, where the unequal 1707 Act of Union was proving less than popular and a rallying point for anti-English sentiment, did not come to much.[789] While the arrival of the Stuart claimant initially provoked some enthusiasm among his followers, and consternation among his enemies, poor coordination, uninspired leadership and a rational assessment of the

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[785] Sara Mendelson & Patricia Crawford. *Women in Early Modern England, 1550-1720*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1998. pp. 245-246. Laura Gowing. *Common Bodies: Women, Touch and Power in Seventeenth-Century England*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003. p. 68. Rachel Weil. *Political Passions: Gender, the Family and Political Argument in England, 1680-1714*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999. Chapter 8. Henry Snyder "Queen Anne Versus the Junto: The Effort to Place Orford at the Head of the Admiralty in 1709" *Huntington Library Quarterly* (35:4) (August, 1972) *Passim*.

[786] Gyorgy Borus "Political Parties in the Years Before and After the Glorious Revolution" *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies* (13:1/2) (Spring-Fall, 2007) pp. 127-128. Clyve Jones "Debates in the House of Lords on 'The Church in Danger,' 1705, and on Dr Sacheverell's Impeachment, 1710" *Historical Journal* (19:3) (September, 1976) *Passim*.

[787] David Hayton "The Crisis in Ireland and the Disintegration of Queen Ann's Last Ministry" *Irish Historical Studies* (22:87) (March, 1981) p. 193.

[788] Rogers (1978) "Popular Protest in Early Hanoverian London" p. 84.

[789] Wrightson (2000) *Earthly Necessities.* pp. 265-266.

consequences of a Catholic restoration effectively doomed this venture.[790] Basil Williams makes the case that there was never any significant support among the people of England for a Catholic Stuart restoration.[791] Despite some elite attempts to engender grassroots support for the Jacobite cause, the commitment of the common people typically proved to be short-lived. E. P. Thompson maintains that early eighteenth-century English plebeian political crowds were not always predictable, nor were they always easily controlled.[792] This was an opinion shared by perceptive early eighteenth century observers who noted the mutable and excitable nature of common rioters.

> The *London* Rabble, vulgarly call'd The *Mobb*, are a confus'd Multitude Jumbled together by Disorder, econourag'd by Noise, encreas'd by Mischief, enrag'd by Force, Civil by Chance. They are for the most part, good to them they can't Hurt, and bad to those who would save them from Hanging.[793]

It was easy enough to rally the English crowd to a temporary cause, particularly if alcoholic inducements were on offer. Getting rioters to perform on demand, and stay committed to a doubtful and dangerous undertaking, often proved more difficult.

In the short term, protesters could be very useful and contemporary accounts repeatedly emphasize the fact that momentary crowds could be formed with promises of little more than drink and some excited rhetoric. An anti-Whig riot in Cambridge in 1714 was thus quickly assembled when news of a Whig electoral victory reached the city. The historian John Oldmixon (1673-1742) expressed his disgust at the behaviour of the mob.

> The next Day towards Afternoon, some of the Ringleaders and Abettors of this Mob arriv'd, mortal Drunk, with the News of [the] election, upon which the Mob increas'd to that Degree in Fury, as well as Number (being also made Drunk before-hand to prepare them for their Work)…[they]

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[790] Backscheider (1989) *Daniel Defoe*. pp. 382-383.
[791] Williams (2004) *The Whig Supremacy*. p. 150.
[792] E. P. Thompson. *Customs in Common*. London: Merlin Press, 1991. p. 91.
[793] Burgess. *Doctor Burgess's Character of the London Mobb.* (London, 1710)

> mobbed about the Town all Day and part of the Night, insulting People as they rode through the Streets.[794]

Another contemporary observer disdainfully noted how easily plebeian protesters in Bristol were recruited in 1714 to defend the High Church of England, and how fleeting was their loyalty to the cause once the free drinks ran out.

> The High Church [protesters] hardly ever heard of Religion, till [it was] given them by the Faction, and as they will do any thing for Drink, the Faction take care to give them enough of it when they are wanted.[795]

Of course not all protesters were motivated solely by liquor. As was seen in during the Calico riots, a skillfully executed media campaign could also be used to great advantage.

One of the principal propagandists employed by the anti-calico movement, Daniel Defoe displayed a deep understanding of the effect a well-coordinated publicity campaign could have on the plebeian crowd and cautioned the Whig government in 1714,

> The medling with Hawkers and Ballad Singers may be thought a Trifle; but it ceases to be so, when we consider that the Crying and Singing of such Stuff, as vile as it is, makes the Government familiar, and consequently contemptible to the People, warms the Minds of the Rabble, who are more capable of Action than Speculation, and are animated by Noise and Nonsense…The greatest Mischief arises from…small Papers, and their being nois'd about the Streets: 'Tis the quickest and surest way Sedition has to take. Pamphlets work slowly, and the Operation of one Pamphlet is often spoli'd by that of another. Besides, the Publishers of 'em are to come at, and the Printer and the Publisher being as much accountable for the Offence they give as the Author, the State will know how to find out and chastise the Offenders. Their Liberty Therefore ought not to be abridged, but those that abuse it to be punished.[796]

While it was unwise to underestimate the agency of the plebeian mob, the propensity of ordinary people to become enamored by excited language was also well known. Those who sought to turn the power of the mob to their advantage walked a dangerous path.

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[794] Anonymous. *An Account of Riots, Tumults, and other Treasonable Practices: Since His Majesty's Accession to the Throne*. (London, 1715) pp. 18-19.
[795] John Oldmixon. *The Bristol Riot: A Full and Particular Account of the Riot in General*. (1714) p. 6.
[796] Daniel Defoe. *Some Reflections on the License of the Pulpit and the Press.* (Dublin, 1714) pp. 31-32.

Adrian Randall maintains that some plebeian demonstrations in support of James Stuart were largely provoked not by Jacobite sympathies, but by discontent with the policies of the newly elected Whig government.[797] Both Robert Shoemaker and George Rudé note that common people were more than capable of exploiting periods of uncertainty for their own ends, and could be recruited by either party depending upon the temper of the crowd, the issue at hand and the inducements on offer.[798] In his later years, Thomas Pelham-Holles (1693-1768), the Whig duke of Newcastle, noted "We owe the Hanoverian succession to the Mob."[799] According to the Whig politician and jurist Sir Dudley Ryder (1691-1756), this was due in no small part to the significant funds, effort and influence the duke expended to promote the succession of the House of Hanover.

> The Duke of Newcastle is the man who promotes the Whig mobs more than any one. He gives away a vast deal of money on that account. This has made him become the [enemy] of all the Tories who are Continually cursing him and wishing all evil may befall him.[800]

On the other end of the political spectrum, a "very great Tory" and Jacobite in Bristol, known only as Mr. C---, was reputed to have been active in recruiting crowds to protest in support of the Stuart case in 1714. Witnessing this, John Oldmixon maintained,

> the Magistrates and Citizens of *Bristol*, are *Whigs*. And the *Tories* cou'd never have carried any Point [there] but by the Interest of a very great Tory [who] by laying out some Thousands of Pounds in building Hospitals here [made people forget] he was a Jacobite.[801]

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[797] Adrian Randall. *Riotous Assemblies: Popular Protest in Hanoverian England.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. pp. 45-53.
[798] Robert Shoemaker "The London Mob in the Early Eighteenth Century" *Journal of British Studies* (26:3) (July, 1987) pp. 303-304. George Rudé. *Hanoverian London, 1714-1808*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1971. pp. 206-209.
[799] James Fitts "Newcastle's Mob" *Albion* (5:1) (Spring, 1973) p. 41.
[800] Dudley Ryder. *The Diary of Dudley Ryder, 1715-1716*. William Matthews (Ed.) London: Methuen and Company, 1939. p. 255.
[801] John Oldmixon. *The Bristol Riot: A Full and Particular Account of the Riot*. (London, 1714) pp. 4-5.

Those who organized the anti-calico protests of 1719 would have found in the 1714 Hanoverian succession an effective model for how to advance a popular cause by way of cunning rhetoric directed towards a receptive audience. If the Jacobites failed to thrive, it was because those in power, and their middle rank allies, preferred that outcome and warily prevailed upon the will of ordinary people. Evidence for the important role such support for popular causes could play may be found in the actions of High Church Tories who hesitated when it came to supporting the Stuart restoration in 1715.[802]

Linda Colley points out that a Jacobite victory in the early 1700s would not have been a straightforward exchange of one king for another. The French, the traditional supporters of the Stuarts and the Spanish, who backed an abortive invasion of Scotland in 1719, would in all likelihood expect a substantial political and economic return for any military and financial aid they gave to James Stuart.[803] In practical terms, this could mean a foreign Catholic army occupying England and dictating policy to a young and inexperienced Catholic Stuart monarch who had displayed a very slight capacity for leadership. The implications of such an outcome would have been troubling to many, and doubtless accounted for the limited support the Stuart rising received among the elites and middling sorts. While the Jacobite invaders were soon seen off, the event served to highlight what many saw as serious rifts in the recently formed kingdom of Great Britain.

As has been demonstrated, not a few designing individuals exploited political divisions.[804] As Rogers argues, the plebeian crowd had become a force to be reckoned

[802] Maximillian Novak "Defoe's Political and Religious Journalism" in John Richetti (Ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Daniel Defoe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. p. 27.
[803] Colley (1992) *Britons: Forging the Nation*. pp. 24, 71-74.
[804] Haydon (2003) *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth-Century England.* Chapter 2.

with and it behooved politicians of all stripes to carefully cultivate popular opinion.[805] For those who wished to undermine the trade in printed textiles in the early eighteenth century, the actions of powerful Whigs and Tories provided compelling evidence of the extent to which the English crowd could be manipulated with rhetoric and bribes. It would be inaccurate, however, to assert that the discontent of plebeian protesters was entirely down to organized manipulation. English society was rapidly changing in the early eighteenth century and persons of all ranks were feeling fearful of political, social and economic transformations they could neither understand nor control.

**Common Concerns in Early Eighteenth-Century England**

> An Englishman will like no newspaper that does not shew him he is ill governed and on the brink of ruin.[806]

England was not a peaceful and settled country in the early eighteenth century and people at all levels of society were increasingly expressing their concerns with the direction the nation was taking in newspapers and pamphlets. The number of crimes punishable by death increased sharply at this time as the upper and middle ranks felt and feared the pressure from those below.[807] As seen in Chapter 1, waves of refugees, new technologies and foreign imports were causing consternation among workers in the wool and silk industries. However, the concerns of English people extended well beyond economic matters. Corruption and mismanagement at the highest levels, particularly in the manner in which the War of Spanish Succession had been fought, caused growing numbers of low and middle station peoples to question the judgment and moral capacities

[805] Nicholas Rogers. *Whigs and Cities: Popular Politics in the Age of Walpole and Pitt*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989. pp. 351, 368-372.
[806] Anthony Chaimer, Under-Secretary in the Southern Department (1778) quoted in Jeremy Black. *The English Press in the Eighteenth Century*. London: Croon Helm, 1987. p. 135.
[807] Frank McLynn. *Crime and Punishment in Eighteenth-Century England.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991. pp. 257-258.

of their leaders.[808] War profiteers had done very well out of the conflict by servicing government contracts for military supplies. Their profits had driven up the national debt significantly and the middling sorts were required to cover the bill through tax increases and poor rate hikes.[809] Added to this were the human costs associated with war.

Although technically a victory, the 1709 battle of Malplaquet alone had resulted in over 16,000 British casualties and many more men had died, and been seriously wounded, in the war.[810] Increasingly, the citizens of the newly created nation of Great Britain were using the press and popular media to question the conduct of generals like Marlborough, and the human and monetary costs of the conflict.[811] The war had left large numbers of widows and orphans dependent upon parishes across the country, and created a significant gender imbalance. In London alone it was estimated that there were thirteen single women, including widows, to every ten men.[812] Moreover, those men who did return often carried physical and mental scars which made adapting to civilian life difficult. With little hope of reintegrating into society, many turned to crime.

Demobilized Royal Navy sailors could normally find positions with the merchant marine. Many returning soldiers were not so fortunate. Most had little beyond a few weeks pay to sustain them, and their numbers were substantial. In 1714 alone, over

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[808] Black (1987) *The English Press in the Eighteenth Century*. p. 11.
[809] Rogers (1978) "Popular Protest in Early Hanoverian London" p. 92. Jack Lindsay. *The Monster City: Defoe's London, 1688-1730*. London: Granda, 1978. p. 76.
[810] Backscheider (1989) *Daniel Defoe*. pp. 286-287.
[811] Hannah Smith "Politics, Patriotism, and Gender: The Standing Army Debate on the English Stage, circa 1689-1720" *Journal of British Studies* (50:1) (January, 2011) *Passim*. Black (1987) *The English Press in the Eighteenth Century*. p. 156. Rogers (1978) "Popular Protest in Early Hanoverian London" p. 77.
[812] Tim Fulford "Fallen Ladies and Cruel Mothers: Ballad Singers and Ballad Heroines in the Eighteenth Century" *The Eighteenth Century* (47:2/3) (2006) p. 313. Peter Earle. *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660-1730.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989. p. 184.

155,000 combatants were discharged and repatriated.[813] At a time when the population of England was only 5.25 million, this influx of ex-servicemen represented a significant increase in the population.[814] Following a pattern of behaviour that was repeated after every previous war, those who could not, or would not, return to civilian life turned to banditry.[815] By 1719, gangs of former soldiers were roving the country, driving up the crime rate and hampering the ordered practice of inland commerce.[816] As a result, parishes were obliged to spend more on law enforcement which lead to greater demands being placed on middling level ratepayers and militiamen. Increasingly, the educated middling sorts were inclined to express dissatisfaction with the governance of their nation and many saw a significant need for reform when it came to the care of the poor.

In addition to the issue of rising crime rates, the war had also served to drive up taxes, and the national debt, at a time when rising numbers of people were in need of government aid. Between 1700 and 1710 the cost of living had increased by thirty-percent.[817] Poor weather had led to a series of bad harvests which pushed grain prices to record levels in 1710.[818] These shortages were particularly felt during the bitterly cold winters of 1709 and 1715-1716.[819] For growing numbers of people, life was becoming harder each year and the failure of elites to honour what were widely seen as their traditional paternalist responsibilities to care for the poor served to compound these

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[813] L. D. Schwartz. *London in the Age of Industrialization: Entrepreneurs, Labour Force and Living Conditions, 1700-1850*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. p. 100. McLynn (1991) *Crime and Punishment*. p. 321.
[814] J. Rule. *The Vital Century: England's Developing Economy, 1714-1815*. London: Longman, 1992. p. 5.
[815] Tim Hitchcock & Robert Shoemaker. *Tales from the Hanging Court*. London: Hodder Arnold, 2006. p. 158. Beattie (2001) *Policing and Punishment in London*. pp. 47-48. Rogers (1978) "Popular Protest in Early Hanoverian London" p. 93. McLynn (1991) *Crime and Punishment*. pp. 323-324.
[816] Backscheider (1989) *Daniel Defoe*. p. 477.
[817] Backscheider (1989) *Daniel Defoe*. p. 286.
[818] Rogers (1998) *Crowds, Culture and Politics*. p. 34. Hay & Rogers (1997) *Shuttles and Swords*. p. 72.
[819] Schwartz (1992) *London in the Age of Industrialization*. pp. 112-113. M. Dorothy George. *London Life in the Eighteenth Century*. London: Penguin, 1966. p. 40. Rogers (1978) "Popular Protest in Early Hanoverian London" pp. 92-93.

miseries. Where once the privileged had been expected to display proper paternalist charity at times of need, the costs of caring for the parish poor were more and more being carried by the middle ranks. Not surprisingly, many ordinary people felt that traditional paternalist governance and public benevolence were in serious decline in England.

In his writings, Thompson placed great emphasis upon the important role conventional paternalist relationships played in the lives of the common folk in early eighteenth-century England.[820] From the sovereign down to the head of the household, patterns of authority were customarily expressed and understood in paternal terms and many people looked to the upper ranks to provide leadership and charity during hard times.[821] In the cities, political infighting, corruption and mismanagement displayed by the great did little to inspire confidence.[822] In the countryside, the gentry and nobility were perceived by many to be neglecting their time honoured obligations.

Thompson notes that face-to-face interactions between agrarian tenants and their landlords were in noticeable decline in the early eighteenth century.[823] Growing numbers of substantial rural landowners were moving away from the paternalist practice of having full-time live in servants and workers, to the practical habit of employing on demand and part-time labourers. Bridget Hill makes the case that such patterns of elite behaviour were reflective of a decline in traditional patterns of paternalism at all levels.[824] Where once rural people had looked to the landed gentry and nobility to act as community leaders, disinterested absentee landowners were ever more intent upon maximizing profit while

[820] E. P. Thompson. *Whigs and Hunters: The Origin of the Black Act*. London: Allen Lane, 1975. pp. 127-128, 175. E. P. Thompson "Eighteenth-Century English Society: Class Struggle Without Class?" *Social History* (3:2) (May, 1978) *Passim*. Thompson (1971) "Moral Economy" *Passim*. E. P. Thompson "Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture" *Journal of Social History* (7:4) (1974) *Passim.*
[821] Wood (2002) *Riots in Early Modern England*. pp. 20-21.
[822] Lindsay (1978) *Monster City*. p. 139.
[823] Thompson (1974) "Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture" *Passim.*
[824] Bridget Hill. *Servants: English Domestics in the Eighteenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996. p. 5.

avoiding needless expenses.[825] Enclosing common lands allowed property owners to add to the size of their estates while, at the same time, driving off the marginally productive working poor who were the most likely to require support from the parish.

The enclosure of common land represented for many a profound and irrevocable rupture with traditional patterns of English rural life.[826] In his examination of the moral economy of the English crowd, Thompson notes that these changes disrupted community systems which had served as the social bedrock of England for centuries.[827] Generations of accumulated social norms which were fundamentally bound up in hierarchical relationships and systems of mutual support were loosing their relevance.[828] Sara Birtles argues that efforts to force enclosures represented a conscious effort on the part of elites to divorce themselves from their traditional obligations to the rural poor.[829] The nature of English rural society was changing rapidly and ordinary people were feeling threatened by rapid economic and social changes they could neither understand nor control.

The weakening in customary rural systems of local governance left a significant physical, social and psychological void in the lives of rustic peoples. For growing numbers, their only option was to relinquish any hope of maintaining their customary agrarian life. Some were able to take on extra work via the putting-out system to supplement their farming incomes. However, many more were required to move to urban

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[825] John Rule. *Albion's People: English Society, 1714-1815*. London: Longman, 1992. pp. 48-49. Williams (2004) *The Whig Supremacy*. pp. 54, 107-108.
[826] J. A. Yelling "Rationality in the Common Fields" *Economic History Review* (35:3) (August, 1982) pp. 414-415. Bridget Hill. *Women, Work, Sexual Politics in Eighteenth-Century England*. London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994. p. 83. Wood (2002) *Riots in Early Modern England*. p. 94.
[827] Thompson (1971) "Moral Economy" pp. 79, 83, 88, 91, 95, 132.
[828] Hay & Rogers (1997) *Shuttles and Swords*. p. 99.
[829] Sara Birtles "Common Land, Poor Relief and Enclosure: The Use of Manorial Resources in Fulfilling Parish Obligations, 1601-1834" *Past & Present* (165) (November, 1999) pp. 74-75.

centers in search of employment.[830] The population of England was increasing noticeably in the early eighteenth century with London leading the way with a population of 575,000 by 1700.[831] Levels of congestion, noise, crime and the pace of city life were beyond the experience rural folk and the traditional means of imposing social order used in village culture were of little avail.[832] Of particular concern for in the lower and middle ranks were the growing numbers of young female servants living and working beyond conventional masculine guidance or control. The wearing of printed fabrics was seen by many as a bold assertion of this growing female autonomy. Moreover, due to the sustained efforts of skilled anti-calico propagandists, the used of calicos came to be understood as an assault upon that most English of manufactures, the wool industry.

**The Politics of Calico in the Early Eighteenth Century**

> [The Manufacture of woolens] is one of the chief procuring Causes of Riches, and of improving the Land. [833]

The extent to which advocates for the wool industry were able to manipulate popular opinion for their own ends was due in large part to the iconic and pivotal role wool played in the lives of many people. In the early eighteenth century the manufacture of wool was Britain's largest industry.[834] Woollen fabrics and the more fashionable worsted blends of light wool and silk, known as new draperies, constituted the visible end

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[830] Jan De Vries. *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behaviour and the Household Economy, 1650 to Present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. pp. 186-187. Thompson (1991) *Customs in Common*. pp. 380-394.
[831] John Bohstedt. *The Politics of Provisions: Food Riots, Moral Economy, and Market Transition in England, c. 1550-1850.* Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010. p. 35.
[832] Lee Davidson, Tim Hitchcock, Tim Keirn and Robert Shoemaker (Eds.) *Stilling the Grumbling Hive: The Response to Social and Economic Problems in England, 1689-1750*. New York: St. Martin's, 1992. pp. XXVIII-XXIX.
[833] N. C. *The Great Necessity and Advantage of Preserving our own Manufactories being and answer to a Pamphlet Intitle'd The Honour and Advantage of the East-India Trade* (London, 1697)
[834] Julia De Lacy Mann. The Cloth Industry in the West of England from 1640 to 1880. Oxford: Clarendon, 1971. Chapter IX. Phyllis Deane "The Output of the British Woolen Industry in the Eighteenth Century" *Journal of Economic History* (17:2) (June, 1957) *Passim*. C. Gulvin "The Union and the Scottish Woollen Industry, 1707-1760" *The Scottish Historical Review* (50:150) (October, 1971) *Passim.*

products of a vast and intricate network of producers and manufacturers that spanned the nation and brought finished English goods to the world. The wool industry was by far the largest employer in the country and for centuries wool had served as a major English export, an iconic symbol of national identity, and a mainstay of the economy.[835]

Wool was a fabric that kept infant children and the elderly warm in draughty homes and hovels. It clothed everyone from paupers to professors and by law it served as a burial shroud for the dead.[836] Silk fashions were beyond the purse of most people and linen products, though increasingly available in the late seventeenth century, usually could not compare in price with the wool fabrics.[837] However, after the 1660 Restoration consumers of all ranks were being increasingly drawn to the novel patterns and colours of the new EIC cotton textiles.[838] Originally a sideline to the oriental spice trade for the EIC, the importation of Indian fabrics was becoming ever more common and profitable.[839]

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[835] Tim Keirn "Parliament, Legislation and the Regulation of English Textile Industries, 1689-1714" in Lee Davidson, Tim Hitchcock, Tim Keirn & Robert Shoemaker (Eds.) *Stilling the Grumbling Hive: The Response to Social and Economic Problems in England, 1689-1750*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992. *Passim*. David Rollison. *The Local Origins of Modern Society: Gloucestershire, 1500-1800*. New York: Routledge, 1992. pp. 21-22. W. J. Ashley "The Early History of the English Woollen Industry" *Publications of the American Economic Association* (2:4) (September, 1887) pp. 13-14.

[836] Beverly Lemire (Ed.) *The British Cotton Trade, 1660-1815.* (Vol. II) London: Pickering and Chatto, 2010. pp. IX-XVII. E. Lipson. *A Short History of Wool and Its Manufacture: Mainly In England*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1953. p. 99.

[837] N. B. Harte "The Rise of Protection and the English Linen Trade, 1690-1790" in N. B. Harte & K. G. Ponting (Eds.) *Textile History and Economic History: Essays in Honour of Miss Julia de Lacy Mann.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1973. pp. 75-76. Audrey Douglas "Cotton Textiles in England: The East India Company's Attempt to Exploit Developments in Fashion, 1660-1721" *Journal of British Studies* (8:2) (May, 1969) p. 42.

[838] Lemire (2010) *The British Cotton Trade.* (Vol. II) p. 48. Robert Gosselink (Ed.) *The Manufacturer by Daniel Defoe, 1719-1721*. New York: Scholars Facsimiles and Reprints, 1978. pp. VII-VIII. P. J. Thomas. *Mercantilism and the East India Trade.* London: Frank Cass, 1963. p. 48.

[839] Pamela Ulrich "From Fustian to Merino: The Rise of Textiles Using Cotton before and after the Gin" *Agricultural History* (68:2) (Spring, 1994) pp. 223-227. Douglas Irwin "Mercantilism as Strategic Trade Policy: The Anglo-Dutch Rivalry for the East India Trade" *Journal of Political Economy* (99:6) (December, 1991) pp. 1312-1313. Om Parakesh "The East India Company and India" in H. V. Bowen, Margarette Lincoln & Nigel Rigby (Eds.) *The Worlds of the East India Company.* Woolbridge, Leicester: University of Leicester, 2002. pp. 1-6.

The widespread appeal of printed textiles was both understandable and undeniable. Printed cottons and linens were fashionable and their production undoubtedly provided jobs for a respectable number of English, Scots and Irish linen workers and dyers. However, beyond the issues of fashion and employment lay the practical realm of day to day life. In comparison with light weight wool products, linens and cottons were comparatively easy to care for. The physical and financial costs associated with doing laundry were a major consideration for the hard-working home makers of the middle and lower ranks.[840] From the point of view of fashion, colourful cottons and linens offered the lower and middling sorts the style and sophistication of silk at a fraction of the price, features which particularly appealed to the female consumer.[841] Feminine sensibilities, at all social levels, were highly important in the evolution of fashion trends and did a great deal to encourage the use of printed fabrics in the early 1700s.[842] However, the EIC calico trade initially prospered because of the patronage of the great and powerful.

By the beginning of the reign of George I the integration of these new textiles into the upper echelons of English society had already been carefully stage-managed by the EIC for decades. After the 1660 Restoration, EIC directors set out to win the favour of the king and council by providing high quality calico clothing to influential women at court, and dispensing strategic bribes to their husbands.[843] Presenting gifts of attractive Indian fabrics to ladies of exalted position helped to bolster EIC fortunes by putting

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[840] John Styles "Product Innovation in Early Modern London" *Past & Present* (169) (2000) p. 140. Hill (1994) *Women, Work, Sexual Politics*. pp. 108-113.
[841] Alfred Wadsworth & Julia De Lacy Mann. *The Cotton Trade and Industrial Lancashire, 1600-1780*. New York: Augustus M. Kelly, 1968. p. 129. Lemire (1991) *Fashion's Favourite*. p. 14.
[842] Chandra Mukerji. *From Graven Images: Patterns of Modern Materialism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983. p. 192.
[843] Peter Linebaugh. *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. p. 46. Lemire (2010) *The British Cotton Trade.* (Vol. II) p. IX. Lemire (1991) *Fashion's Favourite.* pp. 14-15.

calico on the fashion map in England.[844] This strategy proved very successful. In terms of social impact, the widespread use of calico in the late 1600s caused a great revolution in consumption, which was only surpassed in later years by the extensive use of tea, tea sets, and the performance of polite tea rituals.[845] Ensuring that political elites preferred such goods reinforced the correlation between calico and style in the popular mind and such patronage was judiciously cultivated to great effect by the EIC.[846]

The EIC had enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship with the later Stuart kings. Both Charles II and James II received 10,000 guineas a year in direct payments from company and in return the EIC received royal protection. Consequently, a 1680 petition by the London Weavers to prohibit the wearing of Asian fabrics was rejected.[847] However, by the late 1689 EIC fortunes were in doubt.[848] In the wake of the Glorious Revolution of 1689 parliament was eager to assert authority over what had traditionally been royal revenues. The India trade was very lucrative and a single EIC ship could yield £10,000 in customs duties for the crown.[849] Though the dismantling of the EIC was narrowly averted in 1690, it was clear that accommodations would have to be made with

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[844] Erin Mackie. *Market a la Mode: Fashion, Commodity & Gender in the Tatler and Spectator*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997. pp. 40-41. Gosselink (1978) *The Manufacturer by Daniel Defoe.* pp. VII-VIII. Thomas (1963) *Mercantilism and the EIC*. p. 27.

[845] Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace. *Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping and Business in the Eighteenth Century.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1997. pp. 19-36. P. J. Marshall "Afterward: the Legacies of Two Hundred Years of Contact" in H. V. Bowen, Margarette Lincoln & Nigel Rigby (Eds.) *The Worlds of the East India Company.* Woolbridge, Leicester: University of Leicester, 2002. p. 236.

[846] Douglas (1969) "Cotton Textiles in England" p. 29. Thomas (1963) *Mercantilism and the EIC*. p. 27.

[847] Arnold Sherman "Pressure from Leadenhall: The East India Company Lobby, 1660-1678" *Business History Review* (50:3) (Autumn, 1976) *Passim*. Lemire (2011) *Cotton*. p. X.

[848] Henry Horwitz "The East India Trade, the Politicians, and the Constitution: 1689-1702" *Journal of British History* (17:2) (Spring, 1978) *Passim*. Parakunnel Thomas "The Beginnings of Calico Printing in England" *The English Historical Review* (39:154) (April, 1924) p. 207. Patrick O'Brien, Trevor Griffiths & Phillip Hunt "Political Components of the Industrial Revolution: Parliament and the English Cotton Textile Industry, 1660-1774" *Economic History Review* (44:3) (August, 1991) p. 404.

[849] Narcissus Luttrell. *The Parliamentary Diary of Narcissus Luttrell, 1691-1693*. Henry Horwitz. (Ed.) Oxford: Oxford University, 1972. (28 November 1691) p. 46.

powerful interests at court and in parliament.[850] Ultimately, the EIC was reformed into a larger company in 1708 in order to allow more investors to profit by the India trade. However, this change did not bring an end to the controversy over cotton imports.

The reign of William III coincided with increasing anti-calico agitation resulting in widespread rioting by wool and silk weavers against imported Indian textiles in 1697.[851] Capitalizing upon this civil unrest, an increasingly coordinated woolen industry lobbying campaign resulted in Parliament passing laws (11 & 12 Will. III. c. 10) against the importation of printed and painted calicos in 1700.[852] However, by chance or design this legislation provided no financial penalties for wearing printed linen and linen/cotton blends made in England, and did not prohibit the importation of unprinted cotton fabric.[853] The nascent English fabric printing industry was quick to capitalize on this oversight to begin copying Indian inspired patterns on imported plain cotton and homegrown linen on a large scale.[854] With increasing volumes of domestically produced printed cotton and linen on the streets, it became extremely difficult to distinguish between fabrics patterned in England and Indian printed calicos illegally smuggled into the country.[855] The ill-conceived 1700 attempt to ban calicos had only served to make the problem of competition from printed fabrics worse. However, the full effect of this was not to be felt for some time as the linen industry was then still in development.[856]

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[850] Bohun (1993) "Protecting Prerogative" p. 67.
[851] Carole Shammas "The Decline of Textile Prices in England and British America Prior to Industrialization" *Economic History Review* (47:3) (1994). pp. 500-501.
[852] Lipson (1953) *History of Wool*. p. 100.
[853] Rogers (1989) *Whigs and Cities*. p. 318.
[854] Beverly Lemire "Revising the Historical Narrative: India, Europe, and the Cotton Trade, c. 1300-1800" in Giorgio Riello & Prasannan Parthasarathi (Eds.) *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1200-1850*. pp. 223-224. Alfred Plummer. *The London Weaver's Company, 1600-1970*. London: Routledge, 1972. pp. 294-295. O'Brien, Griffiths & Hunt (1991) "Political Components" p. 405.
[855] Wadsworth & Mann (1968) *The Cotton Trade*. p. 139.
[856] Lemire (1991) *Fashion's Favourite.* pp. 32-33.

Linen fabric had become a significant source of competition for wool and silk manufacturers by the time of the Calico riots.[857] Linen supplies were relatively limited until the 1690s when the English government had made the growing of hemp and linen in England and Ireland a priority in order to ensure strategic supplies of rope and sailcloth.[858] Such state efforts produced significant results and imports of linen cloth from Ireland grew from 299,000 yards a year to in 1700 to 2,560,000 yards a year in 1720.[859] Increasing supplies of domestically produced linen brought down prices for English buyers and the 1707 union with Scotland, a major linen producer, reduced costs even further. While not denying the clear fact that linen originated from areas entirely under English control, Defoe railed against the tendency of the fashion conscious English to eschew traditional woolen goods for what he saw as exotic linen fabrics.

> We run to the remotest Corners for some Shift or other to cheat our-selves; and now we see the general Cloathing (of the meaner People specially) runs into the meanest, tawdriest Colours, stamp'd upon the most ordinary Linen, fetch'd from *Scotland*, *Ireland*, or indeed any where; as if any thing but our own was to be our Choice, and as if we had forsworn our own Manufacturers, and were asham'd to be dressed in our own Cloths.[860]

However, the Scots did not hesitate to demand protection for their domestic industries. Their appeals to parliament to protect Scottish manufactures and linen workers used the same arguments as did the defenders of the English wool and silk industries.[861]

> Linnen is become the staple Commodity of *Scotland*. All Hands are employ'd in that Manufactory, every Town and Village in *Scotland* are particularly Concern'd in the Improvement of it, a great many thousand Work-People who would otherwise be sent a starving are thereby

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[857] Lemire (2003) "Transforming Consumer Custom" pp. 187-197.
[858] Davidson, Hitchcock, Keirn & Shoemaker (1992) *Grumbling Hive*. p. 10.
[859] Harte and Ponting (1973) *Textile and Economic History*. pp. 92-93.
[860] Daniel Defoe. *A Brief Deduction of the Original, Progress, and Immense Greatness of the British Woollen Manufacture*. (London, 1727) p. 51.
[861] Harris (2007) "Parliamentary Legislation" pp. 81-84.

> maintain'd, Land improv'd, the Tenants thereby enabled to pay their Rents, and the Navigation considerably encourag'd; and there is not any Borough in *Scotland*, where there is not an Incorporation of Weavers, whose greatest, if not only Business, in the weaving of Linnen.[862]

The case of English wool and silk industries was further hampered by the increasing numbers of English linen workers and printers eager to expand their businesses.

English linen producers in the 1680s had initially feared losing market share to cotton and joined with the wool and silk manufacturers in denouncing the foreign fabric. However, as import duties on India cloth increased and linen became competitive in price with cotton, the industry shifted its focus from opposition to emulating the colourful Asian patterns.[863] Setting the claims of English wool and silk workers against the domestic linen industry was never going to be an effective strategy. Moreover, by 1719 it was clear that efforts by the wool and silk industries to stop EIC cotton imports by appeals to authorities and the mass petitioning of MPs had produced little of value. Moreover, with the Whigs now in power this was unlikely to change. Though there were overlapping interests in the calico issue, it generally fell out that Tories, particularly those related to large land owning interests, favored protectionism and the wool and silk lobby. On the other hand, the Whigs tended to lean towards greater freedom in international trade and economic development. Politicians and influential figures on both sides of the calico debate used newspapers to considerable effect to advance their view points.[864]

Prominent Whig newspapers such as the *Weekly Journal or British Gazetter* took a dim view of the extreme actions of the weavers, whereas the Tory backed *Weekly*

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[862] Anonymous. *The Case of the Convention of the Royal Boroughs in Scotland, in relation to the Linnen-Manufactory of that Country*. (Edinburgh? 1720)
[863] Lemire (2003) "Transforming Consumer Custom" p. 194. Francina Irwin "Scottish Eighteenth-Century Chintz and Its Design" *Burlington Magazine* (107:750) (September, 1969) *Passim*.
[864] Parakunnel Thomas "The Beginnings of Calico-Printing in England" *English Historical Review* (39:154) (April, 1924) pp. 214-215.

*Journal or Saturday Post* (usually called *Mist's Journal*) supported the anti-calico cause.[865] It only remained to be seen which side would come up with the discourse that most appealed to the influential middle rank male readership.[866] As Peter Earle notes, the tactic of using print media, and paid crowd actions, to influence popular opinion was common practice.[867] Thompson placed a great deal of emphasis upon the role the popular consensus played in legitimizing rioting behaviour.[868] Successfully appealing to the concerns, sympathies and prejudices of the influential wider community was also essential if groups agitating for a particular course of action were to achieve their goals.

**Popular Media and the Anti-Calico Campaign**

Popular media, in particular newspapers and magazines, could be used to significant effect by those wishing to bring about social, political and even personal change. Some magistrates and social action groups like Societies for the Reform of Manners used the threat of publishing names of intemperate persons in newspapers as a means of controlling what were seen as inappropriate behaviours.[869] Such strategies were often effective as newspapers were still relatively recent innovations at the time of the Calico riots and many people had great faith in the power of the printed word. This was particularly the case when it came to the lower orders who did not possess the learning and critical reasoning skills necessary to dissect complex ideas. A lack of education meant common folk might be more easily swayed by the arguments put forward by those claimed to possess moral authority and expert knowledge of wrongdoing.[870]

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[865] Thomas (1963) *Mercantilism and the EIC*. p. 143.
[866] Edward Baines. *The History of Cotton Manufacture*. London: H. Fisher, 1835. p. 80.
[867] Earle (1989) *English Middle Class*. pp. 260-268.
[868] Thompson (1971) "Moral Economy" pp. 78-78, 112.
[869] Shoemaker (2004) *London Mob*. p. 254.
[870] P. B. J. Hyland "Liberty and Libel: Government and the Press During the Succession Crisis in Britain, 1712-1716" *English Historical Review* (101:401) (October, 1986) *Passim*.

The rustic folk of England were schooled from birth to display respect towards their social betters. Naturally this was not a blind devotion. The many incidents of rioting in English history demonstrate the extent to which the lower orders could act against those of higher rank when they felt that their rights, and even their lives, were threatened. However, in the normal course of things, hierarchical relationships remained an important feature of day to day life. Addressing men and women of rank by their ancient titles, and employers and other worthies of the district in respectful terms, did serve to reinforce patterns of deference in the minds of many ordinary people. They were used to having others explain intricate thoughts and newsworthy events to them, usually during rural church services, and had limited access to other types of information about current events.[871] When they moved to less structured urban areas, such patterns of acquiring knowledge often remained for necessary and practical reasons.

Functional literacy is difficult to determine, and the ability to produce a shaky autograph does not mean that the signatory was necessarily able to read effectively.[872] Given the choice between hearing the news read to them and labouring over a piece of written text, most hard-pressed working people would naturally choose the former. Moreover, printed materials were costly and an expense that the labouring poor could not normally afford. Therefore it was common practice for ordinary folk to listen to newspapers, periodicals, pamphlets and even books read aloud in public venues.[873] As the volume of printed material increased, men and women from all walks of life were

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[871] Steve Hindle "Civility, Honesty and the Identification of the Deserving Poor in Seventeenth-Century England" in Henry French & Jonathan Barry (Eds.) *Identity and Agency in England, 1500-1800*. New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2004. pp. 41-42.
[872] Peter Earle "The Female Labour Market in London in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries" *Economic History Review* (42:3) (August, 1989) pp. 333-336. Peter Borsay. *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1770*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1989. p. 288.
[873] Hill (1994) *Women, Work and Sexual*. p. 143.

exposed to a greater range of issues and ideas than ever before making persons who controlled and interpreted popular media ever more important.[874]

Those who produced, and publicly read, periodicals and pamphlets were overwhelmingly men. These masculine agents decided what news was printed and read and what emphasis should be placed on various arguments.[875] Public discourse, driven by the popular media of the day, was therefore overwhelmingly masculine in tone and largely concerned with the needs and aspirations of the middle rank male. Yet for all this, ordinary people also had a say in what news was produced and read. Naturally, witty, engaging and uncomplicated stories, and traditional tales of right and wrong, which appealed to plebeian sensibilities, were the most popular. This was particularly the case when it came to appeals to uphold gender norms during the Calico crisis. Publishers knew that many people would hear their works read aloud and they made often made efforts to appeal directly to the interests, and capacities, of the unlearned masses.

Defoe's pro-Whig government paper, *The Review*, which was published two or three times a week from 1704-1713, was often read out in public with the aim of increasing sales, and influencing popular opinions. The prominent Anglican churchman Charles Leslie (1650-1722) expressed concern that informing, or rather inflaming, popular opinion in this manner was a dangerous practice. As a Presbyterian, Defoe felt contempt for the religious intolerance displayed by the High Church Anglican clergy and used his newspaper to find fault with prominent religious figures. Leslie complained that public readings of Defoe's *Review* had the effect of "teaching [ordinary people] the principals of rebellion" by encouraging contempt for the established religious order. He

[874] Randall (2006) *Riotous Assemblies*. pp. 11-13.
[875] Karen Harvey. *Reading Sex in the Eighteenth Century: Bodies and Gender in English Erotic Literature.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. p. 46.

observed that illiterate pedestrians appeared particularly inclined to "suck in greedily" negative opinions of church leaders.[876] It is, however, difficult to determine the extent to which such anti-clerical ideas permeated the traditional plebeian consciousness. Ordinary protesters in general remained strongly committed to the Church of England and demonstrated their alliance to the established faith by destroying Dissenting meeting houses during the Sacheverell Riots of 1710, for example. In general, plebeian men and women were cautious in their attitudes and actions. They had few resources to fall back on in times of hardship and thus had little appetite for economic, religious and social innovations which carried with them unpredictable outcomes. In order to exploit this popular conservatism, anti-calico groups had to bring information to ordinary people in forms with which they were familiar, and play upon their common fears. The ordinary folk of England possessed a rich oral history and were used to negotiating challenges to traditional norms and values verbally. Consequently, songs, ballads and poems performed aloud were important mediums whereby anti-calico information was disseminated.

Thompson notes that plebeian thought was often defined by a pre-literate popular oral culture through which wisdom and customs were transmitted.[877] Therefore, in order to acquaint ordinary urban people with ideas outside of their normal immediate existence, one had to go where working men and women lived the bulk of their lives, the noisy and crowded streets of the city. In such places, agitators were able to quickly excite the minds of the lower ranks with ideas which were briefly and easily explained and in accordance with the traditional gendered morals of common folk. This was particularly the case when

[876] John Richetti. *The Life of Daniel Defoe: A Critical Biography*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2005. p. 88.
[877] Thompson (1978) "Eighteenth-Century English Society" p. 155.

it came to narratives which focused on female sinfulness and corruptibility.[878] As seen in Chapter 1, low-ranked women dressed in printed fabrics became the iconic symbol of the moral corruption which was imperiling the English wool and silk industries.

Ribald ballads sung on street corners, and racy poems recited in public venues denouncing 'calico madams,' were an efficient and common means of interacting with uneducated people on an emotional and moral level. One popular song, describing the "taudry Callico Madam" as a "scandalous slut," left listeners in no doubt as to the manifold moral failings of such women.[879] Given such inflammatory rhetoric, the practice of weavers mobbing and tearing the gowns of calico wearers could not have come as a surprise to those directing the anti-calico campaign, even if they attempted to minimize the extent of the practice. The pro-wool writer Claudius Rey, went so far as to suggest that attacks on women dressed in printed fabrics were,

> petit Disturbances [are] properly *among the Women themselves*; which *proceeds* from the *foolish Fancy* of some, and the *Madness and Rage* of *others*: Which might be prevented, if Women wou'd only put on other Cloths when they go into those Parts of the Town [where the weavers live].[880]

To Rey, the actions of the weavers were a rational, if somewhat emotional, response to a pressing need for bread, "the staff of life." However, Rey's imaginative rendering of touching exigencies of the working poor did not convince everyone. The pro-calico editors of the *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer* were in little doubt that incendiary verses and vituperative diatribes produced by the anti-calico camp were plainly intended "to encourage the Mob and the Weavers to tear and burn Callicoes."[881] More than a few

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[878] Fulford (2006) "Fallen Ladies and Cruel Mothers. *Passim*.
[879] Anonymous. *The Spittle-Fields Ballad*. (London, 1721)
[880] Claudius Rey. *The Weaver's True Case*. Objection XIII. (London, 1719)
[881] *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer*. 20 June 1719.

informed people perceived that a well orchestrated and funded effort was underway, one in which popular papers were playing a prominent and complicit role. The standards of journalism which prevailed at the time lent considerable credibility to such allegations.[882]

Newspapers and other periodicals proliferated in England after the Licensing of the Press Act (14 Car. II. c. 33) lapsed in 1695. This change resulted in a deluge of short-lived publications of dubious reputation. Writing in 1719, a contemporary observer commented, "at present…city, town and country, are over-flow'd every day with a inundation of newspapers."[883] Most of these were not to last.[884] The popular periodical the *Original Weekly Journal* smugly noted "the prodigious number of Coffee-House papers that have late appear'd like comets, with a pompous entrance, but short continuance."[885] For newspapers struggling to retain subscribers, veracity and reasoned debate were not of prime importance, especially as scandalous rumors and tales of the sexual proclivities of the upper ranks proved highly popular.[886] Nathaniel Mist (fl.1716-1737), publisher of the popular *Weekly Journal*, knew what the public wanted. "[My] Paper always begins with some entertaining Essay, either upon the Times, or else the Behaviour and Follies of Men." Though Mist claimed that he also provided "a fair and impartial History of the whole World for a Week" he was subject of numerous lawsuits for libel and even spent some time in the pillory for defamation.[887] Many of those who were exposed to a regular diet of salacious journalism and vituperative arguments would have had little appetite for a more rigorous and reasoned discourse.

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[882] Robert Shoemaker "The Decline of Public Insult in London, 1660-1800" *Past & Present* (169) (November, 2000) pp. 122-123.
[883] *St. James's Weekly Journal*. 31 October 1719.
[884] David Rollison. *The Local Origins of Modern Society: Gloucestershire, 1500-1800*. London: Routledge, 1992. pp. 219-221.
[885] *Weekly Journal*. 4 April 1719.
[886] Shoemaker (2000) "Decline of Public Insult" p. 124.
[887] *Weekly Journal*. 28 July 1722.

The excited rhetoric evident in much of the anti-calico literature, the exaggerated claims of wool workers starving to death and the excessive use of capital letters and exclamation points, was calculated to engage with readers on an emotional and not an intellectual level. The anti-calico writer Claudius Rey railed against calicos as,

> [A] *common* Evil to the whole *Nation*, [which] hath spread it self, like and *inveterate* Plague, over all our *Women-kind*, from the Ladies of the best Rank, down to the lowest *Servant-Maids*, from The best Citizens Wives to the meanest Country *Woman*.[888]

Employing such vitriolic language was effective strategy as it did much to engender anti-calico sentiment while avoiding the necessity of engaging with the reasoned arguments of those representing the cotton, linen and printing industries. Those behind the extensive, and expensive, pro-wool media campaign would not have continued to use alarmist rhetoric if it did little to advance their cause. However, appealing to the crowd was only part of the equation. Generating real and artificial media support for the wool and silk industries was also a significant factor in the success of the anti-calico campaign.[889]

Of course, directly inciting crowd violence was a dangerous business. The lengths anti-calico propagandists went to disassociate their cause from the more vigorous actions of protesting weavers tells us that much. Asking the rhetorical question,

> Are *Riots, Tumults, Assaults* and *striping* People in the *streets*, as the *Weavers* have done this Summer, proper *Methods* to obtain any *Redress* of *Grievances*?

Defoe responds that the great multitude of weavers should not be punished for the actions of an ungovernable few, some of whom were doubtless encouraged to such excesses.

> [It] 'tis not the *Weaving Trade*, as such, that has raised these *Riots* and *Tumults*, &c. but they [that] are some of the poorest and miserable among them, who are in a desperate Condition, *spirited* perhaps

[888] Rey (1719) *The Weaver's True Case*. Objection I.
[889] Lemire (2010) *The British Cotton Trade.* (Vol. II) *Passim.*

thereto by some disaffected People.[890]

If direct action was to be instigated against those who wore calico, the language used had to be carefully crafted to protect weaving interests from legal liability. It was thus fortunate for anti-calico writers that the English public had become used to seeing accusations and legal actions openly printed in the popular media of the era.

Robert Shoemaker argues that newspapers of the day appear to have been generally supportive of the wool and silk industries.[891] However, the lack of impartiality evident in the press at this time, and the desperate need many periodicals had for revenue, leaves open the question of the degree to which this support was spontaneous. The anti-calico side resorted to a number of dubious undertakings to advance their cause. As has been demonstrated, propagandists for the wool and silk industries were not above encouraging 'weavers' to assault 'calico madams,' while writers like Daniel Defoe and Claudius Rey stood ready to explain away or minimize their attacks. Moreover, it is not impossible that financial encouragements were offered to popular newspapers to provide favourable coverage of the plight of the suffering wool and silk weavers. Writers at the time were generally a sorry lot. Most Grub Street hacks were willing to turn their hand to any paid literary undertaking, and the wool and silk industries had money to spend.[892]

Defoe, a writer by profession, was well aware of the conditions under which those who made their way by their pen laboured, and expressed great sympathy for "*poor* Authors, *poor* Publishers, *poor* Printers [and] *poor* Paper-makers."[893] Many of these men were quite willing to embrace any cause that would pay, and their ethical boundaries

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[890] Rey (1719) *The Weavers True Case.* Objection XIII.
[891] Robert Shoemaker. *The London Mob: Violence and Disorder in Eighteenth-Century England*. London: Hambledon and London, 2004. pp. 136, 241-242.
[892] Gosselink (1978) *The Manufacturer by Daniel Defoe*. pp. XIV-XV.
[893] Daniel Defoe. *The Manufacturer*. 18 May 1720.

appear to have been correspondingly fluid. Defoe had founded a newspaper, *The Manufacturer*, published from 1719-1721, which dealt solely with the plight of the weavers and the interests of the wool and silk industries. Of course, such an expensive undertaking would not have been attempted by Defoe alone and Robert Gosselink notes the extent to which these manufacturers recruited professional writers to advance their case.[894] However, Beverly Lemire points out that Defoe was also perfectly willing to argue the opposite side of the argument, through anonymous works, to keep public attention focused on the issue.[895] Alfred Plummer makes the case that Defoe often used arguments in his works deriding the cotton trade to encourage the type of public debate which excited public interest and otherwise drew attention to the campaign against calicos.[896] Gosselink points out that Defoe often juxtaposed his ethical positions with self-serving straw man opinions to artificially bolster his own claims.[897] Considering the back and forth of printed arguments at the time of the Calico riots Defoe observed,

> [This] Paper War [is] another Kind of Manufacture, which I believe we need not apprehend will go out of Fashion, since, while there are Printing-Presses, there seems to be some assurance that we shall never want Authors to quarrel, or Subjects to quarrel about.[898]

The evidence presented fully supports the conclusion that the thrust of the anti-calico media campaign was based on volume and excited rhetoric and not reason and substance.

As has been shown in previous chapters, the concerted effort on the part of anti-calico pamphleteers to flood the streets with literature inimical to the trade in printed fabrics and foreign textiles constituted a key tactic in the struggle to ban the trade in

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[894] Gosselink (1978) *The Manufacturer (1719-1720)* p. XV.
[895] Lemire (2010) *The British Cotton Trade.* (Vol. II) pp. 90-91.
[896] Plummer (1972) *The London Weaver's Company*. pp. 300-301.
[897] Gosselink (1978) *The Manufacturer (1719-1720)* p. X.
[898] Daniel Defoe. *Manufacturer: or, The British Trade Truly Stated*. 1 June 1720.

calicos. However, as in the case of the vast numbers of dubious petitions sent to the House of Commons and the House of Lords, the anti-calico side appears to have won the pamphlet war by out-publishing the competition, effectively winning this conflict of attrition through quantity as opposed to quality.[899] Such determined efforts were important as Shoemaker argues that popular opinion was divided on the calico issue.[900]

The crusade against printed textiles was not universally embraced for four reasons. First, the misogynist narrative propagated by anti-calico polemicists was not universally accepted, though it remained highly influential. Not everyone approved of assaults on women dressed in printed textiles.[901] Moreover, some men were willing to use violence, and even lethal force, to defend female friends and family from rampaging weavers.[902] Second, as has been shown in previous chapters, the fact that Irish and Scottish linens were being grouped in with imported Indian cotton in anti-calico propaganda was a contentious issue.[903] Domestically produced and printed linens were popular among many patriotically minded people, and could not logically be styled as foreign fabrics. Arguments were put forward that the interests of the linen producing regions of should be subordinated to the manifest needs of the English economy.[904] In response, the politician John Asgill (1659-1738) took up the case of the linen industry.

> The Linens printed here are all made in *Great Britain*, or *Ireland*… And therefore, they are as much a Staple Commodity and Home Manufacture as the Woollens.[905]

Asgill was not alone in this opinion, another linen supporter declared,

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[899] Wadsworth & Mann (1968) *The Cotton Trade and Industrial Lancashire*. pp. 132-134.
[900] Robert Shoemaker "The London *Mob* in the Early Eighteenth Century" *Journal of British Studies* (26:3) (July, 1987), pp. 301-304.
[901] Plummer (1972) *The London Weaver's Company*. p. 298.
[902] Lemire (2011) *Cotton*. pp. 55-56.
[903] Lemire (2003) "Transforming Consumer Custom" pp. 195-197.
[904] Anonymous. *The Case of the Printed Linens of Northern Britain*. (London, 1720)
[905] John Asgil. *A Brief Answer to a Brief State of the Question*. (London, 1720) p. 8.

> Our Linen Manufacture is as much a Staple Manufacture of the Kingdom, as the Woollen, and hath as much right to be encourag'd.[906]

Such arguments carried weight with the British public. Eventually, Defoe was forced to acknowledge that "Linens [should be] allow'd to be wore, for they are of our own Manufacture."[907] He even went so far as to allow his own wife to go about publicly in printed Irish linen.[908] Third, Chandra Mukerji argues that the hygienic virtues of such inexpensive wash and wear fabrics were particularly appealing to the practical and economically minded lower and middling sorts who made up the vast majority of the female population.[909] Finally, the new calico fashions appealed to the fashionable feminine sensibilities of all social grades which made it difficult to cast calico buyers as predominately women of questionable morals and low social rank.

The scale and duration of the Calico riots supports the conclusion that many English women of all degrees wore printed textiles. Moreover, many showed no signs of giving them up, no matter how many appeals were made to the traditional moral economy by 'starving' male weavers.[910] Consequently, some upper rank women who wore calico were attacked in the course of the riots directly or with acids and inks thrown into their coaches.[911] On the 29th of July 1719, three women dressed in calicos drove in a carriage to the location where several weavers were standing in the pillory for their riotous actions. When the friends of the weavers perceived that these women had come to insult those in the pillory they attacked them and "stripped [the women] clean of [their]

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[906] J. Roberts. *A Further Examination of the Weavers Pretences*. (London, 1719)
[907] Daniel Defoe "Descriptions of a Street Outrage" 12 January 1723 in William Lee (Ed.) *Daniel Defoe, His Life and Recently Discovered Writings*. (Vol. III) New York: Burt Frankin, 1969. p. 90.
[908] Anne Buck. *Dress in Eighteenth-Century England*. New York: Holmes and Meier, 1979. p. 192.
[909] Mukerji (1983) *Graven Images*. p. 192.
[910] Lemire (2011) *Cotton*. pp. 56-57.
[911] Plummer (1972) *London Weaver's.* p. 296.

calicos."[912] This was a dangerous tactic. Wealthy and powerful elites would not tolerate their female relations being handled in such rude fashion by the common mob and even middling women had to be treated with some degree of caution. To succeed in winning over broad popular support for their cause, anti-calico propagandists had to conceive of a means to induce men from the middling and upper ranks prevent their women using printed textiles. To do this, some overriding cause or concern had to be established to rally public support outside of the realm of reasoned debate. The well-worn tropes of female vanity, acquisitiveness and moral corruptibility were popular themes at the time and easily exploited by disingenuous propagandists.

As stated, misogynist rhetoric rapidly emerged as the driving narrative of the anti-calico lobby. Though anti-calico writers like Defoe and Rey made it a point to appeal to men of the middle ranks to control the sartorial habits of the women under their care, this argument would never carry the day alone.[913] A large part of the success of this campaign had to do with the skill anti-calico writers displayed in tapping into the generalized moral and hierarchical anxieties of the age.[914] Shoemaker identifies the period of the Calico riots as being one when the broader community was unusually concerned at the apparent decline in public morals and masculine vigor. Dominated by the middle ranks, Societies for the Reform of Manners flourished in the ethical vacuum left by the decline in the power of Anglican church courts to sanction immoral behaviour. Some claim conservative reactions to the apparent rise in feminine autonomy at this time reflected a wider sense of moral panic in English society, especially with relation to changing gender

[912] *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer*. 1 August 1719
[913] Lemire (2010) *The British Cotton Trade*. (Vol. II) pp. XII-XVII.
[914] Lemire (2011) *Cotton*. pp. 50-56.

roles.[915] Exploiting such generalized anxieties was a common and effective practice in England at the time of the Calico riots.

**The Manipulation of the Popular Consensus**

> The whole Treatise is such a tedious Rhapsody of Fictitious, Fallacious Inferences and Arguments confusedly mixt with some distorted Truths spun out to an unnecessary prodigious length, that it would be tiresome to the Reader to trace all the Prevarications, Mis-Recitals, and Sophistry contained in it.[916]
>
> *An Impartial Vindication of the English East India Company*, 1688.

Long before anti-calico writers began vilifying women dressed in printed cottons and linens, political propagandists of all stripes had come to realize the potential value of enemies real and imaginary.[917] Colin Haydon argues that it was in the interests of the Whig government to encourage and magnify the Jacobite menace, and the Catholic threat, in the popular mind.[918] Disingenuously encouraging riots against Catholics (traditional Stuart supporters) allowed the Whigs to harass and impede real and potential opponents at limited cost.[919] Moreover, the threat of enemies foreign and domestic helped legitimized the passage of ever more restrictive legislation, such as the 1715 Riot Act, which was used to stifle opposition to Hanoverian rule and Whig authority.[920] Rogers points out that Whig agents made considerable use of crowd actions and staged events to rally popular support for George I. However, he also notes the extent to which similar demonstrations were used by enemies of the regime to challenge Whig policies.[921] The example of the Sacheverell riots serves to illustrate both the potential strength of the

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[915] Alan Hunt. *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996. p. 218.
[916] Anonymous. *An Impartial Vindication of the English East India Company*. (London, 1688)
[917] Rogers (1989) *Whigs and Cities*. pp. 380-382. Wilson (1998) *The Sense of the People*. pp. 84-122.
[918] Haydon (2003) *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth-Century England.* pp. 82-83.
[919] E. P. Thompson. *The Making of the English Working Class*. London: Penguin, 1968. p. 74.
[920] Rogers (1989) *Whigs and Cities.* pp. 29-31. Fitts (1973) "Newcastle's Mob" pp. 41-42.
[921] Rogers (1998) *Crowds, Culture and Politics*. Chapter 1.

crowd and the ability ordinary people had to take matters into their own hands when they felt, or claimed to feel, that traditional institutions, and the faith of the realm, were at risk.

The Sacheverell riots occurred in the west-end of London during the night of March 1-2, 1710 after the High-Church clergyman Dr. Henry Sacheverell (1674-1725) was impeached for criticizing the Whig government for their toleration of Dissenters. Assertions by Tory agitators that the Church of England was in danger, and the efforts of Whig politicians to silence Sacheverell, did a great deal to spread fear among the common folk.[922] During the night angry anti-government plebeian crowds destroyed six Dissenting meeting halls and unrest quickly spread to other important regional centers including Oxford and Exeter when local clergy enjoined ordinary folk to support Sacheverell.[923] Ultimately, peace was restored by troops deployed to suppress the rioters.[924] In such circumstances, an excited and widespread plebeian reaction to the animated fear mongering of clerical authorities should not have come as surprise.

Thompson notes that plebeian crowds were often subject to "tetchy sensibilities" and had to be handled with care, and this was particularly the case when it came to mass protest actions.[925] As with the Calico riots nine years later, once released, the mob proved difficult to control and their reliability became increasingly doubtful. Some observers commented derisively upon what they saw as the fleeting loyalty of such crowds.

> They are as changeable as the Moon, and as constant as the Weather; one [day] they will be fond of a *Common-wealth*…and the next Day for neither Queen, Lords, nor Commons. One Day calling the Church of *England* a Brimstone-Church, and the next Day pulling down the

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[922] Jones (1976) "Debates in the House of Lords" *Passim*.
[923] Geoffrey Holmes "The Sacheverell Riots: The Crowd and the Church in Early Eighteenth-Century London" *Past & Present* (72) (August, 1976) *Passim*. John Stevenson. *Popular Disturbances in England, 1700-1832*. London: Longman, 1991. pp. 72-76.
[924] Holmes (1976) "The Sacheverell Riots" p. 84.
[925] Thompson (1974) "Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture" p. 396.

> Meeting-Houses: They are sometimes all Zeal and no Religion, and at other times all Religion and no Zeal…Give an Man an Ill name, and the Mobb will soon hang him whether he deserves it nor not.[926]

When discussing the events of the Calico riots it is important to note that crowds were often made up of a range of people with conflicting opinions and interests. Some, of course, were more strongly committed to the issue than others. However, oftentimes a number were also merely opportunists out for excitement and potential profit.[927]

Observing those who had assembled to support the anti-calico cause in the summer of 1719, one critic noted that protesters who were demanding an end to cotton imports were soon "joyn'd by many Idle Fellows who had no other View *but* Plunder."[928] Another spectator noted disdainfully that the calico issue itself seemed to have come into view practically overnight, making the sentiments of the crowd appear contrived at best. "'Tis very strange the Publick hath never heard any thing against the Wearing of *Callicoes* before this very Summer."[929] This observation is confirmed by Shoemaker who points out that the first recorded attacks on women dressed in printed fabrics did not occur until June 16th 1719.[930] From a practical point of view, the extent to which protesters truly appreciated the nuances of the matter at hand was irrelevant. Drawing in those on the periphery of a debate was important to the success of most large scale protest actions, however the downside of this was that these spontaneous mobs could rapidly become volatile as protests like the Sacheverell riots took on a life of their own.[931]

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[926] Burgess. *Doctor Burgess's Character of the London Mobb.* (London, 1710)
[927] Mukerji (1983) *Graven Images*. pp. 206-207.
[928] *The Flying Post*. 11-13 June 1719.
[929] Anonymous. An unattributed objection offered against the to attempt to ban calicos. Quoted in Claudius Rey. *The Weavers True Case*. (London, 1719)
[930] Shoemaker (1987) "London Mob" p. 281.
[931] Holmes (1976) "The Sacheverell Riots" p. 84.

Shoemaker argues that though political elites were often active in paying for and encouraging mass actions, they also relied to a significant extent upon the spur-of-the-moment participation of ordinary people.[932] Chanting, flag waving, singing, the playing of music and marching in order were often effective in assembling a spontaneous crowd and these were tactics commonly used throughout the Calico riots.[933] Lemire notes that in Norwich crowds of weavers marched through the streets assaulting women in printed gowns and parading around with their torn dresses displayed on poles for all to see.[934] Protesters even marched with their trophies to the doorsteps of the homes of magistrates, to prove the legitimacy of their campaign in the eyes of the people and to show the strength and number of those committed to their cause.[935] On one occasion during the summer of 1719, a woman by the name of Elizabeth Price was set upon by a mob in the parish of St Leonard in London when it was observed that she wore a calico gown.

> Some People sitting at their Doors, took up her Riding Hood, and seeing her Gown, cry'd out Callicoe, Callico; Weavers, Weavers. Whereupon a great Number came down and tore her Gown off … and abus'd her very much. [936]

This pattern of violence was repeated many times during the course of the Calico riots. In June of 1720, Dorothy Orwell was attacked a by a group of London weavers who,

> tore, cut, and pull'd off her Gown and Petticoat by Violence, threatened her with vile Language, and left her naked in the Fields.[937]

In such cases, rallying public support, or at least relying on popular indifference, were important to the success of anti-calico actions. Despite the number of people who

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[932] Shoemaker (1987) "London Mob" pp. 302-304.
[933] Shoemaker (2004) *The London Mob*. pp. 114-117.
[934] Lemire (2011) *Cotton*. pp. 54-55.
[935] Edith Standen "English Washing Furnitures" *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* (23:3) (November, 1964) p. 109.
[936] *Old Bailey Records*. 7 July 1719. Quoted in Lemire (1991) *Fashion's Favourite*. p. 36.
[937] *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer*. 11 June 1720 - 12 July 1720.

witnessed the event, and the multitude of weavers who participated in it, only one person was indicted for the attack on Dorothy Orwell. Shoemaker notes that despite the high levels of violence associated with the Calico riots only thirty-five prosecutions against protesters were conducted in London's Old Bailey between June 1719 and July 1720.[938] Public sympathy for the plight of the protesters meant that few attackers were ever prosecuted and those that were convicted typically received light sentences and fines.[939]

Popular support for the cause of the weavers, the success of the anti-calico media campaign, and a widespread indifference to the sufferings of low-ranked women made middle rank authorities, law enforcement officials and juries reluctant to act to suppress actions against females dressed in printed fabrics.[940] This failure of the establishment to deal decisively with anti-calico rioters was the major reason why the assaults were so widespread and went on for so long. The history of rioting in England is not without examples of authorities using force to effectively quell incipient plebeian actions.[941] Such timely intervention was important as protests which appealed to the moral economy of the English crowd were public affairs which relied on popular support, or at least a degree of public indifference, for their legitimacy.[942] The reluctance of officials to openly condemn and speedily punish mob attacks on women dressed in printed fabrics manifestly contributed to the longevity and scale of these events. However, this lack of action cannot entirely be attributed to popular apathy and political expediency. Part of the problem also lay the legal ambiguity surrounding printed fabrics.

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[938] Shoemaker (1987) "London Mob" pp. 294-296.
[939] Lemire (2011) *Cotton*. p. 56.
[940] Plummer (1971) *London Weavers*. pp. 295-303.
[941] Walter Shelton "The Role of Local Authorities in the Provincial Hunger Riots of 1766" *Albion* (5:1) (Spring, 1973) p. 51.
[942] John Bohstedt "The Moral Economy and the Discipline of the Historical Context" *Journal of Social History* (26:2) (Winter, 1992) p. 271.

The laws passed to suppress the trade in printed Indian cottons meant that there were some situations under which anti-calico agents could claim some legal authority to seize printed textiles.[943] Pro-wool pamphleteers frequently complained that it was difficult to distinguish between British printed linen and Indian made calicos as the importation white Indian cotton fabric, and cottons dyed all blue, was still permitted by law. English printers exploited this legal loophole to print Indian inspired designs on imported cotton and domestically produced linens which confused the issue of enforcement. Moreover, there existed a brisk trade in Indian calicos smuggled into the country from the Netherlands.[944] Rioters often exploited the ambiguity surrounding domestically printed fabrics to their own ends by styling all printed fabric as 'calico' and assaulting those who wore it.[945] The production of official-looking documents calling upon state officials to arrest and turn over to the authorities any woman caught wearing printed textiles also imparted a patina of legitimacy to the weavers' actions.[946]

> Now, this is to give notice to Madam Callicoe, that if she will pass quietly out of this Kingdome, she shall have free passage without molestation; but if she be seen once again in the streets, that it is to command all Hang-man, Bailiffs, Yeomen and all other such officers, to secure her, and bring her to Spitalfields, where she shall undergo the punishment our law in such cases provides. Given at our Court at the Three Sterv'd Lyons eating Shuttles in Spitalfields.[947]

More than this, Lemire argues that those men who attacked women in printed gowns saw themselves as punishing transgressing women in much the same way a child, female servant or wife might be legitimately chastised by the male head of household.[948] Calico

[943] Plummer (1971) *London Weavers*. p. 295.
[944] Thomas (1963) *Mercantilism and the EIC*. pp. 135-137.
[945] Anonymous. *The Case of the Weavers of the City of London and Parts Adjacent, Humbly Represented to the Honourable House of Commons*. London (1719-1720).
[946] Shoemaker (2004) *London Mob*. pp. 163-264.
[947] Anti-calico broadsheet (13 May 1720) Quoted in Shoemaker (1987) "The London Mob" p. 289.
[948] Lemire (2010) *The British Cotton Trade, 1660-1815*. (Vol. II) p. 278.

rioters, like the food rioters portrayed in Thompson's moral economy, were sustained in their sense of right by the notion that they were only upholding laws and customary understandings that were not being enforced. While anti-calico propaganda and official inaction contributed to this sense of legitimacy, many protesters also appear to have been drawn to the anti-calico cause mainly by the prospect of free liquor and excited rhetoric.

The wealthy interests behind the anti-calico demonstrations were willing to spend strategic sums to cultivate widespread animosity against the use of EIC cotton. However, this had to be done carefully and not all paid agitators were good at their job. Evidence was given that John Humphreys, a well-known anti-calico activist and Jacobite agitator, had distributed £5 among the protesters that converged upon Parliament in June 1719.[949] This was a substantial sum for a ordinary weaver, particularly when one considers the fact that a reasonable middle rank income at the time was reckoned at £50 a year. Interestingly, in a manner consistent with some recorded Thompsonian style moral economy proceedings, Humphreys was detained by the weavers themselves who feared to be associated with his illegal activities as these appeared likely to compromise the legitimacy of the weavers' protest.[950] The *Weekly Packet* records that,

> On Monday Night last, one John Humphries, a Merchant's Clerk, being Among the Weavers in Spittle-Fields, told'em he spent five or six Guineas to encourage 'em to rise, and desired them to continue the disorder. The Weavers immediately secur'd [Humphrys] and carrie'd him before Justice Tillard, who committed him to Newgate for High- Treason, and sent a Copy of his Commitment to the Secretary of State.[951]

[949] 8 July 1719 Old Bailey online ref. no. t17190708-56 accessed 08 August 2011. Rudé (1971) *Hanoverian London*. pp. 186-187. Lemire (1991) *Fashion's Favourite*. p. 35.
[950] Adrian Randall and Andrew Charlesworth (Eds.) *Moral Economy and Popular Protest: Crowds, Conflict and Authority*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000. p. 7.
[951] *Weekly Packet*. 13-20 June 1719

Moreover, the jury in this case was not inclined to be lenient and Humphreys, one of the few anti-calico protesters successfully prosecuted, was imprisoned for a year and made to stand in the pillory twice.[952] The fact the Humphreys was also encouraging protesters to drink to the health of the Jacobite pretender, a request the protesters refused, supports the conclusion that the weavers were aware of the importance of the appearance of legitimacy. Some even went so far as to cry "King George Forever" to prove that they actions were lawful and not seditious in nature.[953] However, the hot-headed Humphreys was not the only one dispensing the wealth of the elites among ordinary protesters to garner support for the anti-calico cause.

Given the amount of money the wool and silk industries were willing to spend on anti-calico propaganda, claims the they were also spreading funds around riotous crowds with the intention of generating disorder are certainly credible. One agent for the weavers' guild claimed to have "Five or Six Guineas" at his disposal to buy drinks for the rioters. This was equivalent to half a laborer's wages for a year.[954] However, as has been shown, political agitators in England often dispensed alcohol to the crowd in order to get them into a compliant mood and make them ready to support whatever cause they were given. In light of this fact, the extent to which people really cared about the calico issue is difficult to discern, and there are other social factors to consider. The opportunity to sexually assault women and tear their clothing with impunity was also likely an inducement to anti-calico action. Margaret Hunt argues that many men committed

[952] Thomas (1963) *Mercantilism and the EIC*. p. 142.
[953] Shoemaker (1987) "London Mob" p. 293.
[954] Beverly Lemire. *The Business of Everyday Life: Gender, Practice and Social Politics in England, c. 1600-1900*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005. pp. 117-118.

violence against women at this time for no discernable reason at all, beyond the fact that they were in the mood and knew they would get away with it.[955]

A series of attacks on women attributed to Mohocks, gangs of well-off young men who assaulted women in the streets of London, caused widespread fear in 1712.[956] These attacks had no clear purpose, apart from the desire to inflict harm and appeared to be conducted at random, though the victims were predominately young women. An observer noted that female focused violence was the particular interest of one group,

> whose office it is to set women on their heads, and commit certain indecencies, or rather barbarities, on the limbs which they expose.[957]

G. J. Barker-Benfield argues that these attacks were really sexual assaults and part of a wider culture of pervasive public male violence.[958] Shoemaker makes the case that the activities of the Mohocks must be understood as part of a widespread and often indiscriminate pattern of male cruelty against women which was often to be seen in the streets of early eighteenth-century England.[959] Evidence supports the conclusion that the chance to commit thefts, and the opportunity to perform aggressive sexual acts against women without fear of prosecution, were a popular inducement to the rough and ready anti-calico crowds who carried the campaign into 1720.

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[955] Margaret Hunt "Wife Beating, Domesticity and Women's Independence in Eighteenth-Century London" *Gender and History* (4:1) (Spring, 1992). p. 16.
[956] Daniel Statt "The Case of the Mohocks: Rake Violence in Augustan London" *Social History* (20:2) (May, 1995) *Passim.* Anonymous. *A True List of Names of the Mohocks or Hawkubites who were Apprehended and Taken on Monday Night, Tuesday and this Morning*. (London, 1711). Anonymous. *Original Draft Report by a Commission to Enquire into the assaults and injuries on Citizens by the Mohocks*. (London, 1712)
[957] Lindsay (1978) *The Monster City*. p. 77.
[958] G. J. Barker-Benfield. *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992. pp. 48-49.
[959] Robert Shoemaker "Male Honour and the Decline of Public Violence in Eighteenth-Century London" *Social History* (26:2) (May, 2001) *Passim*.

The tactic of weavers publicly mobbing women and divesting them of their printed cottons and linens did a great deal to draw attention to the plight of the weavers, and kept the issue of printed fabrics in the forefront of the public consciousness. Unlike the practice of supplying crowds with liquor, and producing reams of expensive propaganda, obliquely encouraging attacks on women dressed in printed gowns cost those behind the anti-calico riots little while producing noticeable results.[960] Natalie Rothstein goes so far as to maintain that this campaign was, in fact, the one of the most successful of those brought by the London Weavers Company in the eighteenth century.[961] However, concern over the actions of the anti-calico mobs soon became evident at the higher levels of the wool and silk industries as the riots dragged on.

As time went by, and the attacks on women continued, guild officials, wary of bad publicity and a possible public backlash, were becoming increasingly anxious to distance themselves from the violence associated with the anti-calico cause.[962] In May of 1720, the Weavers' Company issued an appeal to their members to prevent actions which might hamper the course of those lawful bills which were presently before Parliament.

> We recommend to you to use your Authority with Your Servants, and your Interest among your Workmen, to prevail with then to bear patiently the Delay of their Deliverance, and at least to behave themselves peacefully and dutifully that they may not render themselves unworthy of his Majesty's concern for them, or put themselves out of his Royal Favour and Protection; and especially that they may give no advantage to their Enemies to represent them as People unworthy of the Good that is intended for them.[963]

Even Defoe, the most prolific and effective voice in the anti-calico camp was by 1720 having second thoughts. Lemire notes that Defoe had six daughters and was likely

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[960] Plummer (1971) *London Weavers*. pp. 295-303.
[961] Natalie Rothstein "The Calico Campaign of 1719-1721" *East London Papers* (7) (July, 1964) pp. 8-9.
[962] Lemire (1991) *Fashion's Favourite*. pp. 36-37. Shoemaker (2004) *London Mob*. pp. 265-266.
[963] Company of Weavers. *Court of Assistants of the said Company.* (London, 6 May 1720)

exposed to their female perspectives on the issue of anti-calico violence.[964] What is more, as a father he may have feared his own daughters might come in for the reckless female-focused abuse increasingly being carried out by anti-calico mobs. Eventually, Defoe felt it was necessary to forcefully caution the protesters that the continued use of violence meant that "Nobody can appear for [you] or act any Thing, or say any Thing in [your] behalf."[965] However, these warnings were expressed in terms of the interests of the rioting weavers and not their victims. The legitimacy of the actions of the protesters in this case were not in question, only the public perception of their methods.

In 1719, the London Weavers' Guild did speak out against attacks on women who went about in printed gowns and called for an end to violence against them. However, this condemnation did not occur until three weeks after the attacks had begun and the rioters had already inflicted significant damage. Furthermore, in contrast with the anti-calico protests of 1697, the guild did not threaten to expel members who participated in violent acts. The decision not to forcefully condemn such actions was likely based on the lenient treatment anti-calico protesters were receiving from the courts. Magistrates and juries were not inclined to punish those who assaulted low-ranked women dressed in printed gowns and this practice spread quickly across the country.[966]

By the late summer of 1719 the tactic of tearing the clothing of women had spread throughout London and to other cities important to the wool trade, such as Norwich. A weak response from guild authorities and civic leaders had effectively allowed violence against women to proceed to the point where it had taken on a life of its own. There are

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[964] Lemire (2011) *Cotton*. pp. 58-59.
[965] William Lee. *Daniel Defoe. His Life and Recently Discovered Works, from 1716-1729*. Vol. III (London, 1869) pp. 90-94.
[966] Shoemaker (1987) "London Mob" p. 297.

no official numbers of women attacked and the lackluster performance of officials when it came to prosecuting such actions make court records an unreliable indicator of anti-calico actions. However, contemporary accounts suggest that the number of persons assaulted must have been significant. The *Weekly Journal* noted in July of 1719 that,

> The Gibbet on Stonebridge was hung from top to bottom with fragments of Callicoe, Stuffs torn or rather stolen from Women by Journey Men Weavers.[967]

However, while ordinary women were the principal target of the protesting mobs, it should be also noted that not all those who were targeted by anti-calico mobs suffered equally. This was largely due to the fact that authorities often undertook meaningful efforts to prevent attacks on the wealthy and powerful citizens of London.

In June of 1719 protesting weavers and their supporters attempted to invade the House of Lords before they were driven away by the Horse Guards.[968] The offices of the East India Company were attacked and order was only restored when troops arrived to disperse the protesters.[969] On another occasion, the Horse Guards were called out to protect the home of a calico-printer under assault by an anti-calico mob.[970] Yet at times even the presence of troops was not always sufficient to keep the peace. When the known Jacobite and anti-calico agitator John Humphreys standing in the pillory in 1719.

> three Women in Callicoes came in a Hackney-Coach and drove several times round [the protesters] as they imagined, to insult 'em; but the Weavers, enrag'd at this, stopt the Coach, stript them and then sent them home, notwithstanding a Detachment of Guards was there to keep all quiet.[971]

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[967] *Weekly Journal*. 4 July 1719.
[968] William Maitland. *The History and Survey of London*. (Vol. I) (London, 1756) p. 530
[969] Linebaugh (1992) *The London Hanged.* pp. 19-20. Plummer (1971) *London Weavers*. p. 294.
[970] Lemire (1991) *Fashion's Favourite*. pp. 36-37.
[971] *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer*. 1 August 1719.

Even when they were called out, troops could not be everywhere at once. Some shops selling calicos were vandalized and a few women in carriages were assaulted by having acid and ink thrown on their clothing.[972] Other weavers made so bold as to enter private dwellings on the pretense of searching for illegal calicoes.[973] However, these were comparatively rare events and the presence of soldiers likely prevented many such attacks. The response of the authorities to these actions demonstrates that the legal system respected the social hierarchy, and would protect the property and persons of the upper ranks, while turning a blind eye to the sufferings of ordinary working women. Most protesters were cautious and tended to avoid events which could bring them into direct conflict with authorities and the armed forces they had under their command. Elites and their middling agents could, therefore, act effectively both to encourage and prevent riots.

Rogers notes that the extent to which crowds acted autonomously and spontaneously remains an issue of debate among historians with E. P. Thompson and George Rudé emphasizing the agency of the plebeian crowd while later scholars have made the case for a greater role for controlling patrician influences.[974] The distinction usually came down to the type of protest in question. Relatively small scale local riots, of the type Thompson emphasized in his discussion of the moral economy, tended to be driven by the concerns and values of the plebeian protesters involved.[975] As has been shown, those who participated in larger scale rioting, as in the case of the Calico riots or political protests, appear to have relied to a greater degree on elite organization, funding

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[972] Jonathan Eacott "Making an Imperial Compromise: The Calico Acts, the Atlantic Colonies, and the Structure of the British Empire" *William and Mary Quarterly* (69:4) (October, 2010) pp. 731-732. *Weekly Journal*. 13 June 1719

[973] *Weekly Journal or Saturday Post*. 11 July 1719.

[974] Rogers (1989) *Whigs and Cities.* pp. 351-353.

[975] Thompson (1971) "Moral Economy" *Passim*.

and propaganda. The duration and scale of the anti-calico riots was without doubt due in large part to middle rank actions and patrician influences. However, it cannot be denied that it was the lower ranks who were the most forward in attacks on women. The pervasive violence of Calico riots is directly attributable to the enthusiasm ordinary folk displayed in pursuing and punishing working females. The reasons why they were willing to do this were bound up in the broader misogynist societal traditions of the time. One need only look to the history of witchcraft trials in England to find evidence of the lengths to which ordinary people were willing to go of their own volition to punish what was seen as aberrant female actions. Anti-calico writers cunningly played on witchcraft narratives during the Calico Crisis to engender this form of spontaneous mob behaviour.

**The Use of Witchcraft Imagery During the Calico Riots**

*Fashion* is Truly Termed a *Witch*.[976]
*The Naked Truth,* 1696

The use of witchcraft imagery during the Calico riots was a very effective strategy as it appealed to some of the most violent traditions of plebeian social control. John Stevenson notes that plebeian rioters who pursued suspected witches occasionally killed their victims, either intentionally or by way of rough handling.[977] Seventeenth-century witch hunting mobs often inflicted a range of degrading and dangerous tests on their victims to detect the presence of evil.[978] The practice of tying supposed witches up and throwing them in ponds and rivers to see if they would float, a sure sign of demonic

[976] Anonymous. *The Naked Truth in an Essay on Trade*. (London, 1696)
[977] Stevenson (1991) *Popular Disturbances*. pp. 60-61.
[978] Brian Levack "The Great Scottish Witch-Hunt of 1661-1662" *Journal of British Studies* (20:1) (Autumn, 1980) pp. 98-99. Gowing (2003) *Common Bodies.* pp. 73-74.

possession, was especially hazardous. Such ordeals often led to drowning deaths.[979] Despite the fact that magistrates in England and Scotland were increasingly unwilling to hear witch trials in the early 1700s, fears of demonic activity and machinations of witches remained a common and durable feature of the culture of ordinary people.

Douglas Hay and Nicholas Rogers point out that mobs of common folk persisted in the extra-judicial punishment of witches well into the 1750s, long after the educated and enlightened middling juries and elite lawmakers had legislated state sanctioned witch trials out of existence by way of the Witchcraft Act of 1735 (9 Geo. II. c. 5).[980] As in the case of the Calico riots, rank and file witch hunters favored poor females, women of low status and limited family ties, who had little means of defending themselves.[981] However, in both cases merely to be female and unprotected was to be in jeopardy.

During the Scottish witch craze of 1550-1700, eighty-five percent of those convicted of witchcraft were women and females of all ranks were the principal target of anti-calico rioters.[982] Those who persecuted witches and those who targeted plebeian women who wore printed fabrics were not heroes nor were they intellectuals. They commonly sought out the softest targets they could find and defend their actions by using emotional, and misogynist rhetoric. However, it is noteworthy that those who justified the actions of these mobs did so in part with reference to received elite narratives of female moral corruptibility. Erudite debates concerning the intelligence and ethical reasoning natural to the female gender occurred in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries

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[979] Walter Woodward "New England's Other Witch-Hunt: The Hartford Witch-Hunt of the 1660s and the Changing Patterns in Witchcraft Prosecution" *OAH Magazine of History* (17:4) (July, 2003) p. 17. Stevenson (1991) *Popular Disturbances*. pp. 60-61.
[980] Hay & Rogers (1997) *Shuttles and Swords*. pp. 35, 169.
[981] J. B. Kingsbury "The Last Witch in England" *Folklore* (61:3) (September, 1950) pp. 134-135.
[982] Lemire (2010) *The British Cotton Trade, 1660-1815*. (Vol. II) pp. XIV-XVI. Julian Goodare "Women and the Witch-Hunt in Scotland" *Social History* (23:3) (October, 1998) p. 289.

in Europe. Laura Gowing makes the case that these disputes, known as the *querelle des femmes*, were reflective of a pervasive system of thought which disparaged feminine mental and moral capacities.[983] Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford argue that these narratives often stifled rational and empirical systems of inquiry which could have been use to demonstrate female abilities.[984] By and large the anti-calico debate flourished in a similar intellectual void. Arguments characterized by wild allegations were demonstrably reminiscent of the witch hunt *mentalités* which had exemplified the harsh realities of gender relations in the previous centuries.

The *Malleus Maleficarum*, commonly known in English as the *Hammer of the Witches*, was first published 1486. Written in Latin, the arguments contained in this book would have been beyond the reach of the vast majority of the population and only accessible via the mediation of the educated and respected members of church. By reading such works aloud to the masses, learned men effectively endorsed and encouraged the persecution of predominately female witches. The main narrative of the *Malleus Maleficarum* turned on the fundamental corruptibility of female nature.

> They are more credulous…more impressionable…they have slippery tongues…[women are] more carnal [than men]…they are more prone to adjure the faith…and it is a normal vice in her not to be disciplined.[985]

According to the authors, women in general were morally weak, carnal in nature, vengeful and easily diverted from the true Christian path by evil influences.[986] A century later, James VI of Scotland, later to be James I of England, spelled out the manifold failings of female nature which made their sex so suitable to the needs of the Devil.

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[983] Gowing (2003) *Common Bodies*. p. 9.
[984] Mendelson & Crawford (1998) *Women in Early Modern England*. pp. 251-253.
[985] J. Sprenger and H. Kramer. *Malleus Maleficarum.* (Translated) M. Summers. London: Rodker, 1928.
[986] Levack (1980) "The Great Scottish Witch-Hunt" pp. 100-101.

> The reason is easie, for as that sexe is frailer then man is, so is it easier to be intrapped in these grosse snares of the Devill, as was over well proved to be true, by the Serpants deceiving of *Eva* at the beginning, which makes him homelier with that sexe sensine.[987]

Many less exalted figures shared such views. However, as accusations of witchcraft became increasingly unacceptable as a means of vilifying the female sex, the supposedly ubiquitous sins of female willfulness and pride filled their place. The essayist Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) typified the entrenched misogyny of the early modern era.

> Is it not the highest Indignity to human nature, that men should be such poltroons as to suffer the Kingdome and themselves to be undone, by the Vanity, the Folly, the Pride and the Wantonness of their Wives…whose whole study seems to be directed to be as expensive as they possibly can in every useless article of living.[988]

It is in such opinions that the provenance of anti-calico rhetoric is to be found.

Beverly Lemire identifies misogyny as a dominant narrative in the anti-calico campaign as writers exploited ancient themes of female corruptibility.[989] Women dressed in calico, from highest to lowest, were depicted as "against [the weavers] to a man" and nothing less than violent correction would change their ways.[990] However, as stated, it was ordinary women who came in for particular attention as disturbers of the natural gender and hierarchical social order during the Calico Crisis.[991] What made this trend particularly disturbing was the calculated use of inflammatory rhetoric and imagery reminiscent of the witch-hunt *mentalités*. A letter written to *Mist's Journal* in August offered a chilling vision of things to come. A group calling itself the 'Callicoe-Haters' spoke of an apparition which heralded the demise of calico.

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[987] King James VI. *Daemonologie* (1597) J. Craigine (Ed.) Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1982. p. 30.
[988] Jonathan Swift. *The Works of Jonathan Swift, D. D., and Dean of St. Patrick's Dublin.* (Vol. IV) Thomas Roscoe (Ed.) New York: Derby and Jackson, 1861. p. 640.
[989] Lemire (2011) *Cotton*. pp. 50-55.
[990] Plummer (1972) *London Weaver's*. p. 300.
[991] Wigston-Smith (2007) "Callico Madams" *Passim*.

> New Prophesy which they say the Devil delivered one Night lately in the Shape of an Old Woman…That all those Women that were seen in Callicoe Gowns, or with Printed Callicoe for their outer Habit, after a certain Day, should die in the Year 1720.

The writer(s) ended their missive with the ominous conclusion "I don't know…whether it be true or not…[though] I could wish all the Women in England believed it."[992] Claudius Rey demonstrated no hesitations when he condemned calicos in Biblical terms as a female driven "*Flood* of *Evil*" threatening to engulf the entire nation.[993] It is useful at this point to recall that England, like other European nations at that time, was subject to moral panics where ordinary women were often the principal victims.

The witch trials which flourished during the English Civil war (1642-1651) resulted in the death of hundreds of predominately low-rank women. These events were not ancient history when the Calico riots got underway in 1719. The last woman sentenced for practicing witchcraft in England was condemned to death in 1712, though the charges were later dropped on appeal.[994] An elderly Scottish woman, variably recorded as Janet or Jenny, was not so fortunate. She was burned at the stake in the town of Dornoch in north-east Scotland in 1722.[995] Claudius Rey recognized the resonance malevolent imagery had when he described the female desire for printed fabrics in diabolical terms. He claimed that the pursuit of fashion was "not much unlike Witchcraft"… "like a Canker" it was leading to "Madness and Folly" which would cause the "utter RUIN AND DESTRUCTION of our most *famous* SILK AND WOOLLEN

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[992] *Mist's Weekly Journal or Saturday's Post*. 22 August 1719.
[993] Claudius Rey. *The Weaver's True Case*. (London, 1719) Objection I.
[994] J. B. Kingsbury "The Last Witch of England" *Folklore* (61:3) (September, 1950) pp. 134-135.
[995] W. N. Neill "The Last Execution for Witchcraft in Scotland" *Scottish Historical Review* (20:79) (April, 1923) *Passim*.

MANUFACTURIES!"[996] Others who wrote against the cotton trade maintained that the Indian craftsmen who produced calicos were "*Heathens* and *Pagans* [who] worship the Devil" and the women who purchased such items supported an "Evil" trade.[997] Most anti-calico writing was more subtle, though no less effective, for it proceeded from themes of female corruptibility which were already prevalent in the popular consciousness.

Amanda Vickery makes the case that the behaviour and spending habits of women had been linked in the popular mind with a wider decay in traditional virtues since the late seventeenth century.[998] Anthony Fletcher argues that sexual immorality was often portrayed as going hand-in-hand with spendthrift impulses.[999] Such age-old narratives of female corruptibility and dishonour were so ubiquitous in early eighteenth-century English society that they passed largely unnoticed in the public discourse of the nation.[1000] The perceived inability of English men to curtail the pernicious fancies of their womenfolk therefore served as a highly persuasive theme in anti-calico literature.[1001] A supporter of the weavers, Jonathan Swift openly complained that the feminine pursuit of foreign luxuries was undermining the economy of the nation.

> It is to gratify the vanity and pride, and luxury of the women, and of the young fops who admire them, that we owe this insupportable grievance of bringing in the instruments of our ruin.[1002]

The image of fashion-obsessed wives, daughters and maidservant was used to great effect by anti-calico writers.[1003] Literature produced during this campaign appealed to the

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[996] Claudius Rey. *The Weavers' True Case*. (London, 1719)
[997] W. Boreham. *The Female Manufacturers Complaints*. (London, 1720)
[998] Amanda Vickery. *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998. p. 5.
[999] Fletcher (1995) *Gender Subordination*. p. 266.
[1000] Lemire (2011) *Cotton*. pp. 50-52.
[1001] Maxine Berg. *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. pp. 234-236. Wigston-Smith (2007) "Calico Madams" *Passim*.
[1002] Jonathan Swift. *A Proposal that all the Ladies of Ireland Should Appear Constantly in Irish Manufactures*. (London, 1728)

mindset of the politically active middle ranks, men who appreciated the importance of maintaining hierarchical and sartorial distinctions between those the social ranks.[1004] Given such language, the violent reaction of the plebeian mob cannot have been unanticipated or unwelcome to the anti-calico propagandists and their allies. Eventually, attacks on women dressed in calico became the focus of anti-calico plebeian action.[1005]

The 'sport' of 'calico chasing' never failed to attract many enthusiastic participants and any women abroad in printed textiles risked assault, abuse and the destruction of their clothing by the rampaging mobs which flourished in the city.[1006] The degree to which such activity was allowed to flourish suggests the extent to which influential men approved of such actions. Attacks on women dressed in printed fabrics were not furtive affairs. They occurred in public and were meant to elicit public support for the actions of the mob.[1007] The lower ranks relied in part on traditional narratives of female corruptibility to legitimize their actions against women in calicos. However, significant encouragement was given to them by middle rank anti-calico propagandists who deliberately set out to vilify female servants who wore printed fabrics.

**The Targeting of Maidservants during the Calico Crisis**

> When the People find themselves generally aggrieved, They are apt to manifest their Resentments in satirical Ballads, Allegories, By-Sayings, and ironical Points of Low Wit. They sometimes go farther, and break out into hieroglyphical Expressions of their Anger against the *Person*, whom they conceive to be the Projector of any Injury done them.[1008]

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[1003] Wigston-Smith (2007) "Callico Madams" *Passim*.
[1004] Beattie (2001) *Policing and Punishment in London.* pp. 61-71.
[1005] Lemire (1991) *Fashion's Favourite.* pp. 36-39.
[1006] Plummer (1972) *London Weaver's.* pp. 298-300.
[1007] Goodare (1998) "Women and the Witch-Hunt in Scotland" p. 301.
[1008] *The Craftsman*. 10 February 1733.

Chloe Wigston-Smith argues that no image seemed to so occupy the public imagination during the course of the Calico riots as that of the disingenuous maidservant using fine calico clothing to deceive her way up the socio-economic ladder.[1009] Lemire's work supports the conclusion that maidservants who wore foreign fabrics often came in for particular attention during the Calico Crisis due to their supposed treasonous and insubordinate natures. Moreover, she notes that Defoe was one of the principal architects of these narratives.[1010] This is an important point, for if the image of corrupt maids found wide resonance with the public, it was largely down to the writings of middling male writers employed by the wool and silk industries. Given the hostile reaction many low-ranked females encountered due to this anti-calico propaganda, it is important to briefly examine why they continued to wear garments which were so clearly dangerous.

Lemire notes that most working women were forced by necessity to wear what they owned.[1011] Jennie Batchelor argues that many maidservants in fact received old gowns as gifts from their mistresses who often felt obliged to purchase new clothes to keep up with emerging fashion trends and maintain a respectable appearance.[1012] Without a doubt, some servant girls saved their wages to purchase clothing for reasons of fashion, to attract male admirers or to secure a better position in a more affluent house. Attractive and well dressed servants were, after all, considered desirable by employers as they served as a visible indicator of the wealth and sophistication of their master's home. Other servants doubtless appreciated the easy wash and wear versatility of cotton and linen clothes, a significant consideration given the importance some employers placed on

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[1009] Wigston-Smith (2007) "Callico Madams" p. 42.
[1010] Lemire (2010) *The British Cotton Trade, 1660-1815*. (Vol. II) pp. 257-258.
[1011] Lemire (2011) *Cotton*. p. 55.
[1012] Jennie Bachelor. *Dress, Distress and Desire: Clothing and the Female Body in Eighteenth-Century Literature*. New York: Palgrave, 2005. pp. 22-24. Styles (2002) "Involuntary Consumers" *Passim*.

personal hygiene.[1013] However, as Jan De Vries argues, the main motive for most ordinary people to work harder and acquire new material goods lay primarily in their desire to enjoy the novel comforts and refinements of the age.[1014] If maidservants had truly wished to avoid wearing printed fabrics, used woolen garments and cottons and linens dyed in solid colours were widely available via England's thriving trade in second- hand and stolen clothes.[1015] The reasons working women chose to wear printed textiles in all likelihood reflects a range of life choices and experiences that were as individual as the women themselves. Whatever the case may have been, the clothing choices of maidservants served as a significant rallying point for anti-calico writers and when writers spoke against the affectations of maidservants they were only building upon concerns already present in society. Anne Buck notes that the focus on the misdeeds and intrigues of maidservants was not unusual at the time. She argues that servant girls often served as scapegoats for social ills plaguing society during the early 1700s.[1016]

Alan Hunt uses the term 'displaced anxiety' to make the case that conflicts over clothing at this time were often not necessarily concerned with dress as such but rather with its meanings and implications.[1017] This attitude at least partially explains the latitude accorded anti-calico mobs by what Thompson termed the 'popular consensus.' Rioting wool and silk weavers and their putative supporters regularly demonstrated little restraint when dealing with calico-clad women largely because they felt they had little need to do

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[1013] Hecht (1956) *Domestic Servant Class*. pp. 120, 210-212.
[1014] Jan De Vries "The Industrial Revolution and the Industrious Revolution" *Journal of Economic History* (54:2) (June, 1994) *Passim*.
[1015] Beverly Lemire "Consumerism in Pre-Industrial and Early Industrial England: The Trade in Secondhand Clothes" *Journal of British Studies* (27:1) (January, 1988) *Passim*. Thomas (1924) "The Beginnings of Calico Printing in England" p. 211.
[1016] Buck (1979) *Dress in the Eighteenth Century*. p. 109.
[1017] Hunt (1996) *Governance of the Consuming Passions*. p. 215.

so.[1018] Their attacks upon what were styled as 'calico madams' were often explained away, by anti-calico writers like Claudius Rey, either as expressions of inappropriate zeal, a misrepresentation of the facts or as minor disputes between women only.[1019] Though he condemned the attacks upon calico-clad women in oblique terms, Defoe defended the riotous actions of the weavers in general based on exigent circumstance.

> They know their Cause to be good, and think 'tis a pity it should suffer by their having a little more Passion than Patience.[1020]

Other anti-calico propagandists called attention to what were described as the moral failings of those who wore showy and colourful calico gowns.

Wigston-Smith points out that many popular verses excoriating those who used printed textiles equated the inherent showy and lightweight qualities of the fabric with the morals of those who wore it.[1021] A popular anti-calico song entitled "*The* Spittle-Fields *Ballad*" reminded listeners of the racy reputation of calico-clad women. "None shall be thought/ A more scandalous Slut/ Than a taudry Callicoe Madam."[1022] Another popular bit of social messaging both derided calico wearers and suggested corrective action.

> The Callico Trade/ Which long since has made
> Such Damage to Weavers of Stuff; At length is no more,
> And ev'ry poor Whore/ *Must Strip into her naked Buff*.[1023]

The image of calico wearers as promiscuous women dovetailed neatly with a popular fear of crafty and morally suspect young maidservants bringing legions of bastards into the world.[1024] Defoe used this imagery to great effect when he spoke of a master throwing over his good and dutiful wife for a scheming young maid who spent "one week in a

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[1018] Lemire (2010) *The British Cotton Trade, 1660-1815*. (Vol. II) pp. IX-XVII
[1019] Claudius Rey. *The Weavers True Case*. (London, 1719)
[1020] Daniel Defoe. *The Manufacturer*. 30 October 1719.
[1021] Wigston-Smith (2007) "Callico Madams" pp. 33-34.
[1022] Anonymous. "*The* Spittle-Fields *Ballad*" (London, 1721)
[1023] Anonymous. "Naked Buff: or, the Downfall of the Callicoes" (London, 1721)
[1024] Rogers (1989) "Carnal Knowledge" p. 358.

good family and the next in a brothel."[1025] This imagery provides a good example of the extent to which anti-calico propagandists played on the fears of both men and women.

The fear that a mistress might be supplanted by her maid cannot have been far from the minds of many middle rank women who brought young maidservants into their homes.[1026] Such concerns likely account for the callous manner in which many female domestics were treated. The morals of maidservants were often subjected to rigorous scrutiny and they could even legally be forced to endure physical inspections if the mistress suspected sexual activity or pregnancy.[1027] As servant girls were often prey to the undesirable attentions of other male servants, the master's sons or the master himself, such inspections constituted a rational action for a mistress who wanted to protect the reputation of her family. The fact that a maidservant would often have found the attentions of these men forced and unwelcome would likely have done little to calm the offended dignity and family honour of her mistress if an assignation occurred.

The diarist Samuel Pepys (1633-1703) openly commented on his dalliances with a series of maids in his memoirs, and by his own admission took frequent liberties with female servants in his own home. His wife understandably took a very dim view of such proceedings and the constant turnover of servants at the Pepys household was likely in part due Elizabeth Pepys seeing off the competition.[1028] Anti-calico writers found the image of the scheming servant particularly useful as many people appear to have been disposed to believe the worst of female domestics.[1029] The issue of maidservants and the

[1025] Daniel Defoe. *Everybody's Business is Nobody's Business.* (London, 1725)
[1026] Hill (1996) *Servants*. pp. 44-63. Hill (2001) *Women, Work, Sexual Politics*. p. 146.
[1027] Gowing (2003) *Common Bodies*. pp. 69-73.
[1028] Earle (1989) *English Middle Class*. pp. 223-229.
[1029] Sandra Sherman "Servants and Semiotics: Reversible Signs, Capital Instability, and Defoe's Logic of the Market" *ELH* (62:3) (Fall, 1995) *Passim*. D. Marshall "The Domestic Servants of the Eighteenth Century" *Economica* (25) (April, 1925) *Passim*.

concern many in the middling station displayed with respect to their anomalous position within the household has been established. These widely held societal fears were reflected in anti-calico propaganda and contributed to the license and sense of legitimacy which protesters enjoyed.

Despite the violence anti-calico protesters visited upon women discovered abroad in calico, public support for the weavers in general remained high, even if their methods were not always approved of.[1030] Some voices were raised in protest at the treatment of females assaulted by the weavers and not a few men defended the honour of their womenfolk with violence.[1031] However, the absence of a strong public and official condemnation of the assaults on women dressed in printed fabrics supports the conclusion that many people must have bought into the steady stream of anti-calico propaganda. Others, no doubt, were too frightened to intervene or had little interest in the sufferings of the vilified maidservants. In any case, the cumulative effect of these attitudes was the wide leeway afforded anti-calico rioters by society, law enforcement officials, courts and juries.[1032] However, it would be inaccurate to claim that the violence against women found its source entirely in concerns over female servants as misogynist social attitudes were widely held by men of all social ranks at the time of the Calico riots.

As was demonstrated in the examination of witch trial *mentalités*, it was held as natural and just that females who were seen to be transgressing against gender and social norms should be prosecuted and punished and such attitudes were slow to change. The fact that the allegations often leveled against such women were often illogical made little difference, control over the female body and mind was the issue which concerned most

[1030] Lemire (1991) *Fashion's Favourite*. p. 38.
[1031] Lemire (2011) *Cotton*. p. 55.
[1032] Shoemaker (1987) "London Mob" pp. 277, 294-299.

people. At the beginning of the 1700s a significant number of such sexual inequalities were either officially sanctioned or tacitly conceded making the lot of women potentially difficult.[1033] English women, married, widowed or single had limited rights before the law when it came to the defense of their person and property and by tradition and were constrained to be obedient to male authority.[1034] Hunt has argued that the authority of the male partner in early eighteenth-century marriages was often effectively absolute.[1035] Unless it was excessive, and sometimes even when it was, wife beating was tolerated. A man who killed a wife, child or servant in the course of a lawful thrashing was considered to be guilty of manslaughter only.[1036] The expected duty of a husband and master impose physical correction, and men who failed to keep order in their homes could be publicly ridiculed.[1037] In such circumstances, violence against women would not be considered remarkable, even when it was carried out in the streets and in full public view.

England in the early eighteenth century was a harsh society. Most ordinary people would have observed and perhaps taken part in public shaming sanctions against women such as pelting a girl in the pillory or witnessing a woman being flogged.[1038] The branding of female felons was a common practice and women convicted of petty treason, for murdering her husband, master or mistress, could expect to be burned alive.[1039] The position of women in early eighteenth-century England, and particularly low-ranked females, was precarious by any measure. However, the extremities of the tactics

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[1033] Gowing (2003) *Common Bodies*. p. 58.
[1034] Mendelson & Crawford (1998) *Women in Early Modern England*. p. 124.
[1035] Hunt (1992) "Wife Beating" p. 20.
[1036] McLynn (1991) *Crime and Punishment*. p. 37.
[1037] E. P. Thompson "Rough Music Reconsidered" *Folklore* (103:1) (1992). p. 24.
[1038] J. S. Cockburn "Punishment and Brutalization in the English Enlightenment" *Law and History Review* (12:1) (Spring, 1994) pp. 158-160. Amussen (1985) "Gender, Family and the Social Order" pp. 214-216. Gowing (2003) *Common Bodies*. p. 37.
[1039] McLynn (1991) *Crime and Punishment*. pp. 118-124. Gregory Durston. *Crime and Justice in Early Modern England, 1500-1750*. Chichester: Barry Rose, 2004. pp. 192-194, 682-687.

employed by anti-calico rioters can only partially be partially attributed to the harsh anti-female attitudes of the time. It is to the evolving nature of British society in the early 1700s that one must look to find the significant animating spirit of the Calico riots.

Vickery makes that case that arguments concerning female labour, new luxuries, and the purchasing habits of women, had at their root an element of moral panic.[1040] The self consciously virtuous middling sorts feared a decline in decency as a culture of sensuality and extravagance corrupted the family from the outside while amoral and acquisitive servants undermined the home from within. Changes in traditional working patterns sparked debates over appropriate female behaviour and the purchasing of exotic foreign goods. English people were being forced to reassess conventional attitudes respecting social rank, morality and the duty the consumer had to the economy and products of the nation.[1041] Woodruff Smith finds that the means by which women were acquiring new semi-luxuries were forcing rapid reassessments of normative female behaviour and this was particularly the case among the lower orders.[1042]

The redefinition of conventional boundaries of female labour and public action put working women at risk of a social backlash.[1043] Many anti-calico narratives contained in pamphlets and newspapers exploited existing concerns related to the changing role of women in early eighteenth-century English society, as well as well worn tropes of female wantonness and their corrupt natures.[1044] A confluence of ideas and concerns related to the rise of female agency helped drive anti-calico rhetoric and contributed to assaults on

[1040] Vickery (1998) *The Gentleman's Daughter*. p. 5.
[1041] Berg (2005) *Luxury and Pleasure*. p. 250.
[1042] Smith (2002) *Consumption and the Making of Respectability*. p. 67.
[1043] Mendelson & Crawford (1998) *Women in Early Modern England*. p. 432.
[1044] Lemire (2011) *Cotton*. pp. 47, 49-61.

calico-clad women, however it took the determined efforts of anti-calico activists to bring the issue to prominence.[1045]

To further their own cause, and eliminate the major market for printed fabrics, pro-wool interests generated a pervasive social discourse that privileged control of the female mind and body over the moderating traditions of the moral economy. Targeting the dress of maidservants brought the issues of unemployment, political uncertainty and concern over growing female agency down to the level of ordinary people. Finally, the vilification of 'calico madams' brought the putative remedy for the troubles plaguing the wool and silk industries to within the reach of the man on the street.

The efficient operation of Thompson's moral economy was fundamentally premised upon the support of the community for the actions of the protesters. When they targeted maidservants and other low ranked women in their public appeals, anti-calico writers were tapping into a wide range of pre-existing prejudices which were shared at all levels of society. The license accorded anti-calico rioters to target and punish calico wearers was due in large part to the popular condemnation of low ranked female agency and the propaganda of the anti-calico lobby which brought the issue to public attention.

**Conclusion**

In discussing the *mentalité* of food rioters, Thompson notes that some notion of legitimacy was necessary to animate a moral economy crowd, and make its actions appear justifiable to the persons of all ranks who made up the popular consensus.

> It is possible to detect in almost every eighteenth-century crowd some legitimizing notion. By the notion of legitimation I mean that the men and women in the crowd were informed by the belief that they were defending traditional rights or customs; and, in general, that they were supported by the wider consensus of the community.[1046]

[1045] Gowing (2003) *Common Bodies.* p. 5.

In his examination of the subsistence protests, this sense of legitimation arose primarily from within the plebeian community itself. Plebeian protesters felt they were only acting to implement laws authorities were reticent to enforce. However, in the case of the Calico riots the legitimizing notions were, for the most part, provided by external elite interests and re-enforced by a sustained anti-calico propaganda campaign which played upon widespread societal concerns and traditional misogynist rhetoric. Hired crowds and a largely indifferent legal system all contributed to the sense of right claimed by mobs who assaulted women dressed in printed fabrics. However, men among the middling levels of society also played a significant role in creating and sustaining anti-calico actions.

As was demonstrated, the failure of middle rank authorities, juries and law enforcement officials to act decisively to stop or even condemn the harassment of women dressed in printed fabrics contributed to the spread of such events. Those who wrote against the use of printed textiles were tapping into a range of female centered anxieties and generalized social concerns to add weight to their arguments. In her discussion of the anti-calico riots, Lemire argues that moral economy protests in general often reflected the influence of a broad range of community concerns from the local to the national. Protests in such circumstances acted not only to address issues of moment for predominately plebeian rioters as crowd actions but also served to reaffirm the values and structures which sustained the traditional understandings upon which their communities depended.[1047] In his examination of the Calico riots, Shoemaker maintains that rioters who participated in what might be styled moral economy protests derived much of their

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[1046] Thompson (1971) "Moral Economy" p. 78.
[1047] Lemire (2010) *The British Cotton Trade.* (Vol. II) p. 277.

sense of authority from the defense of traditional rights and customs.[1048] As has been demonstrated, significant changes were underway in England which were worrying to many among the ordinary and middling sorts. In times of uncertainty it was natural for people to want to impose some control over their lives, even if it is was largely symbolic.

With few social, economic or legal measures in place to effectively regulate the rioting behaviour of anti-calico protesters, the discipline and restraint which Thompson identified as present in many plebeian food riots of the eighteenth century rapidly collapsed. Significant numbers of pro-wool rioters speedily adopted crude and extremely violent forms of protest once they realized they could get away with it. The artful anti-calico media campaign helped to make indifference to the plight of such 'calico madams' politically expedient and socially convenient for people at all levels of society.

**Findings and Conclusions**

The latitude afforded anti-calico rioters by popular opinion, the middling sorts and the authorities, to physically sanction women who dressed in printed fabrics was remarkable. The reasons behind this behaviour were complex. In Chapter 1 it was demonstrated that the difficulties facing wool and silk manufacturers and workers were due to a number of factors which were largely attributable to mismanagement and corruption at the highest levels of these industries. Although Indian calico imports added to the problems facing the domestic textile industries, they were not the primary cause of them. This fact had little effect upon the deluge of anti-calico propaganda which put foreign textile imports, and the fashion choices of English women, at the center of the anti-calico debate. However, the success of this campaign was undoubtedly aided by the

[1048] Shoemaker (1987) "London Mob" pp. 301-303.

fact that the realm was already concerned with a number of unique and troubling issues which were explored in detail in Chapter 5.

In Chapter 2 the implications of Thompson's moral economy were examined. Scholarly work undertaken since the publication of "The Moral Economy" has proved generally appreciative of Thompson's works and theories. However, important caveats have also been offered. Though instances of restrained rioting did occur, they were less common than Thompson indicated. However, the widespread violence which was perpetrated against women dressed in calicos was severe even by the standards of contemporary crowd behaviour. Appeals to uphold customary standards and practices, and preserve the collective good, were common features of moral economy protests and formed the philosophical cornerstone of anti-calico propaganda. Such pleas were commonly employed during the Calico Crisis, yet there was little evidence of moderation in the actions of the protesters which was normally expected in such cases. Though Thompson gave limited attention to the middling sort, winning over the support of this group proved vital to the latitude accorded protesters to punish female calico users.

Chapter 3 demonstrated the importance of the middling sort to early eighteenth-century English society. Though still a comparatively small proportion of the population, the middle ranks represented a well educated and influential segment of society. These middle peoples were very concerned with social status indicators and the ambiguity surrounding the use of calico fashions, which blurred hierarchical lines, troubled them deeply. Middling men performed a variety of important functions in parish and civic life. In particular, they often served on the frontlines of policing actions as constables and members of the militia. They also sat on juries and administered local government

programs including the poor rates. Their opinions, influenced by self-interest, national concerns, tradition and notions of Christian charity, mattered. Therefore appealing to their well being and concerns was central to the success of the anti-calico campaign.

In Chapter 4, a detailed investigation of the lives of maidservants demonstrated the important role such women played in middling households. However, while they were indispensable, their position was also often ambiguous. Servants commonly shared in the lives of their employers in an intimate way, and they naturally aspired to the material comforts and novelties they saw around them. However, middling writers and employers often argued that such low rank persons should be denied access to new fashions, luxuries and even education, so that they might better content themselves with things appropriate to their station in life. There were some practical reasons for this attitude. Maidservants who spent and acted irresponsibly were seen as more likely to become destitute and require relief from the parish and their pursuit of fashion and middle rank sartorial signifiers led to confusion among the social orders when it became difficult to know the mistress from the maid. However, a more potent concern was expressed in the noticeable decline in male power necessary to trammel female agency.

The apparent weakening of traditional patriarchal authority was troubling to many as the efficient exercise of masculine control was seen as essential to the operation of the nation. From the king, nobles and gentry down to the male head of households, manly authority was perceived as the naturally and Biblically ordained foundation of power. The increasing use of new fashions and manners was accompanied by a troubling rise in incidences of foppish affectations and effeminate behaviour among middling and elite men. Calls by anti-calico writers for men to reassert traditional authority over their homes

and servants, coincided with a national debate over what many perceived to be a troubling decline in customary expressions of English masculine authority. This coincidence of social and economic conditions gave propaganda created in defense of the traditional wool and silk industries a distinct resonance and manifestly contributed to the latitude accorded anti-calico protesters to impose particularly harsh sanctions upon low ranked women who chose to wear imported printed Indian cottons.

Chapter 5 illustrated the manifold difficulties facing the newly formed nation of Britain in the early 1700s. A disputed royal succession, fears of foreign invasion, and an economic downturn, due in part to tax increases needed to serve a massive post-war debt, were compounded by factional conflicts. Whigs, Tories and Jacobites vied for power, using partisan media and organized protests to further their agendas. Building on their example, anti-calico agents tapped into generalized anxieties, misogynist stereotypes and perceived threats to the nation to craft a discourse which placed the fashion choices of women at the heart of a drive to ban EIC calico imports. Maidservants were a popular target for this campaign as they represented for many in the middle ranks, a troubling symbol of female autonomy, plebeian social climbing, and the decline of traditional masculine authority. The ensuing moral panic surrounding calico use served to legitimize violent actions against women dressed in printed fabrics. As E. P. Thomson argued, legitimizing notions, and the tolerance of authorities and the wider community, were central to public expressions of the moral economy.

**Thesis Conclusions**

The findings contained in these chapters support the conclusion that the success of the anti-calico campaign, and the latitude afforded rioters to violently sanction women

dressed in printed textiles, was highly dependent upon the support of men from the middling station. The primary sources used in this work, the poems, broadsides, and songs meant to appeal to working people and the more complex works written by and for the middling ranks repeatedly featured calls for such men to reassert authority over the actions of women. This was particularly the case when it came to maidservants and other working women who were often portrayed as immoral creatures out to destroy England's traditional textile producers by consuming foreign fashions.

People in the early eighteenth century conceived of economic action as being part of the natural order of things. The purchase of traditional textiles was the expected duty of low ranked women. That they should aspire to exotic and novel items was seen by many as a violation of the accepted social and economic order. New material goods were the subject of anxiety, less when they were consumed by the relatively prosperous and stable middle ranks than when they were consumed by impoverished and peripatetic lower orders. To the middling sort, clothing equaled status, and status mattered. The latitude afforded anti-calico protesters to violently sanction women in the streets is largely attributable to the actions and attitudes of the middling ranks who failed to arrest and prosecute rioters and thus effectively encouraged their excesses. However, it is also the case that the actions of the crowd represented a hybrid form of rioting which incorporated influences both from the moral economy and traditional rough music events.

As has been shown, rough music actions against women were often severe, particularly when female autonomy threatened the patriarchal order upon which society was based. Scold's bridles, ducking stools and witchcraft prosecutions were heavily focused on publicly controlling and punishing female transgressors. In this light, the anti-

calico riots can be seen as representing an amalgam of moral economy rioting and improvised rough music punishments. The types of moral economy protests Thompson described in his famous essay often times featured women as protesters. However, his focus on these crowd actions was overwhelmingly on masculine agents. The millers, bakers, farmers, middlemen and merchants confronted by the mob and the constables, militia and soldiers sent to control the actions of the crowds were male. Magistrates, juries and the nobility and gentry who rode out to meet the protesters and listen to their concerns were all male. The plebeian *mentalités* which sustained moderate rioting in the moral economy context had limited experience with female transgressors. Under pressure, and encouraged by the inaction of authorities and the manipulations of the middling agents of elite interests, mobs of predominantly low ranked men reverted to age old shame sanctions when dealing with transgressing women.

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